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HOPE STREET GROUP COLLOQUIUM – March 13, 2013
EDUCATION BREAKOUT GROUP – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

Overview

U.S. students are struggling to compete academically with their international peers and are graduating unprepared for today's jobs. The nation is concerned about their ability to succeed in a new economy and needs to restructure its education system to better enable youth achievement. Despite the immense challenge, key developments have been made over the last five years toward reaching this goal.

Most notable of these has been the creation and adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Math and English Language Arts (ELA). CCSS raises the bar on what students should learn, creates a platform for innovation, and gives educators a critical opportunity to "re-set" how they approach teaching and learning. Yet, while CCSS creates a clear platform for change, it alone is not enough to drive the improvements we want to see in student performance.

In order for students to meet the ambitious learning objectives laid out in CCSS, students, teachers and administrators will require innovative content, tools and support – as well as more informed policy and teaching decisions – to personalize instruction for every student. Within this new world of CCSS, and in some cases because of it, three other significant developments have occurred:

An investment in assessments and the collection and use of data. Federal investment in next-generation assessment systems designed to better diagnose student learning against CCSS, as well as in data systems that enable educators to use such diagnostic information to inform their instruction, has launched education into the data-rich environment that helped transform so many sectors before it.

A renewed focus on attracting, retaining, evaluating, and developing teachers. Mounting evidence that teachers are the single greatest in-school factor affecting student learning, improvements in methods for accurately assessing teacher quality, and federal investments in human capital strategies have all brought "teacher quality" to the forefront of education reform conversations.

An explosion in tech-enabled instructional tools. Technology is showing promise to produce more powerful, and less expensive, methods of teaching and learning than ever before.

Capitalizing on these developments, however, is not easy, as each of the above opportunities carries with it unique challenges. Namely, educators and system leaders must simultaneously grapple with:

- The challenge of changing how they collect and use information on student performance
- How to best evaluate and develop teachers in driving this performance
- How to best select and use learning resources to support the process

They must do all of this within a system that already struggles with helping students meet what are sometimes significantly lower expectations than those articulated by CCSS.

With CCSS as a backdrop and common thread for these areas, the Education Working Group participants used their time at the Colloquium to determine how we should best support public, private and non-profit entities to address these three challenges.

Summary of Group Consensus

The Education Working Group was facilitated by Dan Cruce, VP of Education at Hope Street Group, and by Jimmy Sarakatsannis, Associate Principle at McKinsey & Company. Our attendees (over 35) were diverse and included state commissioners, local superintendents, foundation leaders, classroom teachers, advocacy partners, and policy advisors. Needless to say, the dialogue and ideas were rich with experience, insight and passion.

The following three interconnected challenge areas were presented to the full group, grounded in classroom examples that were shared by our National Teacher Fellows, who explained how each challenge area affects educators and students on a daily basis:

1. **Resources Must Support and Drive a School Data Culture**
2. **Meaningful Professional Development Will Make or Break Teacher Evaluation Progress**
3. **Aligned Curricula/Instructional Materials Must Link Standards with Teaching/Learning**

The following summary feedback was shared for each of the three challenge areas:

Resources Must Support and Drive a School Data Culture

Before a school can commit to or deliver on a school data culture, leaders must provide the enabling resources. The type, frequency, and use of data must be defined with a framework to identify what actually works for learning and what can drive hypotheses - moving from data on a screen to implementation of best practices. In response to recent reform initiatives, state and local data systems have built or expanded their data warehouses; however, the resources to connect the massive amounts of data to teaching and learning are not in place, resulting in teachers feeling like they are "drinking from a fire hose."

Teachers need time and structure throughout the school day to gather and analyze this data in order for it to help drive their instruction. Implementing meaningful and routinized school and team planning processes can equip teachers with the resources, coaching, and data roadmaps they need to succeed.

