

# TRANSFORMING A STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT: The Idaho Story

Brett Lane

for the

Center on Innovation & Improvement

Developing Supports

Coherence and  
Alignment

Culture of Candor

Opportunity,  
Incentives, Capacity

Strong  
Relationships

## Information Tools Training

Positive results for students will come from changes in the knowledge, skill, and behavior of their teachers and parents. State policies and programs must provide the opportunity, support, incentive, and expectation for adults close to the lives of children to make wise decisions.

The Center on Innovation & Improvement helps regional comprehensive centers in their work with states to provide districts, schools, and families with the opportunity, information, and skills to make wise decisions on behalf of students.

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## **Acknowledgments**

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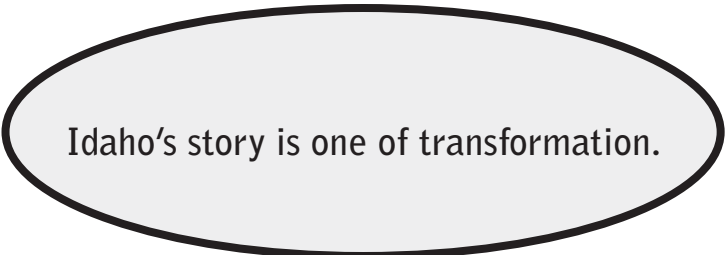
## Transforming a Statewide System of Support

### Introduction

The pace at which state education agencies shifted their focus from compliance monitoring to support quickened during the latter portion of the 2000s. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provided much of the urgency for states to develop ways to support underperforming schools (Dwyer, 2005; Sunderman & Orfield, 2006; Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008). Subsequently, research and guidance on statewide systems of support provided state education agencies with access to best practices and a means to quickly assess and modify their systems of support (Redding & Walberg, 2008).

The Idaho State Department of Education (IDE) provides a case example of how a state can quickly and dramatically alter its approach to providing support for school improvement, building upon internal capacity and external resources. Idaho's story also illustrates the complex nature of state-level change and highlights certain triggers and conditions that can help other states to engage in rapid state-level improvement.

The original purpose of this case study was to document how Idaho had developed its statewide system of support. In the process of documenting Idaho's story, what we found was a state that has dramatically altered its relationship with districts and schools. In three years, beginning in 2008, the Idaho Department of Education has transformed its approach to working with schools, revised (or created anew) all the tools that they use with schools around school improvement, and developed a set of institutional partners that strengthen the system, thereby contributing to the sustainability of overall improvement efforts. Perhaps most telling is the fact that by the end of the 2010 school year, many schools and districts *not* identified for improvement began to request access to the same supports and assistance provided to underperforming schools. In keeping with its tradition of local control and a well-founded reluctance to label schools as chronically underperforming, Idaho is developing a system of support for all schools, not just those identified as low performing by state and federal accountability systems.



Idaho's story is one of transformation.

Idaho's story is one of *transformation*. First, it is a story of how a growing sense of urgency, prompted by a Title I monitoring report and an increasing awareness of performance gaps in certain districts, found opportunity as new education leaders emerged and helped to create the conditions needed for rapid

transformation. Second, it is a story of **leadership**—leaders within the state and from universities—who were willing to make tough decisions and put aside egos to find a way to move forward with improvement efforts. Third, Idaho’s story is one of **building capacity for change**, exemplified in the willingness of leaders to unabashedly access expertise and materials from neighboring states and from national research and technical assistance organizations, as well as cultivating untapped expertise among individuals within the state.

This case study details how Idaho’s statewide system of support promotes coherence and alignment through communication, sharing of ideas, and the consistent use of a research-based framework for school improvement. Alignment is evidenced by the adoption of the web-based planning tool, Ways to Increase School Effectiveness (the WISE Tool), which incorporates a well-developed research base on effective district, school, and classroom practices (Walberg, 2007) and is aligned with the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. The state is building systemic capacity by formally contracting with the Center for School Improvement (CSI) at Boise State University to manage and coordinate school improvement activities, which ensures access to expertise from institutes of higher education (IHEs) and enhances the reach and scope of improvement efforts. Recruited and coordinated by CSI and partner IHEs, a growing cohort of Idaho Capacity Builders (CBs) are working with districts and schools across the state, helping schools to build systems for continuous improvement and explicitly linking school-level needs with state resources and expertise (e.g., special education and limited English proficiency supports). The state is also working with external providers to network superintendents and principals to build upon best practice. While Idaho acknowledges that it still has work to do (such as ensuring that all districts are “ready to benefit”), Idaho’s story illustrates how passionate and driven leaders are able to catalyze significant improvement within a short period of time.

The questions that guide our exploratory case

study are as follows:

- How was Idaho able to develop its statewide system of support in just over two years time?
- What are some of the triggers and conditions that led to the development of Idaho’s system of support?
- What are some implications for how states, and state departments of education, can continue to quickly adapt to changing conditions and develop innovative ways of supporting districts and schools?



Table 1: Then and Now—Idaho’s Statewide System of Support

	In 2007. . .	In 2010. . .
State-level <b>support efforts</b> for underperforming schools:	Were not well defined or coordinated to provide focused support to underperforming schools.	Involves a set of reinforcing programs and support strategies directly targeted to underperforming schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idaho Capacity Builders</li> <li>• Superintendent and Principal Network meetings</li> <li>• Focus review</li> <li>• Targeted academic support from state experts in Response to Intervention (Rtl), math, literacy, and special education.</li> </ul>
The <b>content of targeted support</b> to Title I and underperforming districts and schools:	Was not strategically coordinated and was focused primarily on providing limited support to Title I schools around planning.	Is based on a defined theory of action, focused on improving instructional quality, and built on a research-based foundation of effective practices, drawn from the <i>Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools and Districts</i> and the research-based indicators of effective practice, which serve as the foundation for planning and improvement efforts, including guides, tools, and planning supports (Walberg, 2007).
District and school improvement efforts are <b>supported and monitored</b> :	Through a Continuous Improvement Planning (CIP) tool.	Through the use of the WISE (Ways to Increase School Effectiveness) Tool (school improvement planning tool), aligned with the <i>Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools</i> and based on a set of evidence-based strategies for classrooms, schools, and districts.
Internal Capacity:	Portions of the state department of education had been reorganized, placing Title I and Special Education under the same division.	Boise State University is contracted to manage school improvement activities through its Center for School Improvement. Regional school improvement centers are housed at Idaho State University, the University of Idaho, and Boise State. The Idaho Building Capacity project is managed through CSI and the regional centers, consisting of CBs (expert principals and leaders) working directly in 91 sites across the state. State services to underperforming schools are aligned internally and coordination of services is provided through the CBs and the regional centers.
External Capacity:	No formal external system of regional centers or connections with institutes of higher education.	

