Montclair Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting

New Jersey Public School Collaborative

Professor Saul Rubinstein

March 6, 2024
Overview

- Evidence of Benefits of Collaboration and Union-Management Partnerships to Educators and Students

- New Jersey Public School Collaborative

- Experiences of other Districts

- Capacity Building and Experience in Montclair
Union-Management Collaborative Partnerships and Educational Quality

Public School Improvement based on:

- District-level, School-level, Faculty/Staff Union-Management Partnerships
- Empowering Educator Collaboration in Schools
- Shared Decision-Making, Goal Alignment, Discretion, Educator Voice
- Innovation from Educators within Districts & Schools
- With Focus on Teaching and Learning
Institution for Conflicting Interests: Collective Bargaining
Institution for common interests?

Collaborative Partnerships

(Teaching Quality and Student Achievement)
Union-Management Partnerships as Antecedent to School Collaboration

Formal Union-Management Partnerships

Greater School Collaboration

Educational Impacts: Student Outcomes, Teaching, Culture
National Performance Data

- % of Students Performing at or above Standards
- English Language Arts (ELA) and Math
- District Partnership
- School Collaboration
- Controls for Poverty & School Type
- 5000 Educators
- 25 Districts
- 450 Schools
- 6 States: California, Illinois, Maine, Mass, Minn, NJ
Variables:

- **Partnership (District):** Union leaders and district administration working together to improve teaching and learning. District initiatives are developed collaboratively.

- **Collaboration (School):** Teachers and administration working together on innovations to improve teaching and learning, engaging in significant problem-solving activity, and developing school initiatives collaboratively.
Collaboration and Performance Improvement

(Rubinstein & McCarthy, 2014)
Collaboration and Student Performance

(McCarthy and Rubinstein, 2017)
Union-Management Partnerships as an Catalyst for Educator Collaboration

- Creates Positive Climate
- Builds Trust
- Directs More Resources toward Improvement
  - Creates Problem Solving Infrastructure
- Better Communication and Information Sharing
- Support for Joint Decisions & Implementation
- Union is a Network – Social Capital
WHAT ARE EDUCATORS COLLABORATING AROUND?

Student Performance Data

Curriculum Development

Instructional Practices

Mentoring
Collaboration Eliminates the Negative Impacts of Poverty on Teacher Retention
Collaboration mitigates the negative impacts of poverty on teacher commitment to the profession.

(McCarthy and Rubinstein, 2017)
Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- **Goal alignment**: The extent to which teachers and administration are working towards common goals. High goal alignment is demonstrated by a common purpose and shared priorities.

- **Shared decision-making**: The extent to which school administration and teachers work together on important decisions. In environments high in shared decision-making, school administrators regularly consult with teachers for input on significant issues.
Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- **Teachers' Efficacy**: Teachers in this school have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.

- **Discretion**: The amount of autonomy afforded to faculty within a school. In high employee discretion settings, teachers have latitude to make classroom level decisions independently.

- **Principal as Resource**: My principal is a resource for me.

- **Union Rep as Resource**: My union rep is a resource for me.
Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- **Psychological Safety**: The extent to which employees are comfortable voicing their concerns and sharing their opinions. Employees that experience psychological safety believe that they will not be harshly judged for making mistakes or voicing concerns about school policies. Psychologically safe environments allow for respectful discourse that includes all viewpoints.
Shared Decision-Making and Viewing Principal as a Resource

**Graph:**
- **X-axis:** Commitment to Shared Decisions (Low → High)
- **Y-axis:** Principal as Resource (Low → High)
- The graph shows an upward trend, indicating that as the commitment to shared decisions increases, the role of the principal as a resource also increases.
Shared Decision Making and Association Rep as Resource
Shared Decision-Making and Teacher Efficacy

coef = 0.70924669, se = 0.0404348, t = 17.54
Shared Decision Making and Mentoring

Mentoring Communications

Collaboration and Shared Decisions

coef = .21486146, se = .0438958, t = 4.89
Shared Decision Making and Problem Solving

 coef = 0.27938562, se = 0.03672641, t = 7.61
Shared Decision Making & Communication on Cross-Subject Integration

![Graph showing the relationship between collaboration and shared decisions. The graph indicates a positive correlation with the regression equation: \( \text{coef} = 0.60012975, \text{se} = 0.04567926, t = 13.14 \).]
ASSOCIATION REPS: CHANGING ROLE PERCEPTION

- **Weak Partnership**: Primarily perceive role as focused on traditional union activities.
- **Strong Partnership**: More balanced role.