To dig deeper into educator needs with data, it must be understood that data points do not "show" what standards proficiency actually is. There is a need for a common "north star" for what grade-level proficiency is across CCSS, as well as non-tested subjects. For example, a resource such as the information from the 10-15 top use cases could serve to translate data to action. Inherent to this effort is the need to drive intrinsic motivation, so that educators embrace data as a resource to move students to and beyond proficiency.

Meaningful Professional Development Will Make or Break Teacher Evaluation Progress

States and districts can build and implement technically sound teacher evaluation systems, but without narrowly tailored and specific support that addresses teacher growth, teacher evaluations will fall short of their potential to improve teacher performance and, by extension, student success.

Professional development is now viewed as something to be delivered rather than something to achieve—a core disconnect that must be addressed before reform can occur. Educators must be able to "see" and "get" master instruction and understand not just what master educators do, but why and how

they do it. The skills of driving student engagement, effort and persistence must be shared along with the pedagogy.

Facts and examples from the field should drive policy and funding changes that will break through the structural impediments to executing larger professional development ideals. The impediment fatigue is preventing ideas like those discussed in the Education Working Group from gaining traction and success. Without reform in this area, the education profession will lack the professional status it deserves.

Clear resources to show SEAs and LEAs how to get this done with specificity, as tied to the results of teacher evaluations and implemented through a data-informed culture, are paramount to moving forward. Without such action, we will have new educator evaluations (teacher as well as administrator) that identify need, but do not meet the need with modern day resources capable of improving and exceling instruction.

Aligned Curricula/Instructional Materials Must Link Standards with Teaching and Learning

SEAs and LEAs can collectively drive more transparency into what CCSS-aligned curricula and instructional materials must look like, and which resources actually meet this bar. Unfortunately, there are examples of academic subjects that are not part of CCSS that already have published materials marked as "CCSS aligned". A disheartening example includes a set of materials relabeled as "CCSS aligned" when no revision or change was made from the prior year. With multiple consumer and entry points, the need is greater than ever for smart consumers that demand an industry standard for what "CCSS aligned" means. Decentralization of such a standard or definition will result in failure.

With CCSS as a backbone, technology can, and should, dramatically change the resource landscape, helping to create new tools that support and empower teachers to personalize learning for students. However, we must reframe the opportunity to make certain that we do not start with technology tool development, but rather with a vision of what specific needs tools can serve for educators and students. We must too link technology with where students are and then identify what tools may make a difference.

Preliminary Ideas for Action

From the three challenge area presentations and debates, we culled the collective feedback down by synthesizing the themes into "vision principles" for each challenge area. Attendees then narrowed the larger list of vision principles they created to those with the most potential to transform our education system by utilizing our collective efforts.

The two resulting vision principles were:

- **Using the "right" data to inform teaching on a daily basis**
- **Recognizing that professional development is not a separate idea or activity, but instead something that is embedded into school culture**

The full group divided into four smaller groups (two tackling each vision principle) to further narrow the vision principles into more specific change vehicles, which would have potential to create catalytic change for successful reform via policy and/or product and which would serve as our preliminary ideas for action.

The following summary feedback for action was shared for each of the two vision principles:

Using the "right" data to inform teaching on a daily basis

We must acknowledge up front the real, as well as perceived, history of data use in schools and classrooms in order to avoid recommendations or resources that are disconnected from those who will implement them. Teachers often fear that results from data collected will only be used as a punitive device, rather than as a tool to simplify and drive more meaningful instruction. This historic fear has been most recently heightened by the focus on student growth measures in teacher evaluation. The goal should be to focus on outcomes with this work, rather than drivers. Creating definitions and guiderails for CCSS, as well as non-CCSS, data could serve to demonstrate a commitment to fairness and equal responsibility across a school while laying the foundation for a cohesive school data culture. Aligning standards as complementary to grading by linking standards proficiency and grades can assist in building the right culture.

