

The Role of National Philanthropy in Education Reform or Shifting From Leader-Centered to Community Centered Reform

NEA Research Symposium

Presenter:

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Presentation Goals

- Describe national context affecting school reform and the “frames” used by corporate philanthropy
- Describe and discuss strategies needed to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of education reform and the potential role unions can play in this effort

AISR

- Mission: Share and act on knowledge that improves outcomes and conditions in urban schools
- Core Principles: Equity, Community, Results and Learning Matter
- Three Circles of Work: District Redesign & Leadership, Community Organizing & Engagement, Research & Policy

The National Discourse

Philanthropic, Political, and
Media Elites in Small
Rooms

Our Schools are Still Failing: Now what?

Obama Administration's 4-point framework mirrors corporate perspective:

- Supporting rigorous standards and assessments
- Improving teacher and principal equity and effectiveness
- Using data to improve instruction
- Turning around low-performing schools

Now What? A New more Robust Round of:

- Standards, Assessments, and Accountability
- Incentives and Sanctions tied to teacher performance
- Data Use
- Alternative Staffing and School Governance Models

Early Levers

- State: Race-to-the-Top Competitions
- Local: School Improvement Grants

School Improvement Grants Funding

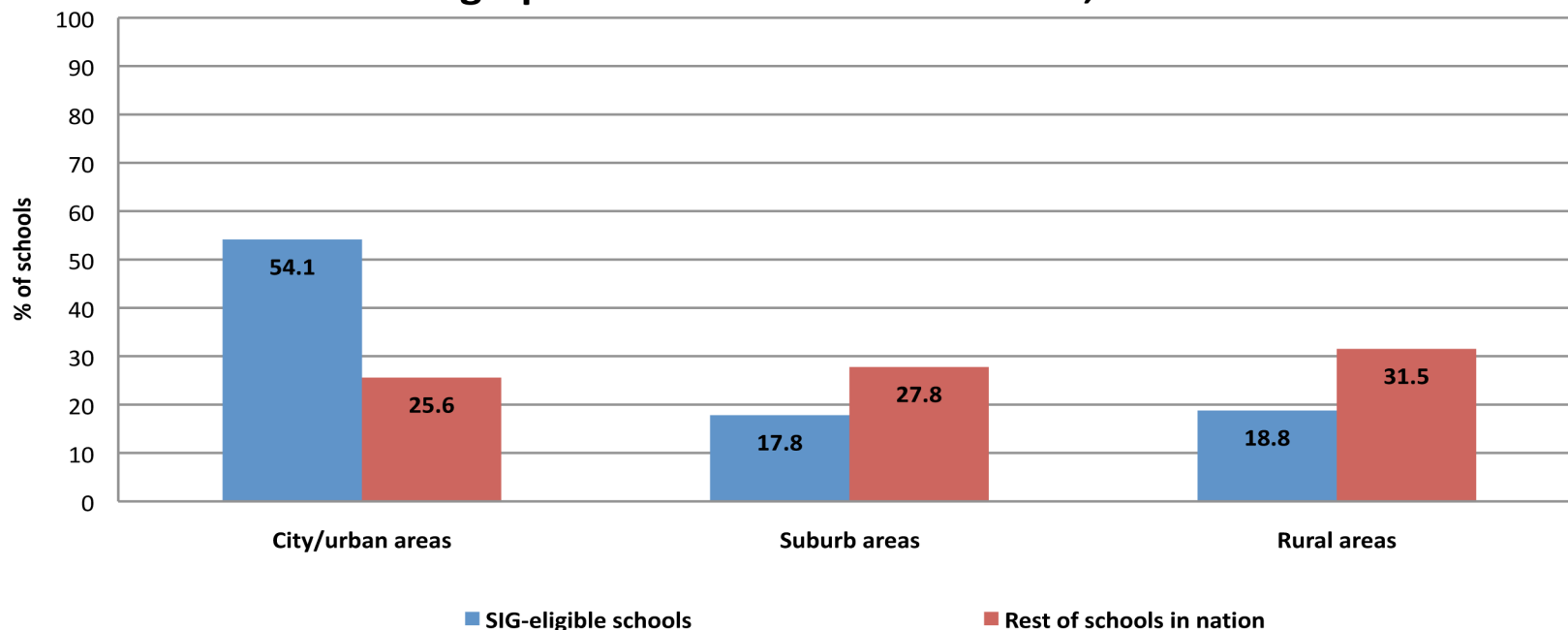
- \$3.5 billion total (\$3 billion from ARRA)
- State SIG allocation is based on Title I allocation
- For each Tier I and II school it selects, the state makes an allocation between \$500K and \$2M to the district, sufficient to implement the model selected by the district.

