REL Pacific Ask A REL Response

Other

May 2019

Question:

What are the examples or best practices in frameworks for high functioning schools?

Response:

Following an established REL Pacific research protocol, we conducted a web-based search for resources related to examples or evidence-based frameworks that indicate school effectiveness or are used in high-functioning schools (see Methods section for search terms and resource selection criteria). We focused our search in particular on studies in the Pacific and other indigenous contexts for greater relevancy to the Pacific region; however, we did include studies with more generalizable findings. Because this request came from those with an interest in charter schools, we also prioritized research relevant to charter schools.

References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. Descriptions of the resources are quoted directly from the publication abstracts. We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, our search included the most commonly used research resources, but they are not comprehensive and other relevant references and resources may exist.

Research References

Cherubini, L. (2018). School practices and education policy: Aboriginal students' challenges and successes. In J.M. Puaschunder (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 9th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities.* Princeton, NJ: Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies. Retrieved from https://www.ceeol.com/search/chapter-detail?id=661817.

From the abstract: "The academic success of Aboriginal students remains particularly concerning across Ontario, Canada, the United States and abroad. Less than half of all Aboriginal students in Canada receive a secondary school diploma since they often do not discern meaning in both the provincial curriculum and the priorities of public schools. In the

province of Ontario (Canada), the Ministry of Education (OME) 2007 policy document, The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (the Framework) addresses the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners in public education. The Framework points to the epistemological learning preferences of Aboriginal students and aims to make all stakeholders more accountable for the academic success of Aboriginal students. This study examines the perceptions and experiences of Aboriginal students in northern Ontario publicly-funded schools in the context of the objectives of the OME policy Framework. The findings of this longitudinal qualitative study include two categories that are described as 'Schools as Spaces of Socialization' and 'Principled Actions and Variability.' The categories, as the discussion of the paper will suggest, bring to light the potential of Aboriginal students to first flourish in the imagination of their individual and collective identity, and second, to undertake the challenges associated to public schooling and thrive in what can be adverse environments. However, the findings of this study also point to the fact that some Aboriginal students perceive the various injustices of school practices and relations but in most instances, consider themselves as having very limited opportunities to enact change."

Note: REL Pacific was unable to locate a free link to the full-text version of this resource. Although REL Pacific tries to provide publicly available resources whenever possible, this resource may be of sufficient interest to the reader to warrant finding it through university or public library systems.

Frumkin, P., Manno, B.V., & Edgington, N. (2011). *The strategic management of charter schools: Frameworks and tools for educational entrepreneurs.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED524356.

From the abstract: "'The Strategic Management of Charter Schools' addresses the challenges facing such schools by mapping out, in straightforward and highly pragmatic terms, a management framework for them. The first charter school law in the United States was enacted in Minnesota in 1991. In the twenty years since that modest beginning, the movement has burgeoned and spread across the country: there are now more than five thousand charter schools attended by nearly two million students. Yet due to this rapid growth in the number of charter schools and to their generally independent character, the nature and quality of these institutions vary greatly. The promise of charter schools is great, but so are the organizational and educational challenges they face. Organized around three crucial challenges to charter school leaders--managing mission, managing internal operations, and managing the larger stakeholder environment--the book provides charter school leaders with indispensable tools and insights for achieving educational and organizational success. In its elucidation of these managerial challenges, and in its equally helpful and detailed examinations of particular schools, the book offers a clear, credible approach to the efficient and sustainable management of what are still young and experimental educational institutions. 'The Strategic Management of Charter Schools' is a volume in the Educational Innovations series. [Foreword by Frederick M. Hess.]"

Kanaʻiaupuni, S. M., Ledward, B., & Malone, N. (2017). "Mohala i ka wai": Cultural advantage as a framework for indigenous culture-based education and student outcomes. *American Education Research Journal, 54*(1), 311S-339S. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1155334.

From the abstract: "The framework of cultural advantage calls researchers and leaders to reexamine the structures, paradigms, and practices of effective education. We argue that the moral imperative in this challenge is to critically scrutinize and counter the way education systems perpetuate systematic inequities in opportunities and outcomes afforded to certain groups in society, in effect curtailing cultural and linguistic diversity and innovation. Our findings from research conducted in Hawaiʻi indicate that learners thrive with culture-based education (CBE), especially Indigenous students who experience positive socioemotional and other outcomes when teachers are high CBE users and when learning in high-CBE school environments. Educational progress will come from forward-oriented research and leadership that embraces the cultural advantages of students with diverse experiences of racism, poverty, cultural trauma, and oppression. By cultivating culturally vibrant and affirming learning environments in lieu of "one-size-fits-all" approaches, educators honor assets found in Indigenous knowledge, values, and stories as models of vitality and empowerment for all."

