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
- School Innovation Design Teams

(DIDT)
District Innovation Design Team
- District Administrators
- Innovation School Faculty
- Faculty from other schools
- Program Developers
- Researchers

School Innovation Design Team (SIDT 1)

School Innovation Design Team (SIDT 2)

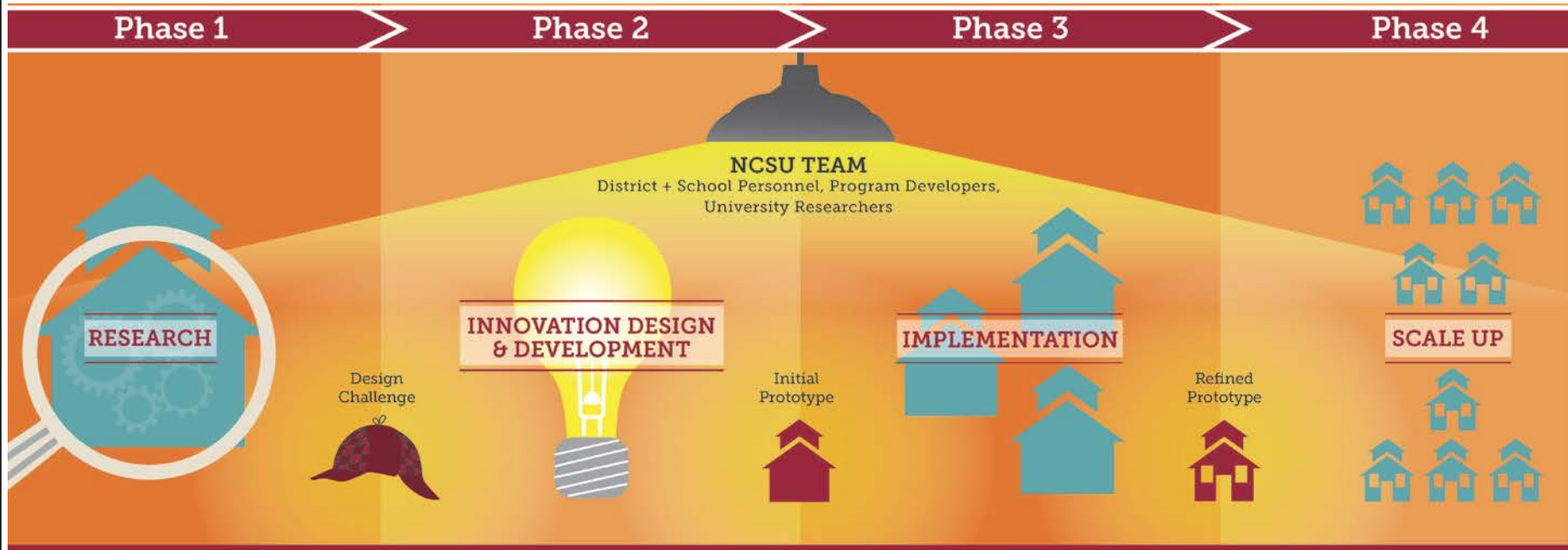School Innovation Design Team (SIDT 3)

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

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