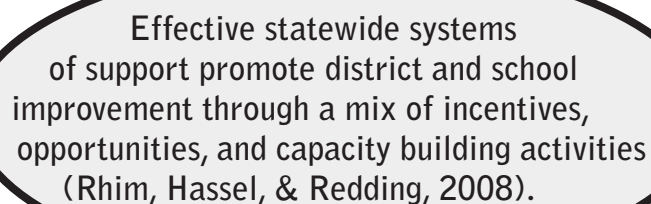


## How Idaho Transformed Their System of Support

### Incentives, Opportunities, and Capacity

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 called for state departments of education to establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for schools identified for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring (NCLB Act of 2001, Section 1117(a)(1)). The recent (2009-10) focus on school turnaround efforts and required use of various intervention models (transformation, turnaround, restart, closure) entails that states continue to support underperforming schools with differentiated supports and interventions (Perlman & Redding, 2009).

Effective statewide systems of support promote district and school improvement through a mix of incentives, opportunities, and capacity building activities (Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008). **Incentives**—positive and punitive—provide the motivation for change. Changes in the policy environment and shifts in the conditions in which districts and schools operate provide the **opportunity and space** for schools to improve. Enhanced **capacity**—the skills, knowledge, and expertise of individuals in districts and schools—provides the tools needed for districts and schools to improve.



Effective statewide systems of support promote district and school improvement through a mix of incentives, opportunities, and capacity building activities (Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008).

The incentive-opportunity-capacity framework also provides a useful lens through which to understand the incentives and opportunities that may contribute to the ability of a state education agency to engage in rapid change, and in Idaho's case, to rapidly transform its own system of support to districts and schools. Building upon the idea that incentives, opportunities, and capacity building endeavors have as much to play in state-level improvement efforts as they do at the district and school level, we asked the following questions:

- What were some of the **key incentives** that drove Idaho to make dramatic changes to its statewide system of support?
- What were the **opportunities** that were presented to Idaho, and how were Idaho's leaders able to use this window of opportunity to initiate and sustain its state-level improvement efforts?
- How did Idaho **access and build upon external and internal capacity** to accelerate its work towards developing a statewide system of support capable of proactively using incentives, opportunities, and capacity to support local districts and schools?

## **Idaho's Incentive to Improve**

Idaho has a strong history of state and local control that is characterized, at times, by a reluctance to implement federal laws perceived as excessively intrusive. It wasn't until 2005 that Idaho began to implement many of the accountability-oriented provisions of NCLB. In 2005, a federal Title I monitoring visit report found Idaho to be deficient in multiple areas, which heightened IDE's awareness of Title I requirements, including the importance of developing a statewide system of support (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). While the 2005 Title I monitoring visit prompted a reorganization of portions of the IDE and the hiring of a Title I coordinator, the 2008 federal Title I monitoring visit is credited, in part, with triggering more dramatic changes (Gates, Peixotto, & Chelemer, 2009). The 2008 Title I monitoring report identified key deficiencies in how Idaho was supporting underperforming schools and provided the urgency needed for key leaders to move forward with improvement efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Additionally, the 2008 Title I monitoring visit coincided with increased discussions within IDE of performance gaps among students in certain districts and schools.

## **Leadership as Opportunity**

Successful improvement efforts, whether in classrooms, schools, districts, or in state departments of education, depend on leaders having the opportunity (and courage) to take risks, innovate, and engage in new thinking and practices. The opportunities that Idaho's education leaders were able to grasp and then use to build a statewide system of support have common roots in the election of Tom Luna as Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In January 2007, Tom Luna was sworn in as Idaho's Superintendent of Public Instruction. From the beginning of his administration, Superintendent Luna's message and work has focused on creating a customer-driven and client-oriented system of public education. This message—that the client comes first—represented a dramatic shift in the relationship between IDE and its clients (e.g., parents, students, and by extension, the schools and teachers working with students). The

client-oriented focus provided an opportunity for change and the leverage needed for leaders to create a statewide system of support focused on support rather than compliance.

Superintendent Luna's administration also brought with it changes in personnel, including the terminations and resignations of existing leadership (e.g., Deputy Superintendents and Coordinators). It is noteworthy, however, that within a year of taking office, Superintendent Luna invited a key leader from the previous administration to return to IDE to support the department's overall work. Superintendent Luna's efforts to build a customer-driven state department of education, coupled with the willingness of leaders from the previous administration to "cross party lines" to continue to build upon earlier efforts, set the stage for dramatic changes to occur between 2008 and 2010.



Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Marybeth Flachbart and Superintendent, Tom Luna

A strong case can be made that Superintendent Luna's vision for a customer-driven system of public education created space for leaders to forge new relationships with districts and schools. Likewise, there is compelling evidence that subsequent efforts to build a statewide system of support would not have progressed if Superintendent Luna had not invited leaders from the previous administration to return, or if those leaders had not had the courage to return to the IDE to continue work initiated during the previous administration.

## Emerging Systemic and Internal Capacity

Incentives and opportunities, such as changes in policies or a client-focused vision, are insufficient catalysts of sustained improvement. Each level of the system—schools, districts, or state departments of education—must exhibit a threshold of capacity in order to grasp the opportunity to change (Lane, 2007). A key chapter in Idaho's story, and one that may have the most important implications for other states, involves how Idaho developed systemic and local capacity to improve. Idaho's systemic capacity was initially cultivated through partnerships between IDE and Boise State University, and later through partnerships with other IHEs across the state. The internal capacity of the IDE—the skills, institutional knowledge, and expertise of individuals within the department—was developed through departmental reorganizations, hiring new people, and strategic rehiring of key leaders from the previous administration.

The shift towards using IHEs, and specifically Boise State University, began in 2003 when Idaho wrote and was awarded one of the first Reading First grants. Boise State's Center for School Improvement was contracted to conduct an early evaluation of the Reading First initiative. Under Superintendent Luna's administration, IDE made a strategic decision to have IHEs administer the Reading First program, setting precedent for partnerships with IHEs around school improvement. While the Reading First initiative provided an opportunity to formally partner with IHEs, shifts in the internal workings of IDE, triggered in part by federal monitoring visits, helped to grow the internal capacity that would prove to be critical for the rapid development of Idaho's statewide system of support in 2008.

The 2005 Title I monitoring report contributed to shifts in the organization of IDE, leading to the restructuring of Title I and Special Education within a single division under a single Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Marybeth Flachbart (Gates, Peixotto, & Chelemer, 2009). Merging Title I and Special Education removed barriers to collaboration and ensured that future efforts to coordinate services would not be derailed by organizational barriers. As the architect of Idaho's original Reading First

grant and an advocate of partnering with IHEs, Dr. Flachbart continued to find ways to develop a regional system of support, such as placing regional school improvement coordinators in IHEs across the state to support the Reading First initiative.

