

Creating An Internally Accountable School

Developing Instructional Cultures of
Achievement that Support Strong Internal
Accountability: “It’s All About the Relationships”

Presentation Overview

- Definition of Internal Accountability
- TEACH the POSSIBILITY Internal Accountability Framework-Alain Locke Charter School Study
- Five Major Findings
 - Developing an Instructional Culture that Supports Strong Internal Accountability
 - Developing Internal Accountability through Principal Leadership
 - Developing Internal Accountability through Teacher Leadership
 - Developing Internal Accountability through Board Leadership
 - Developing Internal Accountability through Engaging Families

Definition of Internal Accountability

- Hill et al. (2002) describe internal accountability as, “a belief that [a] school’s performance depends on all adults working in concert, leading to shared expectations about how the school will operate, what it will provide children, and who is responsible for what” (pp. 3-4). Internal accountability has been found to be a stronger indicator of long-term viability than external accountability (Polk, 2004; Polk, 2006).

TEACH the POSSIBILITY Internal Accountability Framework

Alain Locke Charter School Study

- **91% of Alain Locke Charter School Students Meet or Exceed Grade Level in Reading and Math**

For the ninth year in a row, Alain Locke Charter School has achieved improved test scores on the Illinois Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT), with 91% percent of students meeting or exceeding grade-level standards in reading and math.

- **Alain Locke Charter School recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as 1 of 7 schools in the nation that has been successful in closing the achievement gap in its "K-8 Charter Schools Closing the Achievement Gap: Innovations in Education".**

- **Alain Locke has Posted the #1 Test Score Gains in Illinois History**

- **Alain Locke Graduates Attend Chicago's Top High Schools**

Graduates of Alain Locke attend selective enrollment, charter and Catholic high schools including Walter Payton, Whitney Young, St. Ignatius, and Loyola Academy, among others.

FIVE MAJOR FINDINGS

Finding #1

Developing an
Instructional Culture of
Achievement that Supports
Strong Internal
Accountability

Developing an Instructional Culture of Achievement that Supports Strong Internal Accountability: All Adult Members of the Community Working Together

- Freedom to make personnel decisions. It begins with the interview process, making expectations clear, including telling some teachers that this might not be the place for them. Choosing people who are a fit for the school's collaborative instructional culture is imperative. Teachers have to be open to on-going professional development and staying abreast of current trends in education.

Finding #2

Developing Internal
Accountability through
Principal Leadership

Developing Internal Accountability through Principal Leadership: Having Shared Philosophies and Values are Essential

- Instructional leaders should believe that it is imperative that administrators share the same core values and beliefs for the relationship to be successful...developing trust based upon a shared educational philosophy. For example, the principal should feel confident knowing that her leadership team shares her philosophy and how it impacts how they work with other stakeholders.

Finding #3

Developing Internal Accountability through Teacher Leadership

Developing Internal Accountability through Teacher Leadership: Collegial Relationships that Work

- Teachers who view themselves as team players value the internal accountability that supports everyone working together. This encompasses veteran teachers supporting novice teachers. Teachers thrive in this culture of support because of the collective wisdom that is available; therefore, teachers do not feel as if they have to go it alone and figure out things for themselves.

Finding #4

Developing Internal
Accountability through
Engaging Parents/Families

Developing Internal Accountability through Engaging Parents/Families: Treating Parents as Partners is Essential to Student Success

- Teachers should believe that viewing parents as “experts” helps to build positive working relationships where parents know that their expertise about their children is valued and that the school wants to work with them to maximize students’ learning.

Finding #5

Developing Internal
Accountability through
Board Leadership

Developing Internal Accountability through Board Leadership: Managing Board/Management Relationships is Essential to Success

- Trustees contribute to the school's climate through developing and maintaining strong leadership on the board and working to create committee structures within the board to support the goals of the school. Hiring a school principal whom they believe understands and supports the school's vision and mission and can work with staff, families and the community to carry out the goals of the school enables the board to focus on setting clear policies and objectives for the school and providing the necessary support to the principal and the school.

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Collaborative Work with the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School, Washington, DC

Creating An Internally Accountable School

■ Methodology

- Document Review (i.e., charter contract, curriculum, assessments, professional development, Board Minutes, policies, handbooks, etc.)
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Classroom Observations

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Design of five-year systemic plan to continue to strengthen Stokes' instructional culture of achievement that will support strong internal accountability.
 - Professional Development Plan – Focus on depth, not breadth:
 - *Focus on research-based instructional strategies that strengthen literacy skills and align with learning standards and standardized tests.*
 - Create a Professional Development Model that is based on research and best practices that provides on-going, differentiated support to teachers and holds teachers accountable for professional development; and,
 - Target Data Collection Process to Maximize Teaching and Learning at the classroom level.

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Using Data to Improve Instruction
 - Partner with the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (www.centerforcsri.org) to provide planning and technical assistance specific to the needs of the school to build capacity within administrators and teachers in the areas of instructional data analysis and coaching.

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Strengthening the Instructional Core
 - Continue to strengthen teachers' depth of knowledge and mastery of the SIOP Model and Every Day Mathematics through additional training and support in these major areas of curriculum and instruction.
 - Continue to build capacity within the instructional leader and Learning Specialists to be able to provide effective in-class support (coaching), on-going professional development, and teacher feedback and evaluation.
 - Evaluate dual-language program.

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness based on Performance.
 - Create an evaluation process that includes the following:
 - Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.
 - Align teacher evaluation with professional development to increase accountability and improvement in academic achievement.
 - Align teacher and principal evaluations to maximize improvement in teaching and learning and ensure reciprocal accountability.

Creating An Internally Accountable School

Using Data to Improve Instruction

- Partnerships with the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement and the Achievement Network

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Strengthening the Instructional Core
 - Strengthening the dual language program

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness based upon Performance
 - Alignment of professional development and teacher evaluations
 - Alignment of teacher and principal evaluations

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Strengthening Home/School Partnership
 - Flamboyant Foundation

Creating An Internally Accountable School

- Managing Board/Management Relationships
 - Managing Board/Management Relationships Over Time

Q&A

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like to receive a copy of this presentation or additional presentations on creating internally accountable schools that close the achievement gap, please e-mail:

Dr. Sheila Polk, Founder & President,
TEACH the POSSIBILITY
polksh@teachthepossibility.com.

Ms. Linda Moore, Founder & Executive Director,
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public
Charter School, Washington, DC
LindaM@ewstokes.org