Collaboratively defining and understanding the right data is necessary, as it is the first step to building a strong and beneficial school data culture. From that foundation, structures must be built and time must be allotted for data work to not be just an "exercise," but rather a method of operation. It should be the framework and format for how professional development learning occurs as part of a team; rather than referring to "my data," "my evaluation," and "my professional development," educators and administrators should move toward a culture of collaborative professional development that is rich with data insights.

Recognizing that professional development is not a separate idea or activity, but instead something that is embedded into school culture

Commonality, rebranding and new resources connect professional development to a school culture that is beneficially informed by data. Anchors grounding student proficiency to standards, instruction, assignments, and analysis surfaced as a tool that, while under development in certain locations, was necessary to drive the full connection between standards, instruction, data, and new form professional development. It became clear in discussion that the title of "professional development" is so tarnished with negative history that it should perhaps receive a new name, one that would better reflect the intent and action to connect specific needs to specific resources using the right data during the school day. The potential game changer could come from federal policy movements, but it is likely best to build a new case from practitioners across LEAs and SEAs, one that would demonstrate the potential for scalability with federal incentives and policy reforms.

Creating non-traditional vehicles for the type of professional development not yet available (i.e. a "Top Gun Academy") through different motivators (i.e. peer prestige) could illuminate what new options could and should offer. School leaders' role in this reform is critical, as they can be the gatekeepers to lead by example, set new opportunities and create the room for different paths toward success. These educators need a specific focus within such a new effort. To jump start this, a resource must be created that captures the spirit and specificity linking professional development to data and to educator evaluation.

Next Steps

It was apparent from the conversation that these themes are interwoven and very interdependent, thus for either area to succeed, we must be sure to actively address them both.

Classroom-ready, specific examples of success from both areas are clearly needed, as well as incentives to motivate the will necessary to spearhead the action. Further, open source, widely disseminated opportunities, products and resources are critical components, as the needs cross LEA and SEA lines. Great teachers should drive this content, as they are the ultimate end users.

Synthesizing the activity of the day, the following policy and product outline is proposed for feedback, support and/or edit:

Product (to drive/support policy change): Creation of a Professional Development (name to change) Playbook that would capture, categorize and culture-set educator (teacher and administrator) best practice resources aligned to evaluation tenants (instructional preparation, instructional delivery, classroom climate) under an implementation umbrella that sets up building data culture and utilizes:

- Specific examples/use cases, across subjects, across grades
- Videos of practice – from different performance points (i.e. effective to highly effective)
- Anchor examples and implementation best practices/tools
- Data best practice definitions/usage/purpose categorization
- Data culture implementation best practices (i.e. scheduling, PLC format, data coach roles)

Such an open resource could serve to drive more broad federal and state policy changes.

Policy (to incentivize and scale based off of the Professional Development Playbook), which would be defined through a continued Education Bipartisan Working Group, stemming from the "Coalition of the Reasonable" at the Colloquium, and include:

- Reform of Title II to drive deep change and sustainability
- Federal competition to fund restructure of SEA/LEA Professional Development models/supports

Call to Action for Education Working Group Participants

We encourage you to please:

- Provide feedback on the content outlined in this memo and the initial ideas generated together, based on your reflections from the education breakouts, and on your own experience.

- Indicate which initiative elements you would like to be a part of and what expertise you or your organization could bring to bear on the topic.

- Suggest any existing concept, model, entity, enterprise, or individual (across education experts, teachers, technologists, innovators and funders) whom or which you believe could be helpful in taking the next steps forward. We want to learn, collaborate and turn our ideas into real action, not reinvent.

Simultaneously, Hope Street Group is actively fundraising to collect data and build partnerships to begin developing the first prototype of the Professional Development Playbook. In addition, we are striving to generate the necessary funds needed to continue our national-level coalition of the reasonable through our Education Bipartisan Working Group Series to continuously develop innovative solutions to pressing education challenges. The goal is to host 3-4 per year in conjunction with development of the Playbook.