

# The Iterative Partnership Paradigm: Meeting the School's and University's Agendas to Build and Sustain a Long-Term Relationship

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# Who We Are

- Chicagoland Partners for English Language Learners (CPELL) is funded by the Department of Education through the National Professional Development Program (NPD) from the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)
- For 2007 – 2012: \$1,224,385
- For 2012 – 2017: \$1,952,866
- ELL's in the State of Illinois – 208,838 students receiving services, ranking Illinois as 5<sup>th</sup> in highest number behind California, Texas, Florida, and New York as 1 – 4, respectively  
*(U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Reports for 2008 – 2009)*



# Where the Road Begins— Facts and Figures that Shaped the Program

- Definition of English Language Learner (ELL) – a student whose home language is one other than English.
- Chicagoland-specific public school need
  - Skokie/Fairview 72
  - Skokie 68
  - Hawthorn/Vernon Hills 72
  - Buffalo Grove/Aptakisic 102
  - North Shore/Highland Park & Highwood 112
  - Chicago Office of Catholic Schools



# How Partnerships were Formed with School Districts

- Selection of Partner School Districts – over 50% ELLs within the school district
- Initial conversations between CPELL and Partner Districts –
  - Previous work with School Districts
  - Letters of Cooperation
- Building trust between the university and the individual school districts



# Building a Data-Driven, Iterative Process— The Inner Circle

- Listen – for universities to forge successful partnerships and remain relevant to P-12 school districts, we must listen first and then build the interventions together.
- Administer Needs Assessments – administrators, teachers and parents (translated into native languages)
- Analyze Data
- Provide Services
- Assess after each activity provided
- Yearly reviews and annual plans
- Provide services based on initial needs assessments, continuing feedback on professional development and current circumstances



# Building a Data-Driven, Iterative Process— The Outer Circle

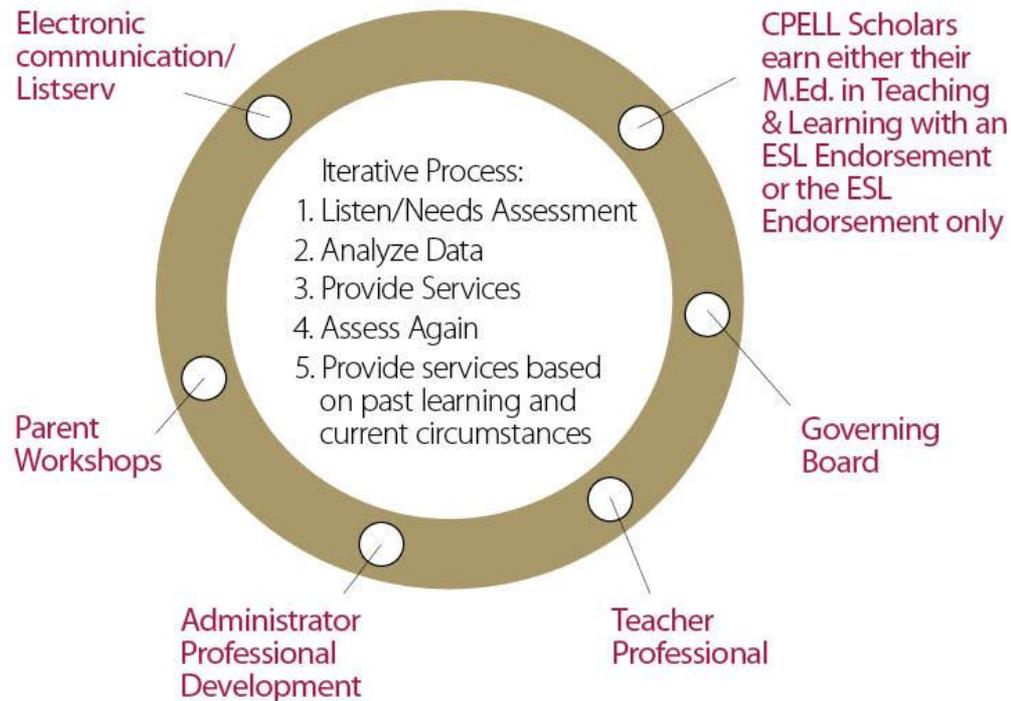
- CPELL scholars—Graduate Education Programs Participants
- Administrator and Teacher Professional Development
- Parent Workshops – translations services
- Governing Board
- Data-Analysis Support for Data-Driven Decision-Making and Strategic Planning
- Communication Pathways



# The Iterative Process

## CPELL Capacity Building

*The elements that surround the outside of the diagram are the expressions of the work accomplished by the iterative process outlined in the center.*



# The Power of Three: Investing in all Stakeholders

- Historically informed creation of structure
  - Giving up assumptions
  - Gaining authentic data through needs assessment process
- Bringing everyone to the table
  - Administrators
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - School Boards
  - Parent-Teacher Boards
  - District Learning Teams



# The Power of Three:

## Investing in all Stakeholders (continued)

1. Yearly planning—one size does not fit all
2. Developing and delivering data-driven professional development
3. Employing the Iterative Process along the Path
  - Annual summative evaluations
  - Building on lessons learned
  - Acknowledging changing circumstances
  - Governance meetings
  - Ongoing dialogue



