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Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding **effective comprehensive school reform professional development (PD) models**.

Ask REL Southwest is part of a collaborative Ask-A-REL reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (REL). By design, this service functions much in the same way as a technical reference library providing references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations for research-based education questions.

Please note that REL Southwest has not evaluated the resources themselves, but offers this list to you for your information only.

BACKGROUND

REL Southwest held a Governing Board meeting on May 2–4, 2016, in New Orleans, Louisiana. A needs-sensing focus group activity was conducted with Board members in attendance. Of the new needs identified by the group, five were submitted as Ask A REL questions. This response addresses one of those questions.

Following an established REL Southwest protocol, we conducted a search for research reports as well as descriptive briefs on effective comprehensive school reform PD models, for use and dissemination at the September 2016 Governing Board meeting. The sources included federally funded organizations, additional research institutions, educational databases, and general Internet searches.

QUESTION

What are some effective comprehensive school reform PD models?

Sources

Borko, H., Elliot, R., & Uchiyama, K. (2002). Professional development: A key to Kentucky's educational reform effort. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, 969–987.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.470.696&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

From the abstract: “Despite its essential role in educational reform, professional development typically does not receive adequate support in systemic reform efforts. This article presents an exception—a state that incorporated professional development as a central priority in its reform effort and four schools that used state resources to build their capacity for enacting the reform agenda. We describe central features of Kentucky’s approach to professional development, characterize elements of professional development within the four schools, and discuss how these elements

promoted three dimensions of school capacity: individual teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions; professional community; and program coherence. Based on this "image of the possible," we offer recommendations for professional development that supports systemic, standards-based educational reform."

Comprehensive school reform: Five lessons from the field (1999). *Education Commission of the States*, Denver, CO. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED439514>.

From the ERIC abstract: "This report presents the results of a 5-year study conducted by governors and other state and local policymakers on education reform. It is intended for a general audience and offers advice on what it takes to implement comprehensive school reforms. The document elaborates on five lessons learned in implementing comprehensive school reform: (1) comprehensive school reform changes the way schools, districts, and states do business; (2) legislative leadership sets the tone; (3) state education department support is key to long-term success; (4) teachers make or break comprehensive school reform; and (5) evaluation of results--early and often--is critical. The text focuses on the dramatic difference between comprehensive reforms and piecemeal improvement strategies that have long dominated education. It stresses the importance of district support in any reform, emphasizing the importance of finding a strong match between schools and reform models and the need to create stability in schools in spite of administrative changes. The document illustrates the benefits of union support and professional development, and the importance of showing parents, teachers, and students positive results. It states that comprehensive reforms will keep state leaders on the mark as regards education issues, will create savvy consumers, and will balance supply and demand in education. (Contains 36 references.)"

Ferguson, M. (2002). Making good choices: A guide for schools and districts. Revised Edition. [with CD-ROM]. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED477188>.

From the ERIC abstract: "This guide was designed to help schools develop effective programs in comprehensive school reform (CSR). It emphasizes that a school's CSR approach should be based on its needs, keeping in mind that one model may not provide every aspect of a school's comprehensive reform effort. Even so, a CSR model that meets the U.S. Department of Education's 11 criteria--especially a model with a proved track record--can serve as a focal point to help organize all the steps and processes required for CSR. This document provides an array of comprehensive designs from which to choose, all of which meet the 11 criteria. The models range from nationally recognized designs to smaller models that were developed by a local entity or university. The guide outlines four basic steps in the decision-making process about CSR: decide on who will be involved and a timeline; evaluate the current situation; create a profile of an ideal CSR approach; and conduct research on a variety of CSR models to make a good decision on a program. The guide also discusses CSR funding grants. A set of appendices provides a self-evaluation tool, a summary of self-evaluations, a profiling tool, a research grid, a list of resources, and a list of research questions. Included with this booklet is an interactive CD-ROM that presents all the tools in the appendices. The CD-ROM--usable in both Windows and Macintosh platforms--provides assistance to schools and districts in conducting self-evaluation, profiling a comprehensive reform approach, and making a final decision."

