Finding the Power in IL-EMPOWER

CONSORTIUM FOR
EDUCATIONAL
CHANGE

ILLINOIS
EDUCATION
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

May 24, 2018

David Osta   – CEC Senior Director – david.osta@cecweb.org
Brad White - IERC Interim Director - brawhit@siue.edu

IL-EMPOWER
Background

IL-EMPOWER

- IL-EMPOWER is the Illinois name given to the structure that will address low performing schools as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- IL-EMPOWER is the new statewide structure through which schools will be able to select a Learning Partner(s) and access school improvement services.

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ISBE ON IL-EMPOWER

From ISBE.net:

- "…empower schools with greater choice and voice in the school improvement process."

- "IL-EMPOWER gives schools resources to focus on the needs of the whole child. Knowing the whole child is created equally from the child's school, community, and home."

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IL-EMPOWER – THE BASICS

- **Tier 4 Schools** will be required to participate in IL-EMPOWER including selecting a "Learning Partner" to support their improvement plan and work.

- **Tier 4 Schools = lowest - performing** ~lowest 5% of schools

- **Learning Partners =** Providers approved by ISBE for IL-EMPOWER

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NEW ESSA ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Tier 1: Exemplary School:** A school that has no underperforming subgroups, a graduation rate of greater than 67 percent, and whose performance is in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.

- **Tier 2: Commendable School:** A school that has no underperforming subgroups and a graduation rate above 67 percent, and whose performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.

- **Tier 3: Underperforming School:** A school in which one or more subgroup is performing at or below the level of the "all students" group in the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools.

- **Tier 4: Lowest-Performing School:** A school that is in the lowest performing 5 percent Title I schools in Illinois and those high schools that have a graduation rate of 67 percent or less.

PARTICIPATION BY STATUS

- **Tier 1: Exemplary School <u>and</u> Tier 2: Commendable School** - May apply to be an IL-EMPOWER Learning Partner for Tier 3 and Tier 4 schools.

- **Tier 3: Underperforming School** - School must complete an improvement plan approved by its *district*. School may participate in IL-EMPOWER.

- **Tier 4: Lowest-Performing School** - School must participate in IL-EMPOWER including a required Needs Assessment process, choose an approved Learning Partner(s), and have its improvement plan approved by ISBE. Funding available.

THE PROCESS

- ■ Schools will use a needs assessment to determine opportunities for growth and set targets for improvement.

- ■ The needs assessment will include:
  - Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) Rubric
  - Equity Activity
  - Data Review

- ■ The needs assessment will identify opportunities for improvement in one or more of the Areas:
  - Governance and Management
  - Curriculum and Instruction
  - Climate and Culture

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IL BALANCED ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURE (IBAM)

IBAM Standards

o Continuous Improvement
o Culture and Climate
o Shared Leadership
o Governance, Management, and Operations
o Educator and Employee Quality
o Family and Community Engagement
o Student and Learning Development

IBAM AND IL-EMPOWER

- Use of IBAM Standards and Rubric were incorporated into ESSA as the tool for Needs Assessment for IL-EMPOWER.

- Rubric has been piloted by an ISBE invited group of ~30 districts.

- Rubric will be revised based on feedback from IL-EMPOWER Pilot.

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WHAT IS NEXT?

■ ISBE will identify and notify Tier 3 and Tier 4 schools in late June 2018.

■ Tier 4 schools will then:

– complete *a* Needs Assessment process (includes IBAM rubric). *Learning Partners can be part of Needs Assessment process with ISBE approval*

– select a Learning Partner(s)

– complete and seek approval (by ISBE) of improvement plan for the 2018-19

– have the ability to use 2018-19 as a planning year.

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WHAT IS NEXT?

■ Tier 3 schools will then:

– complete *a* Needs Assessment process.

– complete and seek approval (by their district) of improvement plan

Many more details to come from ISBE!

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BELIEFS

CEC believes improvement happens when:

- **teachers** become regarded as teaching and learning experts;
- **data** is used as motivation to instructionally innovate and continually improve;
- **districts** commit to supporting schools;
- **schools** commit to supporting instructional teams;
- **teams** assume responsibility for the success of all students;
- **students** engage in and take responsibility for their own learning.