Myer, C. (2012). Creating excellence through school culture: The target, the team, and the tactics. *Excellence in Education Journal, 1*(1), 49-77. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1210207

From the abstract: "Although specific, common characteristics have been found among high-performing schools, the predominant finding in the research literature is that there is no single, clear-cut recommended approach to attaining these characteristics. The position proffered in this paper is that: (1) a school leader can create a powerful, high-performing school by engineering a culture in which all elements are collectively focused on student success, and (2) this culture can be created by centering on three broad areas: the target, the team, and the tactics. The successful school leader must establish a shared vision and align all the elements of the school toward achieving that goal. The leader must build strong teams who work collaboratively toward the shared vision. Previous research is cited regarding the tactics that can be used to effectively implement this school improvement work. It is proposed that strong leaders whose behavior is based on an understanding of the insights presented here will have a direct, positive influence on both personal and organizational success. The case made here is the synthesis of ideas drawn from a focused review of the literature, the author's background in education leadership, and conclusions of case studies conducted on six high-performing schools in Tennessee. Education literature is replete with studies examining high-performing schools across the country and documenting the characteristics they have in common. Although specific, common characteristics have been found, the predominant finding is that there is no single, recommended approach to attaining these characteristics of high-performing schools. The position proffered here is that: (1) a school leader can create a powerful, high-performing school by engineering a culture in which all elements are collectively focused on student success, and (2) this culture can be created by centering on three broad areas: the target, the team, and the tactics. This position

is the synthesis of ideas drawn from a focused review of the literature, the author's background in education leadership, and conclusions of case studies conducted on six high-performing schools in Tennessee. The remainder of this paper presents information to justify the argument."

National High School Center. (2012). *High school improvement: Indicators of effectiveness and school-level benchmarks.* Washington, DC: National High School Center, American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED532568

From the abstract: "The National High School Center's "Eight Elements of High School Improvement: A Mapping Framework" provides a cohesive high school improvement framework comprised of eight elements and related indicators of effectiveness. These indicators of effectiveness allow states, districts, and schools to identify strengths and weaknesses of their current high school reform efforts. This document, 'High School Improvement: Indicators of Effectiveness and School-Level Benchmarks,' extends the framework and offers specific school-level benchmarks that provide a deeper level of detail for each indicator of effectiveness and describe school-level practices that can be implemented to support high school improvement at the local level. The National High School Center (Center) recognizes that many improvement efforts target specific priorities for high schools. However, high school improvement is unlikely to be sustained when improvement efforts do not address the broader context within which high schools operate. The 'Eight Elements of High School Improvement: A Mapping Framework' provides a structure that educators at all levels within the education system can use to address holistic high school improvement. This framework is one way to prioritize high school improvement efforts; it is not the only framework that focuses on high school improvement. The Center provides the following eight elements of high school improvement to help facilitate a cohesive and comprehensive approach to high school improvement: (1) Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction; (2) Assessment and Accountability; (3) Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth; (4) Student and Family Involvement; (5) Stakeholder Engagement; (6) Effective Leadership; (7) Organization and Structure; and (8) Sustainability. (Contains 1 table and 2 footnotes.)"

Shields, R.A., Ireland, N., City, E., Derderian, J., & Miles, K.H. (2008). *Case studies of Leading Edge small urban high schools. Core academic strategic designs: 1. Academy of the Pacific Rim.* Watertown, MA: Education Resource Strategies. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544388