Geoffrey, D. B., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis (report #59). *Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk*.
https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/comer/about/Borman%20meta-analysis_22549_284_1144.pdf OR see
<https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/comer/about/research.aspx>.

From the abstract: “In this meta-analysis, we review the research on the achievement effects of the nationally disseminated and externally developed school improvement programs known as “whole-school” or “comprehensive” reforms. In addition to reviewing the overall achievement effects of comprehensive school reform (CSR), we study the specific effects of 29 of the most widely implemented models. We also assess how various CSR components, contextual factors, and methodological factors associated with the studies mediate the effects of CSR. We conclude that CSR is still an evolving field and that there are limitations on the overall quantity and quality of the research base. The overall effects of CSR, though, appear promising and the combined quantity, quality, and statistical significance of evidence from three of the models, in particular, set them apart from the rest. Whether evaluations are carried out by the developer or by third-party evaluators and whether these evaluators use one-group pre-post designs or control groups are especially important factors for understanding differences in CSR effects. Schools implementing CSR models for five years or more showed particularly strong effects, but the models benefited equally schools of higher- and lower-poverty levels.

A long-term commitment to research-proven educational reform is needed to establish a strong marketplace of scientifically based models capable of bringing comprehensive reform to the nation’s schools.”

Seltzer, D. A., & Himley, O. T. (1995). A model for professional development and school improvement in rural schools. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 11(1), 36–44.
http://jrre.vmhost.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/11-1_4.pdf.

From the report abstract: “The model we describe provides a framework for rural educators to employ as they seek ways to improve their schools and meet the national goal of providing all teachers access to professional development opportunities. Implementation strategies of our model include commitment of school teams; assistance based on the teams’ assessment of their needs; a focus on teaching and learning strategies that promote meaningful connections; extended planning time for teams; recognition that change is a long-term process that requires long-term support; networking of teams across schools to promote collegial support; ownership of the professional development agenda; and process evaluations to guide future professional development opportunities.”

Shakman, K., Zweig, J., Bocala, C., Lacireno-Paquet, N., & Bailey, J. (2016). Teacher evaluation and professional learning: Lessons from early implementation in a large urban district (REL 2016–115). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2016115>.

From the IES description: “REL Northeast and Islands, in collaboration with the Northeast Educator Effectiveness Research Alliance, examined the alignment of teacher evaluation and professional learning in a large urban district in the Northeast. REL researchers examined the types of professional learning activities teachers reported they participated in, the alignment of the reported activities with what evaluators prescribed, and whether evaluation ratings improved from one academic year to the next. The study found that teachers received written feedback across all standards of the evaluation rubric. Each prescription tended to include one or two recommended professional activities, and more of these activities were professional practice activities, such as independent work to improve instruction, than professional development activities, such as courses or workshops. Teachers reported participating in more professional activities for the instruction-based standards than for the non-instruction-based standards. For all standards, less than 40 percent of teachers reported participating in all the activities their evaluator recommended. While further work may be needed to strengthen the connection between teacher evaluation and a comprehensive system of teacher support and development, this study takes the first step in illustrating the need for coherence among these related systems.”

Warren, L. L., & Peel, H. A. (2005). Collaborative model for school reform through a rural school/university partnership. *Education*, 126(2), 346–352. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ765684>.

From the ERIC abstract: “This paper describes a study of a collaborative initiative between a rural high school and a university. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of collaboration in a rural school reform partnership. What grew out of this study was a collaborative model of a partnership. While partnerships are not unique, there is a unique nature of how universities successfully partner with rural schools. Educators in rural schools, as well as university faculty members who serve rural schools, may find the description of the partnership instructive as they embark on similar ventures. Addressed in this paper are the unique characteristics of rural school and the fundamental principles of rural school/university partnership.”

