Partnering for Improvement: Communities of Practice and their Role in Scale Up

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Core Principles

• Innovation reflects core elements of practices shown to be effective in the district where the improvement work is occurring.
• Continuous improvement relies on rapid-cycle testing.
• Partnership model includes researchers and practitioners as equals in the work.
Why Improvement Communities?

• Mechanism to build collective knowledge around complex problems and potential solutions.
  – Organizational learning, not just individual learning
• Diverse forms of expertise come together around shared problems
Defining Improvement Community

• Intentionally formed or defined membership
• Established norms of interaction and expectations for participation
• Formed around shared problems of practice
• Use common tools, routines, or artifacts to define the work
• Emphasis on collective learning and improvement
NCSU improvement communities:

- **District Innovation Design Team**
  - District Administrators
  - Innovation School Faculty
  - Faculty from other schools
    - Program Developers
    - Researchers

- **School Innovation Design Teams**
  - School Innovation Design Team (SIDT 1)
  - School Innovation Design Team (SIDT 2)
  - School Innovation Design Team (SIDT 3)
District Innovation Design Team

- **Purpose:** Build district capacity for identifying problems, designing and testing solutions, and supporting implementation at scale
  - “Owners” of work and “keeper of the vision”

- **Responsibilities:**
  - Study and interpret research findings to determine implications for innovation designs
  - Develop an innovation to be implemented, tested, and adapted in three high schools
  - Develop a process for monitoring implementation and facilitate collective knowledge building about the innovation’s implementation and its effects
  - Use evidence to refine innovation design, revise implementation process, and strategically plan for scaling effective practices
DIDT Work

• Established in September 2012 in BCPS and
  February 2013 in FWISD

• Composition
  – 2-3 representatives from each of three innovation
    high schools
  – 3-5 central office personnel
  – 5-6 at-large representatives from other high schools
  – District liaison/coordinator
  – 3 external researchers
  – Facilitated by external program developers
Research report for DIDT connected work to prior research phase
School Innovation Design Teams

• Purpose: Further develop, adapt, test, and implement the innovation in their school
• DIDT members from innovation schools are coordinators for their SIDT
• In addition to coordinators, each SIDT has five to seven members
  – Teachers, assistant principals, counselors
• Key tool is Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to adapt DIDT-designed innovation to their school
Building Collective Knowledge

• DIDT and SIDT are connected through overlapping membership
• DIDT serves in both supervisory and advisory role to SIDTs, providing guidance and support to school-based teams
• SIDTs are key knowledge creators through PDSA cycles
• SIDTs and DIDT meet jointly once a quarter to share learning from PDSA and come to collective understanding of how to further build PASL/SOAR and teacher support for the innovation