

Smart Districts Framework

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Presentation to the *Achievement Gap Initiative Annual Conference*

June 16, 2008

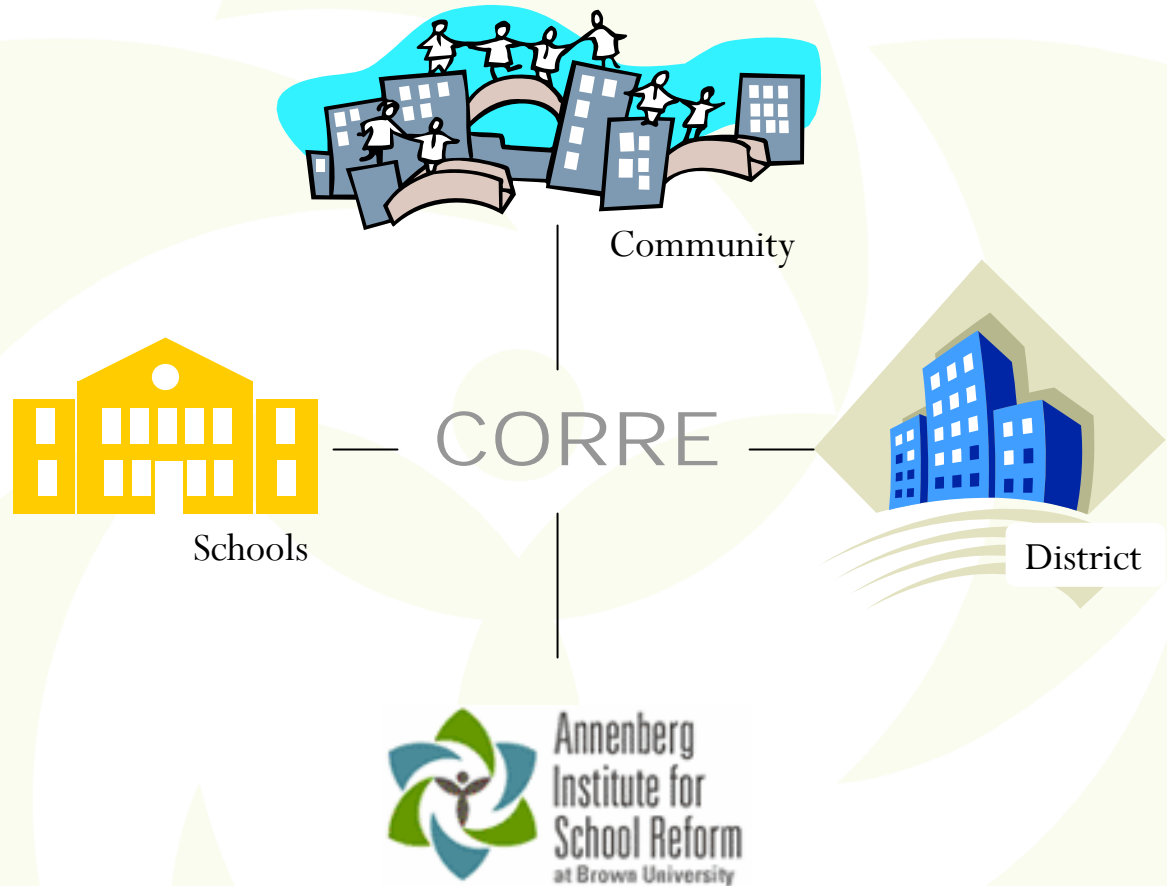
AISR Background

- Mission
 - *To develop, share, and act on knowledge that improves the conditions and outcomes of schooling in America, especially in urban communities.*
- Work Areas
 - Communications, Dissemination and Learning Opportunities
 - Research and Knowledge Product Development
 - Capacity Building
 - School Districts
 - Communities

What We Do: CORRE

CORRE brings a team of leaders from the district, schools and the community together with staff from the Annenberg Institute to conduct a collaborative inquiry of all district stakeholders.

The inquiry collects qualitative data from all stakeholder groups. This data informs a set of AISR recommendations on how to improve district practice in ways that provide better support for teaching and learning in the schools.



Why the Smart District Framework?