- Communication around bargaining & grievance issues
- Ensuring educator voice in decision-making & education quality
- Communication about school improvement (internal)
- Communication about school improvement (external)

Ensuring educator voice in decision-making & education quality.

Weak Partnership = Primarily perceive role as focused on traditional union activities.

Strong Partnership = More balanced role.
Summary of Findings

- Union-Management Partnerships Lead to More Extensive Collaboration between Educators in Schools
- Collaboration Improves Student Performance (ELA and Math) even after controlling for Poverty
- Collaborative Climates Increase the Attractiveness of Schools to Teachers
- Strong Collaboration Reduces the Impact of Poverty on Teacher Turnover & Increases Engagement
Key Elements: District and School Capacity

- Establishing a Culture of Collaboration
- Sharing Leadership
- Identifying Priorities for Improvement
  - Related to Teaching and Learning
- Joint Problem Solving Initiatives (What?)
- Decision Making at Activity at All Levels (How?)
- Engaging Faculty & Staff in Improvement Activity
- Exposure to National Best Practice Models
- Assessing and Measuring Success
- Training for Capacity Building
- Community and School Board as Partners
NJ Public School Labor Management Collaborative

I. State
   - 5 State Associations:
     NJEA, AFTNJ, NJSBA, NJASA, NJPSA
   - State-wide Summit

II. District/School
   - District/School Capacity Building Workshop

III. Scaffolding Support
   - Inter-District Learning Network (Twice a Year)
   - District Facilitators
   - Website, Online Community, Resources, Courses

IV. Research
To Date:

- 25 Districts
- 158 Schools
- 475+ Administrators
- 9,241 Teachers
- 99,552 Students
- Adding 6-8 Districts 2023-24
- 10% of NJ Districts
Types of Improvement Initiatives

- New Curriculum
- Technology
- Sharing Instructional Practice
- Math & Language Performance
- Professional Development
- Energy Conservation
- K-12 Articulation
- Exam Coordination
- Mentoring
- Textbook Selection
- New Teacher Induction
- Peer Assistance
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Covid-19
- English as Second Language
- Student Advisory Periods
- New Courses
- Scheduling
- Homework Policy
Structures

District Leadership Team
- Representatives of school and district administration, union and teacher leaders

School Leadership Teams
- Principal, union leader, representatives from grade level and content areas
School Leadership Team (SLT) Training:

• **Overview**
  • Research Overview on Collab Leadership and Student Achievement, Teacher Turnover, Recruitment, and Seeing Principal and Union Rep as resource
  • Understanding shared/common interests
  • Collaborative Norms for Working Together
  • Team Building

• **Planning School Leadership Teams**
  • Membership
  • Roles and Responsibilities
  • Collaborative Structures
  • Processes
  • Shared Leadership
SLT Continued:

- **Problem Solving**
  - Cycle of Problem Solving
  - Identification of Needs
  - Criteria for Problem Selection
  - Priority Matrix
  - Use of Data
  - Vital Few: Pareto Analysis
  - Priorities for Improvement
  - Cause-Effect Analysis
  - Improvement vs Control
  - Managing Project/Improvement Teams
  - Organizing Initiatives/Action Planning
SLT Continued:

• Decision Making
  • Methods of Joint Decision Making/Consensus
  • Value and Difficulties of Joint Decision Making

• Communication
  • Within and Across Schools

• Meeting Management

• Conflict Resolution
  • Alignment of Goals, Roles, Procedures

• Shaping Organizational Change
  • Inter-school Learning and Implementation across District

• Evaluating Progress and Making Adjustments

• 5 Days over 2-3 years with Peer Facilitators
## Continuum of Shared Decision-Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrator Centered</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaborative/Consultative Consensus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Staff Centered</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin decision (without staff input) and staff will be informed “Admin will tell staff”</td>
<td>Admin decision, where staff consults “Staff gives input, then admin makes the final decision”</td>
<td>Equal-weight decision. Vote on the decision. “We make the final decision together”</td>
<td>Staff decision, with input from admin “Admin gives staff input, but the staff makes the final decision”</td>
<td>Staff decision (within admin guidelines) and staff will inform admin “Staff will tell admin”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Collaborative Partnerships?

- Quality of Decisions
  - People Closest to the Problem
- Quantity of Solutions – More Resources Devoted to Improvement
- Quality of Implementation – More Support