

“Nothing is more critical to the future of the world than rapidly and constantly improving systems of public schooling that serve all students.”

“It takes a whole village to raise one child, but it takes a system to raise every child.”

Michael Fullan - Breakthrough

Nine Design Elements for Improving Teaching and Learning

□ Beliefs and Understandings

- Monitoring and Assessment
- Intervention and Special Assistance
- Home, School, and Community Partnerships
- Standards and Targets
- School and Classroom Organization
- Professional Learning Teams
- Leadership and Coordination
- Classroom and Teaching Programs

(Hill & Crevola, 1997)

Nonnegotiable Beliefs

- All students can achieve high standards, given significant time and support.
- All teachers can teach to high standards, given the right conditions and assistance.
- High expectations and early intervention are essential.
- Teachers need to learn all the time, and they need to be able to articulate both what they do and why they do it.
- Principals play a crucial leadership role in improving student achievement.

1. Monitoring and Assessment

- Assessment should reveal students' strengths and needs.
- Assessment should inform teaching.
- There should be ongoing monitoring of student progress.
- Assessment should indicate the extent to which standards have been met.

2. Intervention & Special Assistance

- Even with the best teaching, some students need extra time and support.
- Intervention at all grade levels is essential.
- Without timely and effective intervention, some students will continue to fall further and further behind in their school work.
- Teachers require a knowledge of effective intervention programs and how they can be implemented in a manner that supports and complements regular classroom instruction.

3. Home, School, and Community Partnerships

- Principals support and engage parents/guardians in helping their children achieve literacy and numeracy at or beyond grade level.
- The principal provides a link with the home, previous school, service providers, and the community.
- Interactions with parents and caregivers should be based on the notion of partnership.

4. Standards and Targets

- Professional Learning Teams set targets and revise based on data. A focus plan should be in place to achieve targets.
- Continuous evaluation and use of effective practices should be included in the School Improvement Plan.
- All targets should be supported by data.

5. School & Classroom Organization

- Uninterrupted Literacy and Numeracy Blocks are in place.
- Resources, material, and equipment support and promote student achievement.
- Programs support students' emotional, physical, and spiritual growth and well-being.

6. Professional Learning Teams - PLT

- PLT Meetings occur to improve teaching and learning both for individuals and the school.
- We can improve learning in schools by establishing a culture and processes for promoting student achievement.
- Learning teams function through a combination of demonstration teaching, mentoring, coaching and opportunities for the team to debrief and reflect on their own practice and their progress.
- There is a team responsibility for all students and for each other's professional growth.

7. Leadership and Coordination

- Principals align their priorities with those of the Board and the Catholic Graduate Expectations.
- Principals give first priority to their role as instructional leaders.
- There is a common understanding of priorities among the principal and the school staff.
- Principals and staff utilize the School Improvement Plan to make data-informed decisions.

8. Classroom & Teaching Programs

- The principal's knowledge of students' starting points is crucial to the PLT.
- Personalization - Precision - Professional Learning are key.
- Teaching and learning is focused on the strengths and needs of each student.
- There is a balance of teacher-directed and student-centered instructional practices.

Building Capacity for Sustaining Success

- Commitment to professional learning
- Practical effort to involve staff, students, and community in school decisions
- Approaches to transformational learning
- Effective coordination
- Attention to the benefits of inquiry and reflection
- Commitment to collaborative planning

(Gray, 2001)

Characteristics of High Performing Schools

- ❑ Students learn in multiple lesson types
- ❑ Test preparation is integrated into instruction
- ❑ Teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum, and life
- ❑ Students learn strategic activities for doing the work
- ❑ Students are expected to be generative thinkers
- ❑ Classrooms foster collaborative thinking

(Langer, 2001)

Three Key Factors in Sustaining School Improvement

- ❑ How schools approach change issues (Gray et al, 1999)
- ❑ How schools make professional learning available
- ❑ How schools distribute leadership (Harris, 2002)

“When you don’t know what you don’t know, it is difficult to see what needs to be done.”

Michael Fullan - Breakthrough

“We need to combine moral purpose with feasible, powerful strategies that give schools confidence that they can accomplish educational goals never before achieved.”