

Introduction

As more states are developing accountability systems and encountering low-performing schools in crisis, schools and school districts are scrambling to identify comprehensive and innovative school site and districtwide management practices that respond to the multiple challenges and urban realities of student academic achievement. After becoming the fifth in a series of state-appointed administrators for the Compton Unified School District (CUSD) in 1996, Randolph Ward effectively restored the fiscal and academic responsibility to CUSD in 2001. The school district was \$20 million in debt and over several decades had consistently the lowest test scores in California. The primarily Latino–African American school community was plagued with racial tensions, gang warfare, crime, and poverty, and up to 50% of students attending some of the districts schools lived in foster care or with other family members.

Under a key results reform process created by Dr. Ward, CUSD and other national public schools have accomplished the following outcomes:

1. Improved student achievement in the core subjects.
2. Aligned teaching and learning with student performance.
3. Linked professional development for all staff to the goals for students.
4. Created safe, clean, and secure school facilities.

5. Forged stronger linkages with parents, families, and the community.
6. Increased management effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This book describes six steps utilized by CUSD and other national schools struggling to overcome low performance. Each step provides a key results reform strategy with countless examples on how multistressed, low-performing schools can overcome obstacles to respond to the unique learning needs of students and adults. It is commonly recognized in education circles that principals and teacher-leaders know what to do to fix failing schools. It's not rocket science; what has been lacking is the will to do it comprehensively.

The leadership and reform process described in this book provides a support mechanism that can serve a school or school district experiencing any sort of academic or management crisis. The mission of the key results accountability process is to institute and document successful reform practices that address the multiple challenges facing low-performing schools. The reform process has the capacity to effectively implement appropriate action plans that reach and exceed a school's required growth results. This survival guide clearly facilitates a school's and a school system's ability to thrive by providing ample worksheets for central office personnel, school site principals, and teacher-leaders to help them create key results strategies that address their school community's individualized needs.

Step 1 describes an effective process for creating a school culture that will support school site leadership, empowerment, and key results accountability by building relationships with diverse stakeholders.

Step 2 defines how key stakeholders can support ongoing growth and build the internal relationships of district office

administrators and principals teaming together for the common good of all students.

Step 3 provides an overview of how school principals and teacher-leaders can create a key results accountability process with corrective action plans and specific lessons that can have a direct impact on classroom instruction, teacher recruitment, staff development, and results-based teacher evaluation.

Step 4 describes trailblazing initiatives that guarantee student success, including motivational attendance programs, an accelerated learning program, an extended school-year program, and a curriculum alignment backloading process.

Step 5 summarizes effective parent and community involvement activities that can provide schools and districts with the support required to overcome low-performing school challenges and to maintain open communication to respond to ongoing community concerns.

Step 6 highlights effective business practices that schools and districts can utilize to effectively leverage adequate resources for diverse student needs.

The Conclusion discusses how these six reform steps can be sustained over time.

The Resource section describes the Results-Based Intervention for School Efficacy (RISE) project that is currently being used to respond to the complex needs of low-performing schools. In response to the No Child Left Behind initiative, RISE uses a crisis response team approach to facilitate the implementation of a corrective action plan and measures benchmark progress through a key results recovery matrix in urban school districts in California and in other large urban cities across the nation.