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INSIGHTS

- School **and** district system change

- Collaborative teams and structures must be oriented to support change

- School leadership matters

- Prepare for quality not quantity

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INSIGHTS

- Schools need student level, actionable data

- No one size fits all model / no formula

- Meet non-academic needs (whole child, whole school, whole community)

- Teaching and learning is THE target

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WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

- Prior efforts produced mixed and often disappointing results

- Evidence of positive effects in specific states or districts, types of schools, or student populations

- Many approaches have *some* evidence of effectiveness, but there is **substantial variation** within each approach

- There's no one-size-fits-all formula, and successful efforts are context-sensitive and meet local needs

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5 Components of Successful School Improvement Efforts

1. Supporting structures and systems

2. Culture shift

3. Improvement leadership

4. Talent management

5. Instructional transformation

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RESEARCH:
SUPPORTING STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS

- <u>School</u> improvement is a misnomer
  - *Requires system-level change with support from district and the state*

- What have successful states and districts done?
  - *Help schools identify their unique needs*
  - *Providing multiple, individualized supports*
  - *Build networks of schools that work collaboratively on school improvement*

- External partners <u>can</u> help jump start school improvement -- but not all do

RECOMMENDATIONS:
SUPPORTING STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS

- All stakeholders should commit and recommit. Leaders at each level must make school improvement a priority, and keep it a priority, even in changing political winds.
- Districts, schools, and in many cases, a Learning Partner should develop a robust process for Needs Assessment.
- Districts should grant the school(s) autonomy and flexibility - especially around time, people, and money.
- Choose a high quality Learning Partner.

RESEARCH: CULTURE SHIFTS

- In many low performing schools, trust is insufficient for individuals to risk change
    - *Replacing principals and staff, or restarting schools, are ways to catalyze culture shift -- but not the only ways*

- Organizations typically choose to make only minimal change if that is an option
    - *But improvement requires systemic change and the least disruptive interventions are usually the least effective*

- School improvement programs can be viewed as way to coordinate individual efforts into a more efficient <u>collective</u> vision

RECOMMENDATIONS: CULTURE SHIFTS

- Districts and school should include teacher, student, family, and community participation in the needs assessment, planning and then implementation.
- Schools should choose a small number of changes to start on the path to improvement, rather than a laundry list. Quality over quantity.
- Schools should choose interventions that are research-based, can be adapted to the local context, and match the current capacity to implement.
- Districts and schools should focus on implementation and continuous improvement.

RESEARCH: TURNAROUND LEADERSHIP

■ An effective principal is critical for school improvement. Research indicates that effective turnaround leaders:

– *support effective instructional practices*
– *prioritize improvement & instill a sense of urgency*
– *monitor goals & focus efforts on outcomes*
– *target supports to student needs*
– *improve staff efficacy*
– *spark culture shifts*

■ Successful turnaround <u>teams</u> include teacher leaders and distributed leadership is common

RECOMMENDATIONS: TURNAROUND LEADERSHIP

What makes "turnaround" leadership different? Vision.

- Districts and schools should make sure the right principal is in place from the outset.

- Districts should plan robust support for the principal and administrators.

- Administrators should share and distribute leadership. Use the power of collaborative teams.

RESEARCH: INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- Successful improvement efforts link professional learning and external support with instructional transformation

- Instructional interventions must be research-based *and* match be research-based and fit the needs and capacity of the school

- Successful efforts **use data** to pinpoint the needs of struggling students, target PD, identify intervention strategies, and adapt interventions over time

- Focus on students' non-academic needs is also critical

RECOMMENDATIONS: INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- Districts should support schools to implement interventions with strong evidence of success and support their efforts to adapt the intervention to the local context.
- Districts should examine and then provide an effective instructional infrastructure, including:
  - *clear curriculum guidance,*
  - *high-quality curriculum-aligned assessments,*
  - *a data system to track implementation progress and measure student outcomes, and*
  - *access to interim student data via user-friendly data tools*

RECOMMENDATIONS: INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- Schools should develop or redevelop a teaming structure (e.g. PLCs) to support instructional improvement.

- Schools should focus on providing instructional training and then follow-up coaching and feedback to support improvement of instructional practice.

- Schools should build a plan that supports the whole child - integrate academic and social emotional learning & supports

RESEARCH: TALENT MANAGEMENT

- The most successful efforts often involve the most dramatic reforms, especially around staffing

- BUT talent management for school improvement is not solely a matter of "weeding out bad teachers"
  - *Effective principals can help attract, hire, develop, motivate, and retain better teachers*
  - *Successful schools create conditions where all staff can **rapidly increase their effectiveness** through meaningful professional learning, receive actionable feedback based on data, and take advantage of increased time for collaboration and instructional coaching*

RECOMMENDATIONS: TALENT MANAGEMENT

■ Districts should develop a plan to recruit, develop, retain, and sustain talented teachers and administrators.

■ Collaboration is key. All stakeholders, but especially district and union leaders, should make agreements or policy changes to better support low performing schools.

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