**Executive Summary**: Comparison of Approved Evidence-Based, Whole-School Reform Models

June 2015

In an analysis of the four whole school reform models currently approved by USED, three dimensions of the analysis rise to the top as most relevant to NEA members: Educator Autonomy on Instruction; Educator Involvement on Decision-Making; and Staff PD and Support. Small Schools of Choice is most likely to be compatible with the professionalism of NEA members, but has some gaps in its program.

* Success for All involves scripted instruction, which is problematic for many professional teachers. On the other hand, educators are involved in distributed leadership, and detailed PD is provided on classroom management. **Few NEA members would be likely to appreciate working under this model.**
* The Institute for Student Achievement does not involve scripted instruction. However, decision-making seems concentrated at the school leadership level which closes educators out of important decision making. Teacher PD focuses on content knowledge, instructional strategies, and coaching. **While newer teachers might like the supportive PD, established teachers will probably resent being left out of important school decisions.**
* Positive Action requires that students at the same grade level across the school receive the same lessons, which are written for teachers if not scripted. Much of the PD is self-administered through kits. A leadership committee made up of teachers, ESP, students, parents, school leaders, and community members directs implementation of the reform effort. **Not all educators will want to give up using their own lessons. Also, teachers on the leadership committee seem to have no more weight than other stakeholders when school decisions are made.**
* Small Schools of Choice are very teacher driven. Instruction is the responsibility of the teacher, and teachers do much collaborative planning and PD in teams. PD is based on teacher needs. This model emphasizes the structure of a small school and the supportive relationships teachers form with students. It is not directive about curriculum, assessment, or instruction. **NEA members are most likely to approve of this model which puts educators in the forefront. On the other hand, the model is so non-directive on some dimensions that schools will have to build most of the school program for themselves.**