# Reading the Road Signs & Following the Map: Data Sources

Data analyzed across five years (2007-2012) by partner school district & as a whole

- Bi-Annual Governing Board minutes
- Partner School Annual Service Data
- Partner School Annual Planning Data
- University team bi-monthly meeting minutes
- Informal emails



# Reading the Road Signs & Following the Map: Data Sources & Process for Analysis

- Qualitative Methods
  - Holistically and historically for each school district and the partnership as a whole
  - Word frequency and word cluster maps for each school district and for the partnership as a whole
  - Inductively with attention to communication, collaboration, ownership, process and product outcomes, and data-based decision-making using Michael Fullan's *Change Imperative for Whole System Reform*



# Researching Our Destination: Findings & Themes

- Demonstrating true respect for the local school context, challenges, and community through a shared governance model to create structures for communication and collaboration
- Providing services based on individualized school district data, through a structured process, in order to allow for flexibility and responsiveness based on these data as time progressed



# Researching Our Destination: Findings & Themes

- Implementing theory, research, training, and professional development based on current research and best practices while contextualizing for each individual school district's needs
- Providing a multi-stakeholder approach to maximize impact focusing on training teachers, supporting administrators, shared governance, and parent services



# Big Ideas for Whole School Reform

## Michael Fullan (2010)

- All children can learn
- A small number of key priorities
- Resolute leadership/stay on message
- Collective capacity
- Strategies with precision
- Intelligent accountability
- All means all



# Data analyzed through Fullan (2010) Systems Framework: When It Goes Well

- **All children can learn** – The school district provides the university access to all forms of student achievement data. Using student achievement data, the university assists the school district in analyzing multiple measures to assess student learning.
- **A small number of key priorities** – Working collaboratively with the school district, the university weaves data analysis together providing the district the ability to create informed priorities.
- **Resolute leadership/stay on message** – The university assists the school district in leading courageous conversations, providing the administration with the will to stay on message and reduce distractions.
- **Collective capacity** – Through annual planning and Governing Board meetings, the university and partner districts create an environment for all to share successes, struggles, and strategies.
- **Strategies with precision** – The university assists the school district with best practice strategies through professional development that is specifically targeted to needs assessment data—not on previously held assumptions.
- **Intelligent accountability** – Using multiple forms of student assessment data, the university assists the school district with the creation of reports to inform teachers, parents, and school boards.
- **All means all** – By addressing the aforementioned six Fullan criteria, the needs of ELLs becomes a district priority that is built into the strategic plan.



# Data analyzed through Fullan (2010) Systems Framework: When It Does Not Go Well

- **All children can learn** – The school district provides the university partial access to some forms of student achievement data. The university can only provide a partial analysis of these data.
- **A small number of key priorities** – The district has multiple, competing priorities. The district uses the university to “shore-up” these priorities when it is politically prudent to do so.
- **Resolute leadership/stay on message** – The school district schedules courageous conversations but follow-through is sporadic and contradictory.
- **Collective capacity** – Through annual planning and Governing Board meetings, the university and partner districts create an environment for all to share successes, struggles and strategies. However, follow-through is often stymied by competing interests.
- **Strategies with precision** – The university assists the school district with best practice strategies through professional development but the audience is not always targeted appropriately.
- **Intelligent accountability** – The school district does not request the university to assist in creating reports or providing information to all stakeholders.
- **All means all** – The district affords access only to “willing” administrators and audiences resulting in ELLs becoming “their problem” and not a shared responsibility.



# Reaching Our Destination: Implications for the Field

- For university-school district partnerships to be effective, collaboration between the university and the school district partners must be based on a commitment to the process, dedication to achieving the agreed upon outcomes, and supported by documentation that can be directly tied to a capacity building model.
- For university-school district partnerships to be effective, sharing and respecting expertise from all stakeholders' voices must occur so that no voice is marginalized or privileged.



# Reaching Our Destination: Implications for the Field

- Universities and school districts need to create respectful, effective partnerships that leverage the resources that each institution can bring to the table.
- There is much we can, and must, learn from each other if we are going to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.
- For universities to forge successful partnerships and remain relevant to P-12 school districts, we must listen first and then build the interventions together.



# Reaching Our Destination: Implications for the Field

- The work of today's school districts and universities is daunting—to educate and prepare students for a tomorrow one cannot even imagine.
- No one institution or organization has all of the answers or all of the resources to bring to this challenge.
- Data from the first five-years of this project indicate that the iterative partnership paradigm may provide the structure for such an authentic, sustained conversation and partnership to occur and flourish.



# Reaching Our Destination: Implications for the Field (continued)

- Universities and school districts need to “give up” their assumptions about each other and begin a dialogue to understand the current contexts and needs that must be addressed.
- To be truly responsive to schools, universities must be willing to adapt their work to the ever-changing facts in the field.
- Therefore, research that is fluid must be respected within academia if universities are going to learn from and provide services to P-12 institutions.



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