The election of Superintendent Luna in November 2006 resulted in an expected period of transition for staff and leaders. Marcia Beckman, a Title I Coordinator, was promoted to Title I Director in 2007 and quickly began to reach out to IHEs, and to Boise State University in particular, due in part to the successful partnerships built around Reading First. In late 2007, IDE contracted with Boise State's Center for School Improvement to coordinate Title I School Improvement services for the state. Dr. Lisa Kinnaman, the Title I School Improvement Coordinator, and Dr. Flachbart, then the Associate Director for the Center for School Improvement, began to develop plans to revamp Idaho's statewide system of support. In late 2008, Dr. Flachbart transitioned back to her position as Deputy Superintendent at the request of Superintendent Luna, while Dr. Kinnaman remained at the Center for School Improvement as the Title I School Improvement Coordinator.

In hindsight, the actions of state leaders appear to be more strategic than they were perhaps intended. But what is clear is that the partnerships formed and relationships built between 2004 and 2008 contributed to an emerging systemic and internal capacity that was not only capable of addressing the findings of the 2008 Title I monitoring report, but was poised to dramatically alter how Idaho supported its districts and schools. Early efforts to partner with IHEs across the state through the Reading First initiative set precedent for IHEs to play a role in school improvement and developed the capacity of IHEs as intermediate agencies. The restructuring of Title I and Special Education under a single Deputy Superintendent withstood a change in administration and the departure of the Deputy Superintendent who had spearheaded the restructuring. Moreover, the precedent of working with IHEs was powerful enough that IDE, and in particular the new Director of Title I, reached out to Boise State for direct assistance with school improvement. And perhaps

most important, key leaders were able to bridge potential ideological differences in order to build upon existing capacity, rather than starting totally anew.

***A combination of incentives, a window of opportunity, and emerging capacity set the stage for Idaho's development of a new statewide system of support and a transformation of how IDE relates to and supports districts and schools.***

As of January 2008, as IDE officials prepared for a Title I monitoring visit, the state did not have a functioning statewide system of support, and Title I planning involved the use of an outdated continuous improvement planning tool. Low-performing schools did have access to support from IDE around special education, LEP, and Response to Intervention (Rtl), but this support was not fully coordinated or intentionally targeted to schools based on need.

#### ***What happened next?***

Shortly after coming on board as the School Improvement Coordinator and while preparing for the looming 2008 Title I monitoring visit, Dr. Kinnaman discovered that Idaho had never applied for federal funds that could be used to support the implementation of its statewide system of support. Together, Dr. Flachbart, Marcia Beckman, and Dr. Kinnaman submitted an application for

Idaho to receive 1003(g) school improvement funds and were awarded these funds in December 2007. With 1003(g) funds providing the initial seed money, the Title I monitoring visit providing urgency and incentive, and with the backing of Superintendent Luna, leaders within IDE and the Center for School Improvement at Boise State University set out on an ambitious effort to recast Idaho's entire system of support.

#### ***Where is Idaho today?***

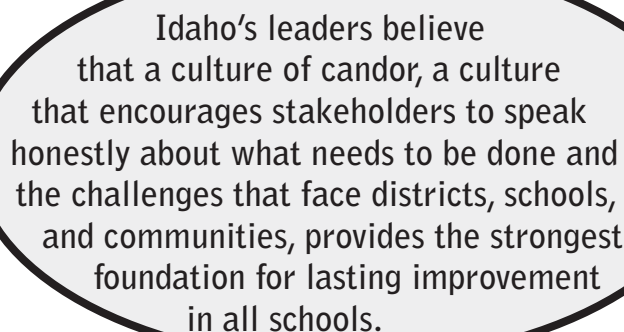
As of June 2010, Idaho has developed and implemented a coordinated statewide system of support that involves IHEs as intermediate agencies and consists of multiple support strategies, networking opportunities, a revamped planning process, and specific processes to identify needs and target services in high need sites. Sixty-one schools and 30 districts are formally part of the Idaho Building Capacity project, which serves as the hub of support for targeted districts and schools. Additionally, 467 schools and 76 districts are accessing key features of the statewide system of support, including the WISE Tool and networking opportunities such as the Principals Leadership Academy and the Superintendents' Network.

## The Building Blocks of Rapid Transformation

Over a period of three short years, Idaho's statewide system of support has developed multiple reinforcing components that are beginning to work together as a system to improve student achievement.

The components of Idaho's system and the technical aspects of the system (e.g., how many schools are involved, how often schools are visited by CBs) are expertly described by the Center for School Improvement on its web site: <http://csi.boisestate.edu/improvement/SIHome.html>. A visual depiction of Idaho's statewide system of support is provided in Display 1 and additional information is provided in Appendixes A, B, and C. Readers are invited to refer to these sources of information to gain a better understanding of the nuts and bolts of Idaho's approach to school improvement.

Rather than restate the technical aspects of Idaho's statewide system of support, the purpose of this section is to explore the inner workings of Idaho's story by analyzing how Idaho has addressed three problems, or dilemmas, that state education agencies face as they strive to develop effective systems of support (Lane, 2007; Unger et al., 2008).

