**AASA 2012 National Conference on Education**

**Houston, Texas February 16-19th**

**Keynote Speaker Notes**

**Constructed by Dr. Robert Barner and Dr. Linda Purrington**

**Jamie Volmer (**author of ***Schools Cannot Do It Alone*)**

“We need to transform an education system that was designed for another age. The old system was designed to generate a handful of thinkers and a big slug of doers.”

Volmer shared a laundry list (which he called his magic list) that included dozens of programs that have been added to public school curriculum over time (e.g. health education, sex education, substance abuse prevention etc.) He then emphasized that no additional time has been added to the curriculum and describe the list as representing “raise my kid” not “teach my kid”.

Four pre-requisites for change:

1. Community Understanding
2. Community Trust
3. Community Permission
4. Community Support

Understanding--A big conversation is needed. Less than 20% of taxpayers have children in school and don’t feel like paying for those children. We need to clarify that support for schools is good for the community. They already know that school is good for kids. We need to get out the message that the quality of community life is tied to the quality of local schools.

Trust—As understanding grows, so does permission. If we don’t educate, we will take care of children for the rest of their lives or fear them for the rest of their lives.

Permission—We gain permission on the basis of understanding and trust.

Support—Schools need to go out to the community. Map your community with your staff. Your teachers and staff should be the ones to go out because America trusts teachers more than administrators.

For example: We need to have conversations between the schools and the community. Use data to show the community that when graduation rates go up, crime and teen pregnancy decrease. There is also a reduction in individuals using hospitals as primary healthcare centers. Many communities trust the custodians and the secretaries more than the teachers and administrators.

Use the marquee to tell good news happening at the school. Get student work out to the public. How many children do you feed in a week? How many receive support services? Use placemats at the local restaurants the number of college acceptances, the number taking AP classes, sports awards, etc.

Volmer share the 5Ss for teachers to do:

1. Stop badmouthing one another.
2. Shift attention from negative to positive.
3. Share what they are doing right.
4. Sustain the effort.
5. Start now.

**Rick DuFour**

Rick recommended reading **NAESP Solution Series** and he recommended a website: **allthingsplc.info as a resource for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).**

**Renaissance Group** is a resource for higher education and school/district partnerships

CSU Fullerton and Sangor District represent an example of a very successful university/district partnership. Sangor is a very poor district in California. They were identified as one of the first Program Improvement schools. Within 2 years of implementing PLCs, they became a 10/10 school. For more information, contact Mark Johnson and Rich Smith.

DuFour recommended viewing new Michael Fullan video about ***Systematic Reform***. Video features Sangor, CA.

Specific to middle schools and the PLC process, DuFour recommended **checking out blog by Steve Pierce at allthingsplc.info site.**

DuFour referenced Critical Issues for Team Consideration on pp. 130-131 in his text, ***Learning by Doing***, as source of questions to guide PLC work.

DuFour described successful PLCs as engaging in recursive inquiry and action research and job-embedded continuous learning. He shared the stories of 5 successful districts and common elements learned from all five:

1. You can’t do it alone. PLCs require loose-tight leadership or what he coined as “defined autonomy”. One superintendent described successful PLC work as related to 1000 conversations, one at a time.
2. You must clarify exactly what you expect to see—collaborative culture w/ teams working together to achieve common goal. You must have guaranteed and viable curriculum, common formative assessments (they are cornerstones for PLCs), and use assessments to inform instruction. Instruction must be systematic with plan in place to respond to needs and to provide enrichment.
3. Schools must develop a common language.
4. Superintendents must build the capacity of local leaders to lead PLCs by providing and supporting training (reciprocal accountability-Elmore). Superintendents must provide “real support” for principals and communities.
5. PLC team assignment must be meaningful. Each team needs to address: what and how students learn, when will they learn, if not learning—ask why not and how to intervene, and provide enrichment for proficient students.

**Tim Waters**

Waters recommended reading:

***Change the Odds*** Report by Brian Goodwin

***Simply Better*** (book)

***That Used to Be US*** by Thomas Friedman

Martin West Harvard Researcher-asked question, what if focus is on top 5% vs. bottom 5%, what will happen? You can‘t raise the top and not also raise the bottom.

Most high achieving education systems are those systems that focus on quality instruction for all kids all of the time—where you can count on the system to deliver

**Carline Robert’s work on high reliability systems**

Also read **McKinsey report**, other than what ELAP read, to go deeper into high reliability systems

Efficiency in system indicates that only 1 out of 3 students will successfully graduate from the system.