From the abstract: "This report is one of nine detailed case studies of small urban high schools that served as the foundation for the Education Resource Strategies (ERS) report 'Strategic Designs: Lessons from Leading Edge Small Urban High Schools.' These nine schools were dubbed 'Leading Edge Schools' because they stand apart from other high schools across the country in designing new ways to "do school" while outperforming most high schools in their local districts. ERS found that Leading Edge Schools deliberately create high-performing organizational structures, or Strategic Designs, that deliberately organize people, time, and money to advance their specific instructional models--the set of decisions

the schools make about how they organize and deliver instruction. They create these Strategic Designs through four interconnected practices: (1) Clearly defining an instructional model that reflects the schools' vision, learning goals, and student population; (2) Organizing people, time, and money to support this instructional model by (a) investing in teaching quality, (b) using student time strategically, and (c) creating individual attention for students; (3) Making trade-offs to invest in the most important priorities when faced with limits on the amount, type, and use of people, time, and money; and (4) Adapting their strategies in response to lessons learned and changing student needs and conditions. Using these strategies as their framework, ERS assessed case study school practices and quantified their resource use. They did this by creating a set of 'diagnostic indicators' that describe how schools best use their resources for improving student performance. They are used throughout the case studies to illustrate resource use. ERS hopes that these case studies will serve multiple purposes: to generate ideas about implementing strategies in schools; to help develop new small schools and reform existing schools; and to engage colleagues, principals, and teachers in conversations about what is possible in their districts. Appendices present: (1) Resource strategies; (2) Pacific Rim high school sample student schedule; (3) Pacific Rim high school graduation requirements; and (4) Pacific Rim staff list. (Contains 12 notes and 7 figures.) [For the full report, 'Strategic Designs: Lessons from Leading Edge Small Urban High Schools,' see ED544382.]"

Opp, R.D., Hamer, L.M., & Beltyukova, S. (2002). The utility of an involvement and talent development framework in defining charter school success: A pilot study. *Education and Urban Society, 34*(3), 384-406. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ648273

From the abstract: "Explored the utility of an involvement and talent development framework in assessing the success of charter schools and their students. Focus group interviews with parents and teachers in four Ohio charter schools indicated that student, teacher, and parent involvement and growth of students' cognitive and affective talents were important indicators of school and student success."

Preston, C., Goldring, E., Guthrie, J.E., Ramsey, R., & Huff, J. (2017). Conceptualizing essential components of effective high schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 16*(4), 525-562. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED578861

From the abstract: "Three decades of reform aimed at improving disadvantaged student achievement have not substantially narrowed achievement and graduation gaps. This article reviews the research around eight essential components of effective high schools emerging from a review of the effective schools and high school reform literature, and provides a framework for how these components are implemented and integrated. We submit that far-reaching high school improvement is rooted in these components: schools succeed because they are woven into the school's organizational fabric to create internally consistent and mutually reinforcing reforms; their success is explained by more than the simple sum of their parts."

Wilcox, K.C. (2011). *Best practices from high-performing high schools: How successful schools help students stay in school and thrive*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED523293

> *From the abstract:* "In their second collaboration, Wilcox and Angelis tell the stories of high school educators who embody best practices in their day-to-day activities—practices that consistently lead to higher student academic achievement across the core subjects for "all" students. This book shares results of a multi-case study of how some high schools consistently deliver better student performance, including improved four-year graduation rates. These schools have learned how to successfully adapt to the climate of increased (and increasing) accountability. 'Best Practices from High-Performing High Schools' is for anyone who strives to ensure that all teens graduate from high school and are ready to succeed in college, in their careers, and in life. Book features include: (1) Models that teachers and administrators can use to improve their school and their own practice; (2) Depictions of how educators in higher-performing schools strategically target resources and focus their energies on areas of greatest need; and (3) A framework of best practices from schools serving large numbers of children from low-income and/or immigrant families."

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Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- "framework" and "charter school"
- "framework" and "high functioning schools"
- "best practices" and "frameworks" and "case studies"
- "school effectiveness" and "frameworks"
- "school effectiveness" and "frameworks" and "Pacific"
- "best practices" and "frameworks" and "Pacific"

Searched Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of over 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences, for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the academic database Google Scholar.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

REL Pacific searched ERIC and other academic journal databases for studies that were published in English-language peer-reviewed research journals within the last 20 years. REL Pacific prioritized documents that are accessible online and publicly available, and prioritized references that provide practical information based on peer-reviewed research for the teachers and leaders who requested this Ask A REL.[1] Methodological priorities were given to randomized control trials and quasi-experiments where possible, followed by surveys, descriptive data analyses, and literature reviews. Additional considerations were given to target population, samples, and study duration, as well as limitations and generalizability of the findings and conclusions.

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[1] This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educational stakeholders in the Pacific Region (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL Pacific) at McREL International. This memorandum was prepared by REL Pacific under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-17-C-0010, administered by McREL International. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.