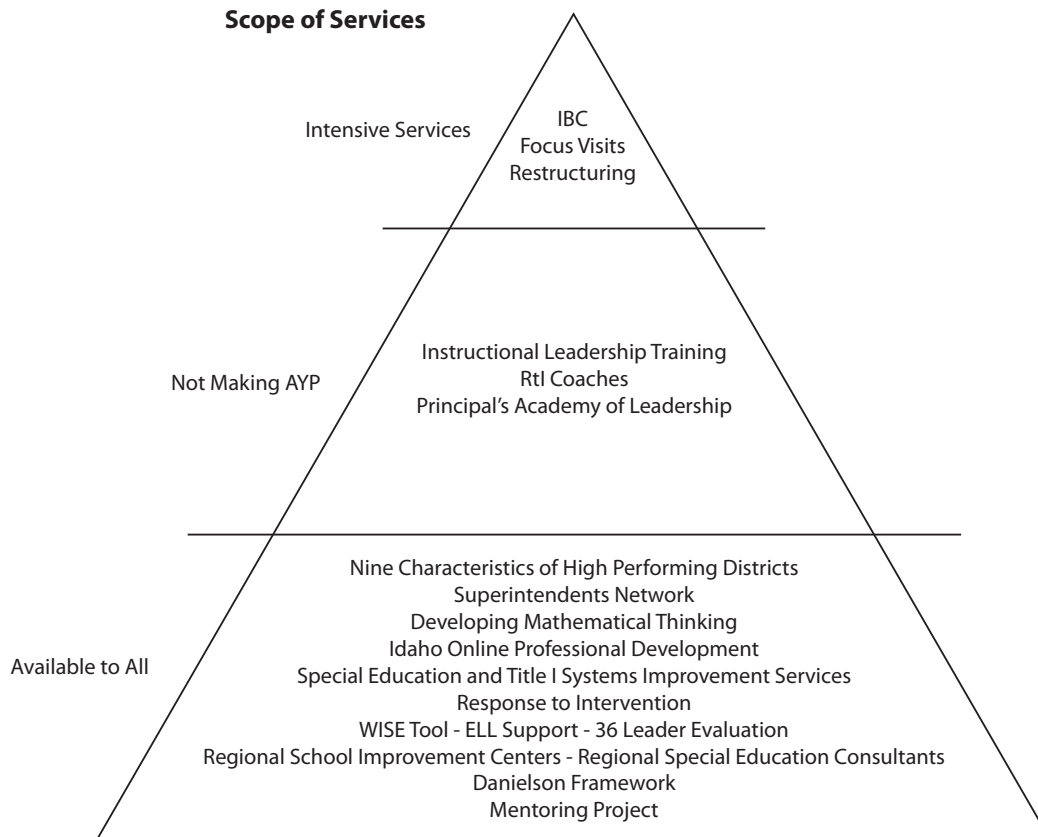


Idaho's leaders believe that a culture of candor, a culture that encourages stakeholders to speak honestly about what needs to be done and the challenges that face districts, schools, and communities, provides the strongest foundation for lasting improvement in all schools.

The three dilemmas facing states working to develop statewide systems of support are:

1. How to build, develop, or access an **infrastructure** capable of delivering supports and services to all districts and schools?
2. How to develop the **internal and external capacity**, in terms of skills, expertise, tools, and resources, needed to appropriately meet the needs of all districts and schools?
3. How to ensure that services, supports, and expectations are **aligned and cohesive** (i.e., integrated) so that districts and schools do not receive mixed or contradictory messages around school improvement?

Display 1. Idaho Statewide System of Support



Adapted from The Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies Website:  
<http://csi.boisestate.edu/improvement/SSOSManual.html>

Idaho's story is also characterized by two crosscutting themes that served to guide how Idaho's leaders went about developing and implementing the various components of the statewide system of support. The first crosscutting theme is *the importance of strong relationships and trust as a foundation for the support provided to districts and schools*. Idaho's leaders believe that a culture of candor, a culture that encourages stakeholders to speak honestly about what needs to be done and the challenges that face districts, schools, and communities, provides the strongest foundation for lasting improvement in all schools. Building trust and proactive relationships among leaders, teachers, students, and parents is a key ingredient to creating a culture of candor. Instead of minimizing challenges and issues, a culture of candor enables schools to be honest about their work and willing to develop improvement plans that are owned by the school and useful to overall improvement efforts.

The second theme is a *pervasive belief that providing differentiated and flexible support to districts and schools rather than enforcing a particular "cookie cutter" model of school improvement best matches the context and culture of Idaho's education system*. In Idaho, providing differentiated support is about building from strengths rather than needs (or deficits). Instead of IDE diagnosing the "problems" of low-performing schools and requiring schools to implement particular models or approaches to improve, IDE leaders and CBs work with districts and schools to chart a local approach to school improvement.

**Infrastructure for Capacity Building: A Regional System of Institutes of Higher Education.**

The Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies at Boise State University is contracted by IDE to provide a number of services related to school improvement, including serving as the lead coordinator of technical assistance and monitoring



of Title I schools. The Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project, a central connector of services and supports from IDE to targeted districts and schools, is managed through the Center for School Improvement and has three regional centers, one located at Boise State and the other two located at the University of Idaho and Idaho State University. The School Improvement Coordinator at the Center for School Improvement works closely with IDE leaders, including the Title I Director and the Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement and School Improvement, and with the IBC regional coordinators located at Boise State, the University of Idaho, and Idaho State.

The decision to deploy school improvement supports through IHEs has dramatically increased IDE's overall capacity to serve districts and schools across the state, many of which are rural and isolated. Idaho does not have a state-authorized set of intermediate service providers, and up until 2008, partnerships with IHEs around school improvement were limited to Reading First and Special Education. The regional school improvement centers now serve as intermediate, yet external, arms of IDE and have dramatically increased the reach of IDE supports. The IBC regional coordinators, located at each of the three IHEs, meet quarterly and have monthly phone conferences to discuss their work, share issues arising from the CBs' work with districts and schools, and plan for the implementation of new initiatives. Holding regular coordinator meetings provides a mechanism for ensuring that there is consistency in the strategies, approaches, and terminology used across the state, from one region to the next.

The use of IHEs to provide support and assistance to districts and schools:

- Has *formally linked IHEs and IDE* around school improvement;
- Contributes to the *provision of local and customized support* to districts and schools;
- Provides a mechanism, through the CBs, to provide support that is *welcomed by districts and schools*, in that the support comes from local experts and not state officials; and
- Has prompted discussions *connecting the needs of schools with the content of teacher*

*preparation programs*, by bringing together CBs, district leaders, and professors at colleges of education to discuss instructional quality and school improvement.

However, the development of a state infrastructure to deliver services is incomplete without research-based and consistent content, guidance, and tools around school improvement. Forming an office of school improvement and regional centers was just the start, as the system required individuals capable of working directly with schools—the Idaho CBs.

### Internal Capacity and External Support

In the fall of 2007, IDE leaders and Dr. Kinnaman, as the newly appointed school improvement coordinator, faced the following challenges:

1. IDE had limited capacity and staffing to work directly with districts and schools.
2. Existing school improvement planning guidance and tools were insufficient, out of date, and not generally well received by districts and schools.

**Building Internal Capacity.** The way in which Idaho went about addressing these two challenges and in developing their overall capacity to support schools was intentional and based upon past experience. IDE leaders learned through prior school improvement efforts (such as the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration project and Reading First) and in speaking with other states, that “to have lasting change we needed to have an impact at both the district and school levels” (M. Flachbart, personal correspondence, July 8, 2010). Evaluations of the Reading First initiative and their own analysis of student data showed that student achievement was much higher in districts that actively supported and monitored school-level improvement efforts, compared to districts that did not provide coordinated support. In other words, district capacity was important, and IDE leaders were intentional in constructing a system that would cultivate district, as well as school capacity.

To address the first, and most immediate, challenge of providing direct support to districts and schools, IDE and the Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies designed the initial speci-

fications for the pilot Idaho Building Capacity project. Building upon their joint expertise in school improvement and a working knowledge of how other states had used Distinguished Educators, Dr. Kinnaman and IDE leaders recruited CBs from the ranks of successful principals, superintendents, and leaders. The pilot IBC project was initiated in January 2008 and involved 17 schools and 2 district offices. CBs were strategically placed in districts and schools based on their expertise and the perceived needs of the district or school. During this first year (2008), CBs spent considerable time working with targeted schools and districts and

school improvement tools and processes between 2008 and 2010.