**Roger Goddard (Arizona) Collective Efficacy is his area of expertise**

Looking at what is going on in the classroom—causal study—influence of leadership on teacher practice

Obama’s influence on NCLB—potentially misses what parents and others want from their schools—Read—Don’t Count Us Out report. Pay attention to 10 state applications related to NCLB

Productivity, High Quality Personnel Evaluations are a good thing, but not without a meaningful theory of action and purpose. For example, is your purpose to simply eliminate teachers or is your purpose to inform and support teacher practice/improvement? There are efforts in motion that do not clearly define their theory of action and purpose. They also adopt teacher systems that are in conflict with principal systems---terms mean different things, templates for prof. development are different, data architecture are different. Within 2 years we are going to see some systems trying to undo what they have enacted.

***What Works at the District*** (text) addresses supt. Stability

**The Primacy of Supt. Leadership** (article) refers to Defined Autonomy and Practices

Trajectory from unstable to proficient means avoiding Burger King approach to doing business and expanding etc.

Don Burwick, tapped by Obama to become Medicare Medicaid director, created IHI

**Atul Gawande 3 texts: Complications, Simply Better, and Checklist Manifesto recommended must reads by Tim Waters**

What McKinsey found in education is also being found in healthcare—looking at procedures in medicine—for example—multiple ways of inserting tubes down throats—all have science behind them and they all work—but if doctors all choose which ones they want---mistakes increase, efficiency increases, quality goes down. They learned to bundle solutions—collect data and then nail it instead of giving people autonomy.

Gawandi wrote about survival rate of wounded warriors—increase is due to applying know how better than ever—with not necessarily more people or more resources. Another study related to cystic fibrosis—doctors innovate around the science—they don’t implement innovation that changes science; rather they expand upon the science.

**Waters re: What’s New**?

***What Matters Most Survey*** see survey.changetheodds.org

**Networking for Innovative Education**—benchmarking performance of best education systems in the world.

***McKinsey and Company 2010 Report*** goes deeper on journey towards excellence and discusses “bundles” that move systems towards excellence

Waters believes that there will be unintended consequences of current decisions related to teacher and principal evaluation systems.

NCLB Waivers State Accountability Models—what public wants from leaders/systems in terms of accountability.

***Don’t Count Us Out*** report by Kettering Foundation. What does public really want from schools? (e.g. access, trust, etc., not traditional accountability measures.

**Waters re: What’s True**:

McCREL’s Balanced Leadership professional development program actually changes principals and teachers’ practices.

Higher reliability systems are only possible when school districts are unit of change, not single schools or classrooms.

Excellent educational/learning systems strike the right balance between direction and support. See McKinsey and Company Report.

Need for Michelle Obama approach to accountability: quality process=quality outcomes. Michelle is tackling teenage obesity by planting gardens, not weighing children with a scale.

**Doug Reeves**

Think about if we ran our public health system like we run public education. We need to brand public education. School Board members should be our ambassadors.

“If a child is drowning, the child doesn’t need a lecture, or a strategic plan on methods to increase poolside safety. The child needs an adult to jump into the pool to save him.” Urgency is needed in education.

“You can’t accurately assess 21st century skills with a 14th century assessment. “His reference to multiple choice tests first being used during the Ming Dynasty.

“ Changes involving equity don’t need buy-in; they need leadership to make them happen. “ The essence of significant change is doing things before you believe they can be done!

“Retention does not work”

“There is a zero correlation between five-year plans and student achievement.”

Level of complexity too high; we must make it simple. Think complexity up and simplicity down.

**What’s True**?

I used to think, but now I think…

The error imperative—learn from mistakes and past research. (Self-challenge is needed and asking what is different-you will make mistakes.)

Bureaucracies by any other name…(state government and districts are bureaucracies)

Averages are wrong. They don’t measure central tendency. Getting better is part of the human condition.

Ambiguity is wrong. Need explicitly--consistent, reliable expectations and specificity of feedback—key to assessment systems.

Collaboration is good. Zero sum game—I win and you lose is antithesis.

**What’s New**?

Collaborative leadership assessment—evaluate team not individual

Read ***Visible Learning for Teachers*** by Jim Hattie. Keep your eyes on the windshield and not on the rearview mirror.

Implement 100 day plans, not five year strategic plans.

Shift from multiple choice assessment to multi-task and multi-day performance assessments

Complexity up and Simplicity down. Focus on 6 or fewer objectives.

Think evaluation versus assessment for learning for adults

Dissertation resource: finishthedissertation.org

Reeves recommended reading ***Reframing Teacher Leadership*** and Chenoweth and Theokas text, ***Getting it Done***.

Three Levels of Leadership/Decisions

1. Safety and Values –no voting, the principal/district makes the call
2. Collaboration (CFA’s, feedback, you will do it, but you decide the day to day way to make it happen.)
3. Discretion – you will teach the standards, the order and the how is up to you.

Teachers are often engaged in this level and think they do this less. The reality is that they do most things at this level.

Referred **to Larry Ainsworth as resource for Common Formative Assessments.**