



## **MASCD**

September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006

### **SUMMARY NOTES**

#### **MASTER CHALLENGE**

##### **Reaction to Macon High School and Principal Forester**

- Challenge for educators: difference between learning and thinking
- Schools need to address gaps in student knowledge ~ Trying to do too much in school
- Family support increases success
- How to get external voices into schools? (Telling stories)
- Expectation for students need to change ~ greater focus on use of technology
- Students learn how to “play the game” called school ~ need to be challenged to think
- Narrowing/framing of learning experiences because of high stakes testing ~ “covering” material
- Incongruence: testing content versus depth ~ ~problem solving gets squeezed out of frameworks/schools
- Social Studies and Science testing ~ is it good or bad??

#### **MODULE ONE: DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE (The World, Students, Schools)**

##### **Implications of Module One for Massachusetts High Schools:**

- Technology ~ public schools are not providing access to all kids and outside experiences vary
- Does access to technology lead to improved student learning? (Investment \$\$ = Outcomes?)
- Change in pedagogy is necessary ~ no longer can teacher be “sage on the stage”
- Relevancy? Scaffolding is gone ~ schools are not structured for all kids’ needs
- Cannot rely on all teachers being well-trained
- Connections between higher ed and high school curricula and its relevancy to industry

- Relationship between schools and communities ~ internships?
- Curriculum ~ does it reflect student interests?
- How to consider “context” of today’s high school in discussions about changing?
- Disconnects/connects between policy and practice?
- Agents of change ~ who are they?
- Challenge of statewide change initiative is due to diversity

## **MODULE TWO: NEW VISIONS**

### Summary of Big Ideas and Their Impact on MA Redesign:

- Schemas ~ thinking about thinking: How to create environments that foster metacognition?
- “Adaptive Expertise” ~ huge implications for teacher preparation and mentoring
- Expectation that teachers be involved in curriculum design and model innovation for students
- Proposition 2.5 (1980) and the decline of the “boomers” ~ few veteran teachers/expertise
- Need to quickly adapt in training new teachers to be effective
- Include continuum of teacher training/support for continued growth ~ Identify master teachers and value their expertise
- Systemic change needs to provide opportunities for teachers to become adaptive
- State Department and professional organizations have to work together ~ align their work and expectations
- Empower students to take charge of their learning
- Tension between adaptive expertise and prescribed curriculum ~ High school redesign needs to separate instructional leadership and management
- How to impact outside “barriers” to student learning (family issues, abuse, etc.)?
- Teachers and students need personal connections ~ need to address affective domain
- Capacity building ~ How can teachers develop skill of problem-solving to meet all kids’ needs? Structure needed to support this.
- Need to build morale ~ positive energy to move forward
- Promote capacity building framework for teachers
- Plan for redesign must address implementation phases ~ over time
- Destination: What is it?
- Our focus has been skills ~ what about structural changes that will make redesign imperative?
  - Do we have the management skills?
  - How do we change the political environment?
  - Do we have the tools to make it happen?

- Resources? What will we give up? What will we stop doing?
- What structures are needed for change?
- Transformation is not only about more \$\$ but also about reallocation of \$\$ and a shift in attitude/philosophy
- Framework must acknowledge the uniqueness of each district (need some autonomy)

## **MODULE THREE: SOME EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES**

### Summary of Big Ideas for Change:

- Primary sources of knowledge ~ authentic learning and assessment
- Stop rewarding conformity ~ reward “out of the box “ thinking
- Offer choices for kids ~ honor their interests
- Provide safe learning environments where learning and risk taking are valued
- Kids need opportunities to talk about their experience as learners ~ model metacognition
- Increase opportunities for conversation between university and high school staff ~ K-16 Continuum
- Honor mistakes ~ not always one right answer
- Identify artificial barriers between content areas and grade levels ~ explore different pathways
- Rethink how we measure success
- Responsibility of high ed in this process ~ need to be in partnership for high school redesign
- Relevance is key for adolescents
- On-going assessment
- Multiple opportunities for revision
- Repetition is positive not negative
- Authentic demonstration of learning
- Flexible time structures and cycles
- Treat teachers in ways we want them to treat students