The creation of University-based regional centers for school improvement and the IBC project provided an infrastructure and means to provide support to schools; however, the system lacked content (e.g., planning tools, data analysis tools, and strategies) that could be used by the CBs to support superintendents, principals, and teachers. The Center for School Improvement was responsible for developing school improvement tools, which included a new school improvement

**Table 2: Number of district and school sites included in the Idaho Capacity Building Program, 2008 to 2010**

Region	Number of Sites Cohort I (Pilot)	Number of Sites Cohort II (2009)	Number of Sites Cohort III (2010)	Total
North	0	13	13	26
Southeast	0	14	15	29
Southwest	19	6	11	36
Statewide	19	33	39	91

meeting together to develop joint approaches for working with schools. The IBC project was scaled up in 2009 and again in 2010, requiring additional hiring and training of CBs.

The choice of the term “capacity builders” to refer to the individuals working in districts and schools was intentional and reflected the approach promoted by state officials. The role of CBs is to build the capacity of districts and schools to engage in continuous improvement and to “empower local leaders to build their own internal capacity to sustain and continually evaluate, adjust, and implement school improvement efforts” (Center for School Improvement, 2009). IDE purposely stayed away from the term “distinguished educator” because they wanted CBs to be seen as partners with districts and schools rather than as external experts. Similarly, the CBs see themselves as active learners and co-contributors to IDE’s overall approach to school improvement, as they have played a critical role in the development of

planning and monitoring process that would be useful to schools as well as compliant with Title I regulations. Fortunately, expertise was available, and Idaho was willing and eager to reach out and access external supports.

**Accessing External Support.** The work of the IBC project and the development of tools, protocols, processes, and guides to support the IBC project occurred in tandem. As the saying goes, Idaho was truly building the plane while flying. As CBs were hired and beginning to work with districts, Dr. Kinnaman and the Center for School Improvement, in coordination with IDE officials, developed tools and protocols to be used by districts, schools, and CBs working in targeted sites. Idaho’s statewide system of support was quickly built from the ground up, but its development was strategic, intentional, and based on best practices from neighboring states and federally funded content centers. Idaho’s school improvement leaders had a need for information and best practices,

a need that was successfully (and willingly) met by leaders from other states, universities, and the federal system of technical assistance and content centers.

In September 2007, Dr. Kinnaman participated in an institute sponsored by the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) in Chicago, Illinois that focused on statewide systems of support. Soon thereafter, Dr. Kinnaman and Dr. Flachbart requested formal assistance from CII. As a broker of information and resources on statewide systems of support, CII provided Idaho's leaders, and in particular Dr. Kinnaman and Dr. Flachbart, with information on other states' efforts to develop effective systems of support. Through the connection with CII, Idaho forged relationships with key leaders in Virginia, Washington, and with other states and researchers involved in school improvement. Through discussions with leaders in Virginia, Dr. Kinnaman learned about the CII's online system for continuous improvement (Indistar®), which was subsequently customized as the WISE Tool in Idaho. Similarly, Dr. Kinnaman's discussions with leaders in Washington served as the basis for the development of the CBs.

Idaho also requested assistance from CII and the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWRCC), housed at Education Northwest, in conducting a self-assessment of IDE's capacity to provide support to low-performing schools. In May 2009, and with the support of CII and NWRCC, Idaho completed the *Strengthening the Statewide Systems of Support* (Redding & Walberg, 2007) self-assessment process.

In the summer of 2009, Idaho participated in the CII sponsored Academy of Pacesetting States, an event that proved to be crucial to Idaho's continued efforts to develop a coherent statewide system of support. Prior to participating in the Pacesetting Academy, Idaho's statewide system of support consisted of various initiatives and pilot programs that were in the first or second year of implementation. The components of the system, such as the CBs, Principal and Superintendent Networking Meetings, and the WISE Tool, had yet to be fully integrated. During the 2009 Academy, Idaho used a rubrics-based evaluation tool, based

on CII's *Evaluating the Statewide System of Support* (Hanes, Kerins, Perlman, Redding, & Ross, 2009), to assess the overall coherence and effectiveness of their system of support. Using the information provided by the evaluation tool and building upon discussions held during the Academy, Idaho's team developed a draft action plan (subsequently approved by the state board of education) articulating the actions to be taken to develop Idaho's statewide system of support (Appendix D).

The Academy of Pacesetting States consisted of a year-long set of monthly meetings, direct consultation, distance learning activities, and networking among state leaders, book ended by a week-long Academy in the summer of 2009 and a culminating Academy in the spring of 2010. As one of eight state teams to participate in the Academy, Idaho's team consisted of five officials from the Idaho Department of Education, including Dr. Kinnaman, Marcia Beckham, and Dr. Flachbart, with ongoing support from a representative from NWRCC, Idaho's regional comprehensive center, and a state liaison provided by CII. Through the opportunities provided by the year-long support and participation in the summer 2010 Academy, Idaho's leaders were able to engage in ongoing and focused work to fully develop its statewide system of support.

According to Dr. Kinnaman, "Participation in the Academy of Pacesetting States helped Idaho in many ways, including:

- Bringing together leaders from IDE and the Center for School Improvement as a team, focused on developing a statewide system of support;
- Connecting us to a professional community of eight states and education leaders in these states, all working on similar issues and challenges;
- Helping us to develop an action plan for implementing our statewide system;
- Giving us a formal reason to come together on a monthly basis to participate in distance learning sessions and state conference calls to discuss our work;

- Providing the content and structure for a set of district focus visits; and
- Helping us to focus on instructional leadership and training for coaches and Capacity Builders.”

(L. Kinnaman, personal correspondence, July 12, 2010)

Along with accessing the federal content and comprehensive centers as brokers and providers of information, IDE partnered with CII to co-develop an online school improvement planning and monitoring tool, Ways to Improve School

In IBC project schools, CBs serve as coaches and work with principals and school teams to help the school use the WISE Tool to plan, examine current practices, and guide school improvement efforts. A related tool developed by CII, *Patterns of Practice* (Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center, Center on Innovation & Improvement, Chelemer, District of Columbia Public Charter Schools, 2009), was used by IDE staff to structure a set of district focus visits to six high need districts in 2009-10.

The content of Idaho’s framework for school improvement integrates the research-based indicators of effective practice contained in the WISE



Idaho’s Pacesetting Team at the Center on Innovation & Improvement’s Pacesetting Academy, June 2010.

Effectiveness (WISE). The WISE Tool is based on the premise that effective and sustainable school improvement is a school-based endeavor, through which a school improvement team, composed of leaders, teachers, and stakeholders, continuously examines the effectiveness of school improvement efforts, charts a course to improve, and implements targeted improvement efforts. Building upon a research-based set of district, school, and classroom practices, the WISE Tool provides IDE, districts, schools, and the CBs with real-time information on the progress of school improvement efforts. The WISE Tool is available to all schools and required for schools involved in the IBC project.