Literature Review
& Research



Experience in
Districts

To bridge the research/reality gap where AISR operates, make our tacit knowledge base explicit, and help us communicate more effectively with the districts we serve.

Knowledge Base

- *School Communities that Work* national task force
- Central Office Review for Results and Equity
 - Experience in 8 sites
 - Cross site analysis
- Other work with districts
 - Capacity-building
 - Research
- Review of literature on district wide improvement



How it Works



- Rooted in three themes
 - Results
 - Equity
 - Community
- Focuses on what we take to be key functions of a district concerned with results, equity and community – not necessarily exhaustive
- Assessment of a district’s “smartness” or how well it supports teaching & learning for all students

Smart Districts Functions

- Lead for Results & Equity
- Manage Human Capital
- Focus on Instruction
- Use Data for Accountability
- Build Partnerships & Community Investment
- Align Infrastructure with Vision

Lead for Results & Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with all stakeholder groups to develop a vision for the district and implement a strategic plan for realizing it • Build ownership of and sustain progress toward the vision through effective internal communication • Establish a collaborative organizational culture that balances the prescription & guidance of central office with flexibility & autonomy for schools • Develop substantive leadership at all levels of the organization • Encourage & evaluate new ideas, methods, and partners to ensure the availability of the most effective supports & services for schools • Ensure a service orientation towards schools and the community
Focus on Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a common curricular framework aligned with high academic standards & assessments • Develop & implement valid and useful systems of formative and summative assessment for students • Ensure appropriate supports & interventions for all students while maintaining high expectations • Ensure extended learning opportunities and supports that facilitate learning beyond the classroom • Develop & distribute teaching and learning tools and resources effectively
Manage Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract talent from a variety of sources, create a diverse pipeline of quality applicants & stream line entry into the system • Provide ongoing mentoring and support in varying levels and forms • Deploy human capital to meet the varying needs of schools & students • Evaluate the effectiveness of personnel and provide appropriate recognition and accountability • Ensure all staff participate in high quality professional development that is tied to evaluation and, whenever appropriate, supports instruction • Provide competitive compensation and a variety of incentives for excellence and meeting goals • Establish a career track for teachers that provides varied challenges and advancement opportunities for the most effective individuals
Use Data for Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, organize and act on data • Monitor the student, school, and central office outcomes as well as indicators that impact those outcomes • Assist others throughout the system to analyze and use data effectively • Evaluate the effectiveness of district programs • Ensure technology and support necessary for timely and effective use of data • Promote organizational transparency to the public by consistently providing timely district performance data
Build Partnerships & Community Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broker partnerships and work with outside stakeholders to increase resources for schools & students • Collaborate with multiple sectors of the community to set district priorities and identify strategies for realizing them • Advocate for a web of community supports and coordinate partnerships to provide them • Communicate effectively externally and promote a high level of transparency • Regularly seek community input and feedback
Align Infrastructure With Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the effective, equitable, efficient and transparent distribution of public & private resources • Ensure clean, safe & well-maintained facilities that allow for productive learning environments • Develop & implement policies that support the instructional focus of the district while maintaining compliance with established legal & policy regulations • Develop a technology infrastructure that enables the central office and school-based staff to do their jobs efficiently • Attend to the logistical needs of students so that they arrive on time and ready to learn

Practical Uses

Internal

- Help focus the different inquiries we help districts do
- Help organize the qualitative data we collect in those inquiries
- Help determine areas for reform in a district
- Help facilitate strategic planning
- Provide a way to look across sites and identify trends and patterns

External

- Provide a common language we can use to discuss reform with school districts
- Serve as the structure for a rubric that any stakeholder can use to assess their school district
- Help school districts reflect on their practice and the way in which they allocate time, resources etc.
- Provide a guide for developing a reform agenda's strategic plan
- Serve as the architecture for an external website/wiki that contains our knowledge base

Challenges

- Getting It Right and Making It Useful
- Level of Detail and Keeping It Simple
- Alternative Governance Structures
- Cross-cutting Themes

What's Most Important

- The framework attempts to balance research and best practice with the experience of practitioners and the day-to-day realities of school districts
- It tries to identify the most important areas of work for a district that focuses on results, equity and community
- It emphasizes people as strongly as process, systems, and technical/professional knowledge



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