Forum Overview

Designed for teams from schools the Campaign is working with intensively, the three-day Forum addressed the challenges of implementing and sustaining education reform and school transformation. The more than 300 Forum attendees heard from national experts and U.S. Department of Education. But most of all, they learned from each other by participating in teams from their own school and interacting with teams from around the country. Participants assigned high ratings to “team time,” time spent in role-alike group discussions, and opportunities to network. The Forum used technology to poll attendees, gather their opinions and questions, and chronicle their needs and successes. Each attendee received a thumb drive that contained Forum presentations as well as background reading material.

Follow-up experiences for Forum attendees will include electronic newsletters and virtual conversations. Each participant also will receive a full report of the Forum.

Attendees can stay updated on the Campaign at neapriorityschools.org.

Who Attended the Forum?

Teams from 35 schools in 17 states attended the Forum. High schools made up half of the schools represented at the Forum; middle schools 30 percent, and elementary schools 20 percent. Most of the schools (83 percent) were urban.

About one-third of participants (32 percent) were teachers and education support professionals. Principals were 20 percent of attendees. Other attendees were superintendents and district leaders (12 percent); local teacher association presidents (13 percent); local teacher association staff (10 percent); community members, including parents and school board members (10 percent); and NEA Priority Schools Campaign state contacts (3 percent).

NEA acknowledges the generous support of:
The Role of Community Engagement in Sustaining School Transformation

Warren Simmons, Exec. Dir., Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, shared three elements of sustainable school transformation:

1. A strong focus on school instruction, culture, curriculum, and staffing;
2. Wrap-around services for students; and
3. Collaboration with the community to ensure local ownership and accountability.

“Enlist the community so you can address broader social and economic factors that affect schools’ performance,” Simmons urged.

Attendees said implications of Simmons’ comments included broadening the definition of community to make sure it is inclusive; creating effective forums to engage the community; and finding the funds, people, and time to organize the community.

What Do Your Data Say About You?

You’re stressed, but optimistic that your hard work will lead to success.

Four in five attendees said SIG implementation at their school was “very stressful” or “stressful,” but four in five also were confident or very confident their schools would meet expected goals as a result of SIG work.

Are You Collaborating Around Reform?

YES! You’re collaborating on:
- Policy, practice and accountability (e.g., educator evaluation)
- Structures to support collaboration (e.g., PLCs, MOUs, focused community activities)
- Students’, families’ non-academic needs
- Student-focused change

Challenges to Collaboration:

At least two of the role-alike groups identified:
- Staffing changes
- Resistance to change
- Sustainability after SIG ends
- Overwhelmed/overworked school staffs

How Can NEA, and Our State and Local Affiliates, Support You?

- Advocate for additional funding after SIG ends (34% of attendees)
- Help develop family-school-community partnerships (27%)
- Improve school climate, culture, and/or safety (20%)
- Make time for collaboration (20%)
- Advocate for meaningful student assessments (16%)
- Help us address the disconnect between school needs and district requirements (14%)
Leadership that Improves Learning Results: Who, What, and How?

Joseph E. Johnson, Exec. Dir., National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University, spoke about the importance of shared, committed leadership to school success.

Every high-performing school the Center has worked with has a team of dedicated leaders (including teachers, administrators and other personnel) who work together to establish three school-wide characteristics:

1. Climates that nurture the commitment and engagement of educators, parents, and students (the fuel that drives success);
2. Challenging, meaningful, focused curricula; and
3. Instruction that focuses on generating students’ mastery of content.

Dr. Johnson’s Top- Ten List

1. Celebrate progress and success  ASAP.
2. Focus on improvement and growth.
3. Collect data only if we intend to use it.
4. School climate is the fuel for reform.
5. Push back: Real reform takes time.
6. Keep our eyes on the main thing – your students.
7. Focus on a limited number of important standards.
8. Take a risk and do what’s right for students.
9. Leaders may need to change their behavior.
10. Deepen teachers’ content knowledge, and expertise.

What Inspired You?

- Dr. Johnson
- “Green” initiatives
- Community-education partnerships
- Parent Teacher Home Visit Program
- Sessions schools conducted
- Working in our teams!

NEA Partner Support That Is Most Important To You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family involvement</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community partnerships</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green initiatives</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/software resources</td>
<td>6%</td>
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Partner Fair & Reception

- 58 percent of attendees made contact with a partner with whom they intend to follow up.

Contact information for each partner is on the thumb drive you received at the Forum.
More on How NEA, and Our State and Local Affiliates, Can Support You

1. Support community engagement
2. Provide training/professional development
3. Raise awareness of best practices
4. Advocate for educator leadership

Contact info. for NEA resources are on your thumb drive

The Obama Administration and U.S. Department of Education

Jo Anderson, Senior Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Education; Jason Snyder, Director of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of School Turnaround

In response to attendees’ concern about sustainability after SIG funds end, Jo and Jason emphasized that the Federal investment in SIG-funded schools is designed to build local capacity.

ESEA Waiver Package:
- 2012-13: Adopt college- and career-ready standards; set ambitious but attainable performance targets; develop local teacher and principal evaluation guidelines
- 2013-14: Implement college- and career-ready standards and pilot assessments; pilot local teacher and principal evaluation systems
- 2014-15: Implement local evaluation systems; administer assessments

Resource Flexibility:
- Freedom from 20 percent set-aside from choice and supplemental education services; and from the 10 percent set aside for professional development
- Flexibility with respect to Title I and Title II, Part A allocations; school funding under ESEA section 1003(a); transfer to 6123 funds to Title I, Part A; and 1003(g) SIG funds.

States will have the flexibility to define “significant” student growth, “other measures of professional practice,” and what constitutes “regular” teacher and principal evaluation.

Family School Community Partnerships

Warlene Gary and Dr. Bob Witherspoon, Consultants

- Explore your own cultural values and assumptions.
- Get out of school; meet with families in the community.
- Base programs on parents’ and educators’ priorities.
- If needed, assist parents with parenting skills.
- Create two-way communication between home & school.
- Assist parents in accessing community resources.
- Help parents support students’ learning at home.

If you lose your thumb drive, or just want to stay updated, visit us at neapriorityschools.org

Policies that Support School Based Reform

Mary Jane Morris, Dir., Center for Educational Innovation, Illinois Education Association, and Exec. Dir., Consortium for Educational Change

Illinois educators have used collaborative campaigns to successfully influence key policies (e.g., performance evaluation, tenure, and school based training).

How might your team begin a similar campaign to support school reform in your state?