### John Bransford ~ *How People Learn* framework: Impact for MA

- Vision of what staff needs to know about student learning (professional development)
- “Community of Motivated Learners”
- Student motivation comes from relevance and formative assessments
- Community of collaborative practitioners ~ working together for student success
- Self-assessment as part of metacognitive process
- Focus on the learner at all levels of development
- Technology as a contributor to learning (framework) and meeting different learning styles

## **MODULE FOUR: LEADERSHIP**

### Summary of Big Ideas: Implications for MA

- Leading in a world of global economy requires standards and accountability ~ not trained for this
- Not all voices are here ~ minority communities? How can we make them comfortable and a part of the process?
- Transition from middle level to high school ~ What practices in middle school can be modeled to support high schools?
- Student voice ~ where is it?
- Need clear and common vision and goal to guide our conversation and our work
- Explore our assumptions about technology's role in our high schools
- Higher ed ~ competition for initiatives not collaboration about a common vision
- Change is needed at all levels (incl. higher ed)
- Successful models: clear vision and strong leadership ~ higher ed needs to focus on developing leadership capacity
- How will changes be accepted from without and lead to changes within?
- Shortage of administrators ~ how to train and recruit?
- Community needs to share the vision ~ public relations plan/initiative will be critical. Need public support
- Lens of the high school principal is very different ~ leadership needs focus
- What's driving us? How do we measure our progress toward our vision? Who is providing us information?
- Need balance between affluent and not.

### **MASSACHUSETTS ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What policies and initiatives are required for all educators to embrace the research on high achieving schools?

- Need P.R. campaign to communicate need for high school reform
- "Value added" stories from successful schools
- Vision, passion, and focus on success
- "Carrot and stick" approach ~ tie funding to implementation of initiative
- Long-term funding ~ no unfunded mandates!!
- "Entitlement" system needs to be simplified (paperwork)
- A framework or blueprint may provide sustainability
- Can we have influence? Impact?
- Shall we develop a proposal that the DOE sanction the work of a group to develop a plan for high school redesign?
- What is the relationship of Bill # 1457 ~ comprehensive bill about educator quality that addresses all systems that impact the quality of teachers?

- High school redesign should be more comprehensive than just educator quality ~ structures and infrastructures
  - High school redesign needs special attention
- Unstable political environment due to the elections
- To move forward on our own we need to invite all stakeholders and political groups to the table
- WE NEED TO MOVE FORWARD, DEVELOP THE PROPOSAL AND THEN BRING IT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ED.

### Who else should be at the table?

- Department of Ed. and State Board of Ed.
- Charter Schools
- Business
- Department of Higher Ed. and Board of Higher Ed.
- MASSC and MASS
- Students
- Berkshire County
- Urban districts
- PTO/PTA
- College admissions ~ private and public
- Guidance counselors (MSCA)
- MASBO
- Staff members ~ Ways and Means (both House and Senate)
- “Breaking Ranks” schools
- Special Ed. representation
- Teachers
- ELL (MATSOL and MABE)
- 50/50 make-up of practitioners and policy makers
- Vocational schools
- Federally funded centers for reform
- We need to build capacity/widespread support by involving a widespread number of individuals in committee work
  
- DESCRIPTION OF COMMITTEE MAKE-UP WILL BE SENT BY MASCD FOR RECOMMENDED NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS

**Next Meeting: December 11, 2006  
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

**Tentative Agenda**

- I. Establish a Clear and Common Focus
  
- II. Identify models of high schools to be looked at
  
- III. Share “stories” about our own high school initiatives ~ learn from each other
  
- I. Identify additional information needed to proceed