Coherence:

The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems

Foundational Ideas:

Coherence consists of the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work. Coherence, then is what is in the minds and actions of people individually and especially collectively.

- It is not structure.
- It is not alignment.
- It is not strategy.

There is only one way to achieve greater coherence, and that is through purposeful action and interaction, working on capacity, clarity, precision of practice, transparency, monitoring of progress, and continuous correction. All of this requires the right mixture of “pressure and support:” the press for progress within supportive and focused cultures.

An “indirect indicator” of sustained coherence: The ability of those in the system to “talk the walk”

- When people from within the system—teachers, principals, students, district leaders, policy makers—talk with CONSISTENCY and SPECIFICITY about the district’ main priorities, strategies in action, progress, results, and next steps.

Another crucial point: you never arrive once and for all, nor should you want to. Coherence making is a continuous process of making and remaking meaning in your own mind and in your culture.

The Wrong and Right Drivers

The wrong drivers:
- Punitive accountability
- Individualistic strategies
- Technology
- Ad hoc policies

The right drivers:
- Capacity building
- Collaboration
- Pedagogy
- Systemness (coordinated policies)

It is not that these factors should never be included but rather that we should not lead with them.
The Action Framework: The Right Drivers in Action

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**Focusing Direction** is systemness: the need to integrate what the system is doing.

**Cultivating collaborative cultures** oversees individualism by producing strong groups and strong individuals.

**Deepening learning**, which is founded on new pedagogical partnerships, is the driver for better outcomes using technology as the accelerator.

Capacity for results is based on developing skills and competencies within the group that, in turn, serves as a basis for being self-responsible and accountable to the outside. The road to **securing accountability** is through developing capacity with the group that, in turn, interfaces with the external accountability system.

What questions might we pose to district and building leaders to spark reflection about the “drivers” currently in place in their system and in their schools?
At The Center Of The Framework Is Leadership

What might we ask district leaders about their current efforts and effectiveness in *Leading for Coherence*?