Comparison of Approved Evidence-Based, Whole-School Reform Models

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|  | Success for All | Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) | Positive Action | Small Schools of Choice |
| Content Areas | Reading | Literacy, writing, and numeracy are embedded in content areas across the curriculum | English Language Arts | All content areas |
| Grade Levels | usually, pre-K or K to 5 or 6 or 8 | High school | preK - 12 | Any grade level |
| Instructional Strategies | •Language-focused teaching in preschool and kindergarten to build oral language, school skills, and phonemic awareness.  • Beginning reading instruction in kindergarten and first grade emphasizing phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, with children working frequently in pairs.  • Comprehension-focused instruction in grades 2 and above in which students work in four-member teams to help each other learn and use comprehension strategies (e.g., clarification, prediction, summarization, graphic organizers), deep reading, writing process, and other means of building skill and enthusiasm in reading.  • Small group or one-to-one computer-assisted tutoring for struggling readers. | • inquiry approach to curriculum | •Students are taught critical thinking skills and good study habits  Addresses student motivation through the Positive Action system which makes students aware of the intrinsic rewards of learning  Positive Action relies on the Response to Intervention framework to support the differentiation of instruction based on student needs. | This model relies on building strong relationships around students and using local standards and curriculum, but with close attention to student progress and quick intervention when needed. Instructional strategies are not specified. |
| Student Supports | SFA provides PD and materials to support non-academic interventions of several kinds.  • Getting Along Together (GAT-2). Program addresses non-academic skills, including self-control, listening, cooperation, interpersonal problem solving, empathy, anger management, and patience | The Distributed Counseling program builds student engagement through strengthened relationships with adults in the school as well as supports for meeting instructional and behavioral goals. It provides an advocate for every student and a personalized guidance curriculum. Students learn peer mediation and problem solving skills. | Kits are provided on anti-bullying, drug education, counseling, conflict resolution, and family and community support. | Teachers serve as advisors to small groups of students and meet with them regularly. Each student has one or more adults assigned to guide them towards post-secondary life. |
| Student Assessment | Formal assessments are given quarterly but informal assessments are given frequently as formative feedback to teachers and students. | Emphasizes performance based and formative assessments but includes summative online assessment tools. | Aligned to Common Core or state standards where Common Core is not in use. | Assessment should be teacher driven. |
| Staff PD and Support | • PD in classroom management provides strategies for classroom management, including effective uses of time, transitions, responding to behavior problems without disrupting lessons, and positive reinforcement for good behavior. Most SFA schools also use Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies. | PD includes coaching and summer and winter institutes. Math PD focuses on building content knowledge, working with the Common Core, and reflecting on instructional practice. | The system provides the following:  Self-training Professional Development learning kits;  Face-to-face and/or online training;  Train the trainers;  Ongoing support and technical assistance | PD should be determined by staff based on their needs. |
| Family/Community Role | • Parent involvement in problem behaviors: SFA schools engage parents as partners in building positive behaviors. This can take the form of workshops for parents, daily report cards in which teachers send home good news to parents when students meet expectations, and “walking school bus” strategies to round up children in the morning to ensure on-time attendance. | Parent involvement is largely a matter of communicating with parents about student progress but includes involving parents in team interventions with students, educating parents about the school program, supporting the creation of a Parents Association, and helping that association connect with community stakeholders. | Family Classes are based on a Family Kit. Publisher cites evidence that use of the Family Kit decreases family conflict and increases family cohesion.  A Positive Action Community Kit focuses on things the community can do to support the school. | Community involvement is focused on student learning such as providing real world problems to solve, service learning opportunities, internships, and mentorships. Parents participate in school decisions. |
| Differentiation of Instruction | •Principal and teacher facilitator convene teacher teams focused on struggling readers, SPED, and ELL students in order to solve problems and check progress.  •Small group or one-to-one computer-assisted tutoring for struggling readers | Multiple forms of assessment are used to guide differentiation of instruction. | Endorsed by the Council of Administrators for Special Education for improving academics, behavior, and character of all students, including SPED. Positive Action relies on the Response to Intervention framework to support the differentiation of instruction based on student needs. | Differentiation is recommended but not specifically addressed. |
| Educator Autonomy on Instruction | SFA involves scripted instruction. In one implementation study (Beatty, 2011), many Success for All teachers modified these scripts at the classroom level; Some SFA teachers expressed mixed views of these scripts' effectiveness. Some say that the scripts "work" for their students but that as teachers they feel constrained. | No evidence of scripted instruction or other violations of educator autonomy | Lessons are provided pre-written with the expectation that all students within a grade level receive the same lessons. | Most decisions are educator driven with input from leaders, families, students, and communities. Instruction is the responsibility of the teacher. |
| Educator Involvement in Decision-making | The principal and facilitator form staff teams of teachers within the school who provide distributed leadership. | Decision-making seems concentrated at the school leadership level. | Leaders receive training for free and a committee made up of teachers, ESP, students, parents, school leaders, and community members directs implementation of the reform effort. | Teachers form a professional community in order to do collaborative team planning and professional development within the regular school schedule. There should be teacher-driven opportunities for continuous assessment, reflection, and improvement of teaching and learning by the entire school community. |
| Staffing Changes | While certified teachers usually do the teaching, no evidence for staffing changes is found. | While certified teachers usually do the teaching, no evidence for staffing changes is found. | No evidence for staffing changes found. | No evidence for staffing changes found. |
| Outcomes | Comparisons with matched students in matched schools indicated strong positive effects on most individually administered reading measures in most schools for students who have been in the program since first grade. Retentions in grade were also substantially reduced, and attendance increased over time. (Madden et al, 1993) | High school students using ISA had greater rates of promotion and accumulated more credits than a control group. They attended college and persisted in attending longer than non-ISA students (Fanscali & Bat-Chava, 2010). | Studies show significant increases in reading scores as well as reductions in absenteeism and improved behavior. | Students have increased graduation rates and college enrollment rates. Positive achievement effects were experienced by all student groups including SPED. |
| Cost | For 20 teachers plus administrators and support staff, PD costs are approximately:  Year 1 $54,150.  Year 2 $24,950  Year 3 $24,950  Yearly license fee: $700  Curriculum and materials: $45,994  (Source: Blueprints, 2015) | No information found on cost. | Initial teacher training: $3000;  Instructor kits $390 - $460  Student support kits $75 - $1450  School climate kit $460  Annual replacement costs per teacher $70 - $130  Ongoing training $3000/day  Technical assistance $300/hr  For a school with 12 teachers and 360 students, the first year cost would be just under $10,000 | The only info found is that costs per pupil are better at Small Schools of Choice than at larger schools because fewer students need a fifth year of high school to graduate. |

Note: Some excerpts are drawn freely from sources without paraphrasing.

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