Fixing low performing schools



- School Improvement Grants – 2,136 schools serving 1.5 million students; 83% of students in these schools are African American or Hispanic
- African American and Hispanic students are over-represented in SIG schools.
 - Black students 7.5 times more likely to be in a SIG-eligible school as compared to White students
 - Hispanic students are 4.5 times more likely to be in a SIG-eligible school as compared to White students.

Geographical Distribution of Schools, 2008



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Common Core of Data Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey: School Year 2007-08.

Note: Percentages do not add up to one-hundred as we did not include the distribution of schools in "Towns"

City/Urban -- includes large (250,000 or more), midsize (less than 250,000 and greater or equal to 100,000), and small (less than 100,000) territories inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city.

Suburb -- includes large (250,000 or more), midsize (less than 250,000 and greater or equal to 100,000), and small (less than 100,000) territories outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area.

Rural -- includes fringe (less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster), distant (more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster), and remote (more than 25 miles from an urbanized area, and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster) Census-defined rural territories.

Fixing low performing schools.2

- Four Options:

Turnaround

Restart

School Closure

Transformation

Additional agenda items:

- Innovation, competition and incorporating elements of ARRA into ESEA
- Graduating students college- and career-ready
- Expanded federal support for charter schools
- Special attention to preschool
- Special attention to preparation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

District Reform Paths

- Managed Instruction
- Professional Learning Communities
- **Portfolio of Schools**
- Little discussion of equity beyond allocation of fiscal and human resources
- Emphasis placed on community input rather than community engagement
- Growing concern for extended learning

Reframing the Problem and the Critical Questions: A Community Centered Perspective

Recent Critiques

- Failure to narrow achievement gaps due to lack of attention to broader social and economic factors
- School and district reform models pay little attention to political, social, and cultural dimensions of reform that reside inside and outside the school
- State role and lack of capacity largely ignored publicly

The Black-White Achievement Gap: When Progress Stopped, ETS Report

- Period of Stagnation: 1990 until 2008
- Building social capital in neighborhoods is critical to the success of school improvement efforts

The Four School Turnaround Options: Cause for Concern

- Interventions imposed on schools and communities
- Emphasis on governance and leadership rather than instructional change
- Burden for failure placed entirely on school
- Ignores need for collaboration and ownership
- Weak support for ELL, Special Education and Gap Closing

Communities for Excellent Public Schools: Call for Sustainable Transformation

Three Elements of Sustainable Transformation:

- A Strong Focus on School Instruction, Culture, Curriculum and Staffing
- Wrap-Around Supports for Our Students
- Collaboration to Ensure Local Ownership and Accountability

Research on School Turnarounds: What Does the Evidence Say?

Organizing Schools for Improvement



Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppecsu, Easton;
U of Chicago Press

Professional Capacity
School Learning Climate
Parent, School/Community Ties
Instructional Guidance

Three Components of School Leadership:
Inclusive, Instructional, Facilitative

Factors That Support Success in Urban High Schools

Seif and Barnebey; PCCY

- A positive success-oriented school climate
- Motivational, emotional and academic supports
- Adequate time for academic, personal and professional development
- A relevant, coherent, “authentic” curricular and instructional programs

Beating The Odds

Ascher and Maguire; AISR

- Academic rigor
- Networks of timely supports
- College expectations and access
- Effective use of data

District Supports for School Turnarounds

- A better distribution of resources (address state and district mandates)
- Equitable student enrollment policies
- A stronger professional and school capacity-building system (curriculum and best practice)
- Systemic interfaces with community partners to support extended learning and student motivational and emotional development.

The Flat Earth and Education

Darling Hammond; Teachers College, CU

- Adequate and equitable school funding
- National standards and curriculum focused on higher order thinking, inquiry, innovation, technology
- National teaching policies supporting strong teacher ed, recruitment, and funding for future teachers
- Support on-going teacher learning
- Pursue consistent, long-term reforms
- Focus on broader community supports

Flaws of Leader-Centered Approach

- Reform efforts tied to 3-4 year Leader Cycles of Life
- Limits community ownership and accountability
- Favors national expertise and models over local resources and experiences
- Limits development of local infrastructure to support capacity building
- Attempts to outrun local politics and culture

Smart Schools, Districts and Education Systems

- Multiple Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Focused on a Broad Set of Academic and Developmental Outcomes
- Community and Family Centered
- Fosters Shared Accountability
- Systemic Approach for Bringing Work to Scale
- Strategies that Address Power Differentials

Infrastructure for Community Centered Approach

- Cross-Sector Governance, Design, and Implementation Strategies
- Cross-Sector Leadership and Professional Development Strategy
- Data Systems Based on Broader Definition of Learning and Development
- Local Action Research and Skunkworks
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Communications Strategies and Tools