Tool with the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* developed by Washington’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Shannon & Bylsma, 2005; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). The *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* provides a foundation and framework for schools to understand what it means to be high performing, and the WISE Tool provides online planning tools, research-based indicators of effective practice, and ways to monitor progress. On an annual basis, schools in the IBC project ask all staff and administrators to take a survey based on the nine characteristics, developed and administered by the Center for Educational Effectiveness. Information from the survey

is provided to each school and is used for planning, as well as helping each school understand the progress they are making in developing the characteristics of an effective school.

Idaho’s complementary usage of a framework for school improvement (*Nine Characteristics*) and a research-based process for continuous improvement (The WISE Tool) demonstrates how Idaho has learned from the challenges and experiences of other states. By integrating a conceptual framework for school improvement with an online planning process that focuses on specific indicators of school and classroom practice, Idaho is ensuring that schools remain focused on planning without

losing sight of what it means to be a high performing school.

Idaho continued to reach out to external partners during the 2009-10 school year. Training for Instructional Leaders, a new component of the IBC program, was provided by CII in three regions of the state, with four days of training in each region. The Instructional Leaders training is directly linked to the indicators of effective practice contained in the WISE Tool. The Superintendent's Network, which targets superintendents from districts involved in the IBC program, is supported by experts from the Center for Education Leadership at the University of Washington, a national leader in educational leadership.

The development of internal capacity to provide support to schools, through the IBC project and the development of a research-based set of planning tools and resources, does not automatically translate into a fully operational statewide system of support. The learning curve for all involved—state officials, CBs, districts, and schools—has been a steep one. However, there is evidence that school-based improvement efforts are being positively influenced by the newly developed tools and planning supports.

**Evidence from the Capacity Builders.** CBs discussed their work with districts and schools in terms of cultivating trust, building relationships, and developing a “readiness to benefit” among district and school leaders. CBs also described their role as a broker of information and as someone able to help schools to quickly access state-level supports. Finally, CBs described their work as contributing to the ongoing mending of the relationship between IDE and educators in districts and schools.

Reflecting upon his experience as a principal and now as a Capacity Builder, one Capacity Builder remarked that:

*As principals, what we often saw as barriers was an uncertainty about what the state could really provide, or what the message of the state really was.*

Continuing to reflect upon his current role as a Capacity Builder, this same individual noted that:

*They [the schools] look at you not as someone from the state department, but as someone who can help them. If they see you as the state department, there is that tag as a compliance monitor. There is often that disconnect between what the state wants and how that is communicated. The Capacity Builders help districts and schools understand what is available and how it relates to the work in the schools. The really rewarding part of this work is making the connections and shortcutting the time it would take for school leaders to access and connect with supports from the state. In a sense, the Capacity Builders serve as a bridge between the state and schools.*

In their work with districts and schools, CBs are attentive to both the affective, or relational aspects of school improvement (e.g., the importance of building trust, cultivating relationships, and developing a willingness to engage in improvement efforts) and the more technical aspects of improvement, such as improving instructional quality, planning, and then implementing the characteristics of school effectiveness.

CBs work with districts and schools in different ways, depending on the need and context of the site. All of the CBs see the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* as foundational to their work; however, how the characteristics (and the related toolkit of protocols and planning tools) are used differs from one site to the next. CBs are just now (in 2010) beginning to more consistently help districts or schools with the WISE planning tool, through the analysis of data or in the development and implementation of a school improvement plan. CBs understand their work as *building capacity*, which often means that they support the implementation of various elements of school improvement efforts rather than poring over data or focusing solely on planning. As the WISE Tool becomes more widespread and schools become more familiar with online tools, there is an expectation that CBs will use the WISE Tool to a greater extent.

From 2008 to 2010, Idaho dramatically increased its capacity to work with schools by accessing and developing local talent and by

improving the quality of supports and information provided to schools, exemplified by the WISE Tool, the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*, and partnerships with external organizations, universities, and with other states. However, Idaho’s leaders understood that developing a coherent statewide system of support required that they strategically consider how to connect and leverage state-level supports in ways that would maximize the impact of supports in targeted districts and schools. Merely having high quality support mechanisms and planning tools is not enough, especially if services are not mutually supportive. An ongoing challenge in developing an effective statewide system of support is attending to the perceived disconnect between the support and assistance available from the state and the actual needs of districts and schools. To address this disconnect—whether real or perceived—IDE and The Center for School Improvement have worked to make explicit the connections between and among state initiatives towards the goal of creating an aligned and cohesive statewide system of support.

**Creating an Aligned and Cohesive Statewide System of Support**

Idaho’s statewide system of support includes multiple components and supports designed to build district and school capacity. Some of these components, such as the Idaho Building Capacity network, district focus visits, training on instructional leadership, and networking opportunities (Principals Academy of Leadership and Superintendents Network), are targeted to schools identified for improvement. Idaho offers foundational supports to all districts and schools, including access to the WISE Tool, training on the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*, and through targeted assistance and training in content areas (math and literacy) and with special populations (special education, English language learners). Ensuring that system components and supports complement each other and work together *as a system*, especially in those districts and schools that may be least able to navigate the maze of supports, is of primary concern to IDE leaders.

Idaho’s efforts to create an aligned system of support are ongoing and intentional. The alignment of the system is evident in five related strategies, or types of activities, that have been used to promote alignment.

Table 3: Idaho’s five alignment strategies

1. Alignment through <b>communication</b>
2. Alignment through <b>shared knowledge</b>
3. Alignment through <b>integrated content</b>
4. Alignment through a <b>shared theory of action</b>
5. Alignment through <b>networking</b>

**Alignment through communication.**

Throughout the first two years of the Idaho Building Capacity project (2008-09), Dr. Kinnaman and IDE leaders made sure that most, if not all, meetings around school improvement included members of IDE and CBs. For instance, IDE staff responsible for RtI, special education, and LEP began to attend IBC quarterly meetings. As a result, IDE staff members began to see how the CBs could serve as an entry point for services that were available from the state but were not always welcomed by schools, merely because the services came “from the state” (Hamann & Lane, 2004). Similarly, CBs gained a better understanding of the types of services available to schools and formed relationships with those individuals within IDE that could provide targeted supports to schools. As a result, CBs are able to directly connect schools to a specific person (and phone number) at IDE. The support is personalized rather than “from the state.”