Additional Resources to Consult

Buechler, M. (2001). Updated Catalog of School Reform Models. Program Report. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Northwest Regional Educational Lab. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED458703>.

From the ERIC abstract: “The 2001 catalog focuses on updating existing models, reviewing models selected for the first edition, and offering an improved Web site. Sixty-three school-reform models are considered. Thirty-two are entire-school models, 11 are

reading or language arts models, 6 are mathematics models, and 4 are science models. Ten other models are not tied to an academic subject. Criteria for selecting models include evidence of effectiveness, extent of replication, implementation assistance provided to schools, and comprehensiveness. Each entry provides the model's origin and scope, general description, results, cost, student populations, special considerations, selected evaluations, sample sites, and contact information. Implementation assistance has separate categories for project capacity, faculty buy-in, initial training, follow-up coaching, networking, and implementation review. A concise summary in table format provides founder, year established, number of schools served, goals, main features, impact on instruction, impact on organization/staffing, impact on schedule, subject-area programs, parental involvement, technology, and materials. The models are not ones "approved" by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, or the U.S. Department of Education for any federally-funded program. The models in this catalog have met certain criteria that suggest they have the potential to help schools improve student performance. Many models not in the catalog have the potential to improve student performance. The use of the catalog to limit the choice of models by schools is discouraged."

PBS — "Selecting a Reform Model" — Help for Your Community
<http://www.pbs.org/makingschoolswork/hyc/selecting.html>.

From the article: "A Comprehensive School Reform program focuses on improving the whole school top to bottom – addressing all the subjects taught, all the teachers in the school, the management of the school, and engaging the community and the parents. These are different from models that target a specific subject such as reading or math, or a population like bilingual students.

Generally, comprehensive school reform programs have similar components that include: a commitment and/or buy-in from the school, specific programmatic elements and structure, professional development/training, community/parental outreach, and evaluation/follow-up. Each of these components, however, can vary dramatically between programs. Some models are prescriptive while others are more collaborative and process-oriented. Some provide specific curriculum developed by their organization. Others require extensive and on-going training; and some include frequent – even daily – support from trained staff. They all charge a fee." Suggestions for consideration list here and described at the site:

- Sound Design
- Solid Design Team Or Implementing Organization
- Good Fit Between School And Design Model
- Supportive District And State Policies

Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center
<http://www.air.org/resource/csrq-center-report-elementary-school-comprehensive-school-reform-models>.

Operated by the American Institutes for Research and funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 2003, this organization provides tools and resources to help educators determine which comprehensive school reform model will meet their specific needs.

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement
www.sedl.org/expertise/historical/center-for-csri.html.

From the website: “The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (formerly known as the CSR Clearinghouse) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by Learning Point Associates. SEDL was a subcontractor for the contract, and SEDL's responsibilities included creation and maintenance of the centerforcsri.org web site, as well as scanning for and processing up-to-date information and research for inclusion in The Center's publications and web site entries, including the online database of school reform literature. The contract for The Center ended September 30, 2009. The website was formerly located at <http://www.centerforcsri.org>.”

METHODS

Search of Databases and Websites

- [Institute of Education Sciences \(IES\) website](http://www.ies.ed.gov) (<http://www.ies.ed.gov>)
- [ERIC database](http://www.eric.ed.gov) (www.eric.ed.gov)
- [Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com) (scholar.google.com)
- Google (<https://www.google.com/>)
- Bing (<http://www.bing.com/>)

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches

School reform models; comprehensive school reform; school reform factors

Criteria for Inclusion

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on effective comprehensive school reform PD models. When REL Southwest staff reviewed the resources, we considered, among other things, three factors:

1. **Date of Publication:** The original search was limited to studies conducted since 2000.
2. **Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article:** Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports or produced by well-known research organizations.
3. **Methodology:** Sources include literature reviews and commissioned reports.

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