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February, 2008

Problem identification exercise:

What's at the heart of the issue? Notes for the building facilitator capacity working group.

- these are 9 issues that emerged from the facilitator templates and were then further clarified by the brainstorming activity around what each of the issues is really about

1) Getting to FOCUS

- Schools feel they've been told what their focus is (through district mandates) and feel they need to report on that- so they're considering focus in relation to things that have been mandated- and they feel that a school-determined focus not related to those mandates is not an option,
- But...

- people think focus means that other things don't matter, but it doesn't- it means a learning need with the most urgency attached to it.
- the focus you pick is not your focus for life- you move on once you've made progress
- is there a shared understanding about what focus means?- focus comes from student learning needs- and the next step is that a student learning need is representative of a teacher learning need- if can't define the focus in terms of these things, it's not a focus
- **confusion between focus, goals, targets, priorities...- language issue
- Also important to remember that elementary/secondary have different needs

2) Alignment across initiatives

- student success- potentially great alignment
- OFIP
- Character ed
- Safe schools
- Etc
- How do we show how these initiatives are all elements of the school improvement plan?
- Show how they all support each other without having a huge plan that's unattainable

- And in showing how they're aligned, need to use the same kind of language
 - o E.g., if a facilitator is not involved with the School Effectiveness Framework, need to still know the language to be able to talk about it
- what does facilitating alignment look like?- what do you do?
- Need to pull together research, IT, curriculum- and within each there's even more... - but school improvement planning connects all of these, and we don't always have the structures to support this
- People involved in other initiatives are often moving at different paces- may be ahead and you're trying to get them to back up (e.g., they may have come to the first session thinking they already had a focus because of something they're working on elsewhere)- which encourages them to think they're not aligned

3) Hypothesis generation

- 2 different kinds of people: 1) the kind that just want to jump to the data because we've provided them with so much; and 2) people who "don't need" the data because they "just know"

- people believe you're supposed to look at the "objective truth" found in the data and NOT pay attention to your intuition, which is really the opposite of what we're saying- we need to pay attention to what we already think we know because what we already think is going to influence the way we interpret data anyway
- also issue of the time it takes to generate hypotheses- people think they should be able to do it quickly, don't realize it's supposed to take time- they're in a rush

4) Whole-school involvement in data use

- difference between elementary and secondary in terms of buy in- and may want to use different data for these reasons
- and it's extra challenging in secondary when there are subject-specific things going on
- again, people see themselves as involved in many different initiatives
- trying to get the whole school involved in the poster- so it isn't "these teachers are involved in this project, and other teachers involved in other project..."
- there's a divide and conquer strategy where different people in schools are point people of different initiatives - it creates a problem if

there's no mechanism for bringing it back together

- strategy- need to spend time as a facilitator understanding the different pieces the school is involved in
- have to see if leaders are buying in- if they are, can get the team to buy in, and then the team can get other people on board
- classroom teachers may not be interested in anything outside their own kids
- so whole school involvement is going to need to be differentiated

5) Relationship building (within teams/schools)

- hard to move forward if don't have a group of people that are working well together as a team
- difference between professional learning teams and staff meetings
- may require intentional cultivation
- and there's a relationship between this and whole-school involvement because the relationship you have in a small group is different than when you move to the whole-school level

6) Your relationship with teams

- critical friend

- the facilitators' connection to the actual schools is going to differ
- who's the right person?- what's your role?- maybe strategy is that it's a team, not a person because one person doesn't necessarily have all these strengths
- Strategy- Need to build in face time- they need to see you- need to build in structures for this

7) Balance between accounting and accountability

- time is important – labour-intensive on the accounting end, so need structures in place to make accounting simple so doesn't take so much time and makes the accounting easy
- perception of evaluation- make sure they understand that accountability is to support student learning, not to evaluate
- need to make it meaningful- and bring usefulness down to the classroom level

8) Purposeful data selection

- we need to facilitate them to ask the right questions so they understand what data they need; data literacy starts before you get the data – it plays a role in deciding *what* data
- also confidence about seeking out data and what capacity people have for data literacy

- but don't get stuck in an activity trap of data for the sake of data; start with a purpose and know what you want the data for- what inferences do you want to make?
- People believe the data will provide an answer- how do we help people understand it won't give them an answer?- links back to hypothesis generation issue- because if people think data will give them an answer then they don't want to bother with what they already think
- Strategy- need to be shown models and walked through things
- Back to tolerance for ambiguity- people don't know how to do this, don't want to spend them time on purposeful data selection

9) Formal leadership capacity

- everything depends on the principal
- if principal is part of the team, more things are likely to happen
- but if the principal is detached from the process then less likely things will happen
- need to have principal on board- formal leadership matters here- the principal's designate isn't good enough- the principal is the one that can apply the pressure and support

- Even having the superintendents on board helps-sometimes challenge with getting superintendents to take it seriously
- Also different in secondary schools because have these formal department heads – need to address this in secondary schools
- Formal leaders enable informal leaders – principal doesn't need to know how to do it all him/herself, but needs to know who the people are that know how to do it