**Alignment through shared knowledge.**

In addition to ongoing cross-fertilizing of meetings with CBs and IDE officials, Dr. Kinnaman and Marcia Beckman organized an information fair for IDE officials and CBs, held in the summer of 2009. The information fair provided an opportunity for CBs to meet with state officials and learn about the different programs and resources offered by IDE. IDE officials had equally high praise for the information fair, noting that the fair not only allowed CBs the opportunity to learn more about state initiatives, but also that IDE officials gained a stronger

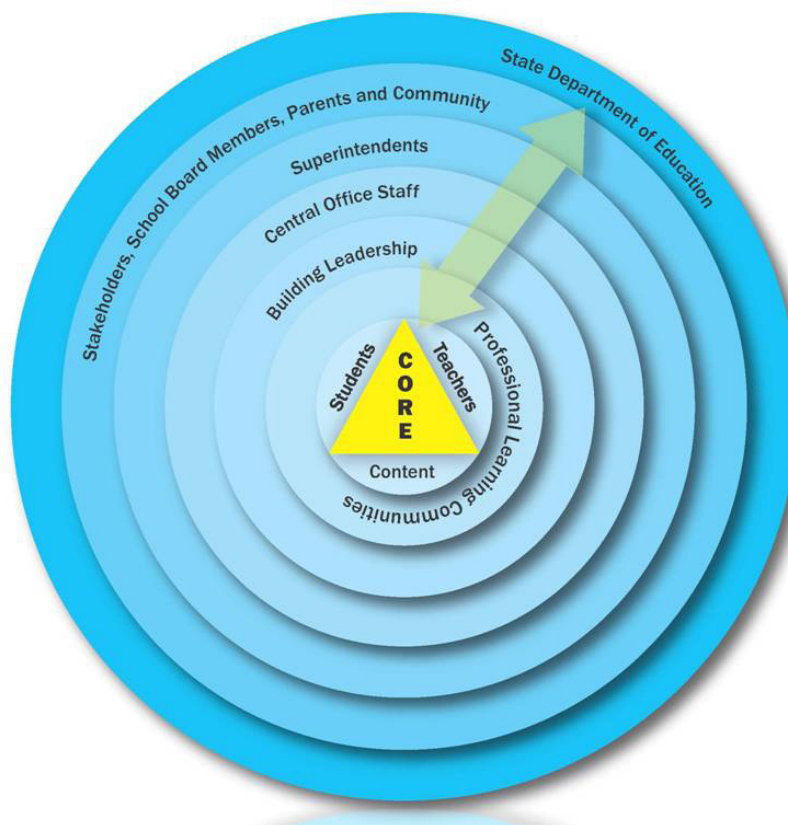
understanding of how all of the initiatives do (or could) work together. One IDE official remarked that “it was great for the CBs to meet with us and learn about the different state initiatives, but it was really the relationship building between us, as state officials and the CBs—it was really important to help us to work together, as we are modeling [the type of] collaboration at the state that we want to see in the districts.”

**Alignment through integrated content.** IDE officials are equally committed to aligning the various planning tools, protocols, and instruments that are used in the field. The WISE Tool, which included indicators of district, school, and classroom practice, is aligned with the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* and with Title I school-wide planning requirements. To reduce the number of plans required of districts and schools, IDE integrated portions of the special education and highly qualified teacher plans into the WISE Tool. Recently, IDE developed a crosswalk of the WISE indicators and Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*, illustrating IDE’s ongoing efforts to ensure that information provided to schools is clear, consistent,

and does not create unwanted noise and confusion (See Appendix E). Efforts to more formally integrate state initiatives with the IBC program are underway (Spring 2010), as CBs are undergoing training to serve as RtI coaches and IDE is introducing the Danielson framework to districts and schools through the CBs. Instead of proceeding on separate (and potentially conflicting) tracks, IDE is intentionally using the regional centers and the CBs to communicate and deliver state initiatives from the state down into the classroom.

A concrete example of how IDE is strategically integrating the content of support through existing delivery mechanisms is the set of district focus visits that took place during the 2009-10 school year. Stemming from the state action plan developed during the Academy of Pacesetter States and CII’s *Patterns of Practice*, IDE developed a protocol and a modified set of indicators for assessing district capacity. The district focus visits, which involved intensive interviews and focus groups with district officials, principals, and classroom visits to every teacher and classroom in targeted schools, were conducted by **a team of**

Display 2: Idaho’s Statewide System of Support Alignment from the State to the Classroom



**state officials, CBs, and representatives from IHEs.** In contrast to previous attempts to visit and monitor districts, the focus visits served as a means of increasing connections, relationships, and positive interaction among various components of the statewide system of support, including districts and schools. As a result of the district focus visits, district leaders are now requesting more services from the state, reflecting the shift to a “culture of candor” and a client-oriented approach.

**Alignment through a shared theory of action.** As states strive to create effective systems of support, a common, and sometimes impenetrable, stumbling block is the tendency of state education agencies to form bureaucratic silos resistant to sharing and collaboration (Sunderman & Orfield, 2006; Lane, Seager, & Frankel, 2005). When departments are isolated from one another, they have a tendency to develop distinct, and sometimes conflicting, notions of the role of the state and what it takes for schools to improve—they develop different theories of action. Idaho’s department of education does not exhibit symptoms of an entrenched bureaucracy, likely a result of its small (numerical) size and the nature of its political system (e.g., an elected Superintendent of Education). Nevertheless, IDE has taken action to ensure that the different departments and individuals working in the field share a common theory of action about how to build district and school capacity to improve.

In spring 2009, IDE officials partnered with NWRCC to conduct a self-assessment of its statewide system of support. During the self-assessment, individuals from different departments had an opportunity to discuss their work and reflect on the nature of the state’s support to districts and schools. As a result of the self-assessment, IDE officials spent an additional day with NWRCC to develop a detailed logic model of its system of support (presented in Appendix A) and a companion theory of action. The logic model clearly articulates how, for instance, the IBC project provides support to districts and schools, how the Superintendents Network and district focus visits are intended to instill a sense of urgency among district leaders, and how all of the components

and supports drill down to the school to focus on instructional quality.

**Alignment through networking.** Understanding that there was a need for superintendents and principals to meet and discuss issues outside of the school building (or the district), IDE reached out to districts and schools to provide networking opportunities and to generate a willingness to discuss and address tough issues in a culture of candor, or what IDE officials like to call the “readiness to benefit” of districts and schools. The Principals Academy of Leadership, which existed pre-2008, continues and is now administered through the Center for School Improvement. To address district capacity issues, Deputy Superintendent Flachbart initiated a Superintendents’ Network in the fall of 2009. Uncertain about the receptivity of Superintendents to meet together to discuss issues related to district and school improvement, Deputy Superintendent Flachbart was pleasantly surprised to have 30 districts elect to participate. Now supported by nationally known educational leaders and researchers from the University of Washington, the Superintendents’ Network provides IDE leaders and Superintendents with direct and joint two-way communication and dedicated time and space to discuss how to engage in sustainable district improvement.

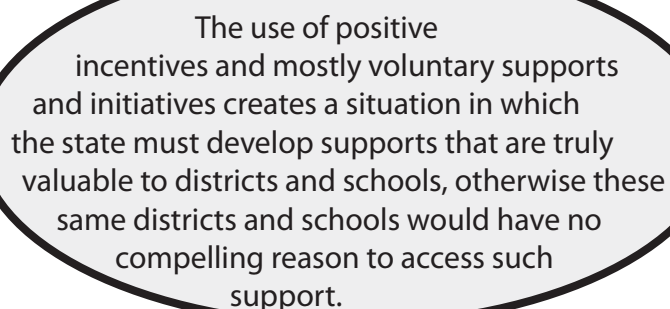


## Leveraging Improvement Through Incentives, Opportunity, and Capacity

In just over two years time, Idaho was able to access and build upon external expertise and opportunities to develop a coherent and aligned statewide system of support. Now, in 2010, Idaho is providing incentives, creating opportunities, and developing the capacity within districts and schools that is needed for sustained improvement among all schools (Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008).

Idaho uses a variety of positive incentives and opportunities, such as charter schools and networking forums, as a means of improving its overall system of public education. The use of positive incentives and mostly voluntary supports and initiatives creates a situation in which the state must develop supports that are truly valuable to districts and schools, otherwise these same districts and schools would have no compelling reason to access such support. The rapid expansion of the WISE Tool (from a pilot initiative in 2008 to its use in 467 schools in 2010) and the demand for state supports (e.g., the Superintendents' Network) provide evidence that districts and schools do have an incentive to access these supports. By creating positive incentives, such as demonstrating the value and quality of supports, the sharing of positive feedback among district and school leaders (word-of-mouth), and creating tools that decreased reporting requirements and streamlined plans, IDE officials were able to engender trust and strong relationships among individuals in schools, districts, and IDE.

Idaho's proactive use of charter schools plays a complementary and crucial role in efforts to improve Idaho's public education system. Charter schools provide opportunity and choice for parents and communities and create an incentive for existing schools to improve. It is this overall urgency to improve—voiced by parents and communities, reflected in growing numbers of charter schools, and evident in schools' desire to access IDE supports—that is providing leverage for sustained improvement. As a result, districts and schools are working to build their own capacity to improve, supported by an aligned statewide system of support.



The use of positive incentives and mostly voluntary supports and initiatives creates a situation in which the state must develop supports that are truly valuable to districts and schools, otherwise these same districts and schools would have no compelling reason to access such support.

**Table 3: Idaho’s Mix of Incentives, Opportunities, and Local Capacity Building**

State Levers	State Initiative, Strategies, and Activities for Sustained Improvement
Idaho provides positive incentives by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcasing the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project, the WISE Tool, and networking opportunities as useful ways that districts and schools can meet state expectations and requirements.</li> <li>• Developing a school improvement planning tool—the WISE Tool—that is useful and that meets state and federal school improvement planning requirements.</li> <li>• Having districts and schools share the successes of the IBC program and WISE Tool, resulting in positive peer pressure among schools.</li> <li>• Providing expectations for school performance and then providing districts and schools with the flexibility to implement locally developed programs and interventions.</li> <li>• Conducting focus visits to districts as a means of documenting district and school capacity and providing recommendations for improvement.</li> </ul>
Idaho provides opportunities through:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting charter schools as a meaningful part of the public school system that provides choices to students, parents, and communities.</li> <li>• Creating networking opportunities for learning across districts and schools (e.g., the Idaho Superintendents’ Network).</li> <li>• Explicitly cultivating a culture of candor.</li> </ul>
Idaho builds local capacity through:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Idaho Building Capacity program.</li> <li>• Instructional Leadership training.</li> <li>• Response to Intervention, by providing training and coaches to schools.</li> <li>• The Lighthouse Project, which provides training for school board members.</li> <li>• The WISE Tool, other tools, and online resources.</li> <li>• Multiple and complementary trainings, supports, and frameworks.</li> </ul>

**A Strategic Mix of Incentives, Opportunity, and Capacity**

Idaho’s developing statewide system of support includes a strong infrastructure for school improvement and a growing capacity to support districts and schools that includes people (CBs) and content (research-based practices, tools, and strategies). A mix of incentives, opportunities, and capacity building activities provides a strong foundation for providing meaningful and useful support to districts and schools. In combination with thoughtful and strategic attention to cultivating alignment within and across the system, Idaho’s story showcases how a state can quickly mobilize

and change direction to meet the needs of districts, schools, teachers, and students. Additionally, Idaho’s story illustrates how a state can learn from the experience of other states to implement best practices and proactively address challenges before they become insurmountable (Reville et al., 2005; Unger et al., 2008).

The implications of Idaho’s efforts, while still developing, are overwhelmingly consistent. Specifically, Idaho’s statewide system of support has:

- Contributed to the development and use of a common language and framework around school improvement;

- Fostered and accelerated positive and constructive relationships between the state and its customers—districts, schools, parents, and teachers;
- Increased the urgency to improve and the readiness to benefit among some districts and schools;
- Cultivated increased trust, collaboration, and coordination within IDE and between IDE and the field, primarily through the CBs' work with districts and schools; and
- Increased the overall capacity of the state, through the use of IHEs and the regional centers, to implement state initiatives and to provide differentiated support to districts and schools.

However, Idaho's leaders realize that they face many challenges in the years to come, as the statewide system of support is only in its third year of operation. Some of Idaho's acknowledged challenges include:

- Improving the consistency of support provided by CBs without losing the ability to customize supports and focus on cultivating trust and building relationships;
- Building upon their success in cultivating trust and building relationships to leverage change in beliefs, actions, and ultimately improving classroom instruction;
- Continuing to scale-up the IBC project and other aspects of the statewide system of support, in terms of developing internal capacity and obtaining resources needed to sustain the work; and
- Figuring out how to catalyze change and improvement in some districts and schools that may not exhibit a readiness to benefit.

As Idaho continues to implement and refine its statewide system of support, its greatest challenge may come from trying to balance the success of its approach to school improvement with the demands posed by federal requirements related to the use of Title I funds in chronically underperforming schools. Current Title I and School Improvement Grant (SIG) requirements (2010) require states to identify the lowest performing

schools (the bottom 5%, based on Adequate Yearly Progress) and, as a condition of receiving federal SIG funds, to require that identified schools implement one of four intervention models. The federal policy assumes (rightly so, in many states) that the lowest 5% of schools are chronically underperforming and that they require intensive intervention in order to improve. However, it is an open question whether significant numbers of schools in Idaho require the type of intensive and intrusive intervention called for by federal policy. The requirements of the Federal SIG program also pose a challenge to states, such as Idaho, working to both address the need to rapidly improve its chronically low-performing schools while also maintaining a coherent system of support for all schools.



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- Idaho Statewide System of Support: Online Resources Idaho Building Capacity Project: Center for School Improvement, Boise State University: <http://csi.boisestate.edu/Improvement/IBC.html>
- Idaho Building Capacity Project: University of Idaho: <http://www.uidaho.edu/cda/ibc> Statewide System of Support Operations Manual <http://csi.boisestate.edu/Improvement/SSOSManual.html>
- WISE Tool: Center for School Improvement, Boise State University: <http://csi.boisestate.edu/Improvement/WISSTool.html>



## **Appendix**

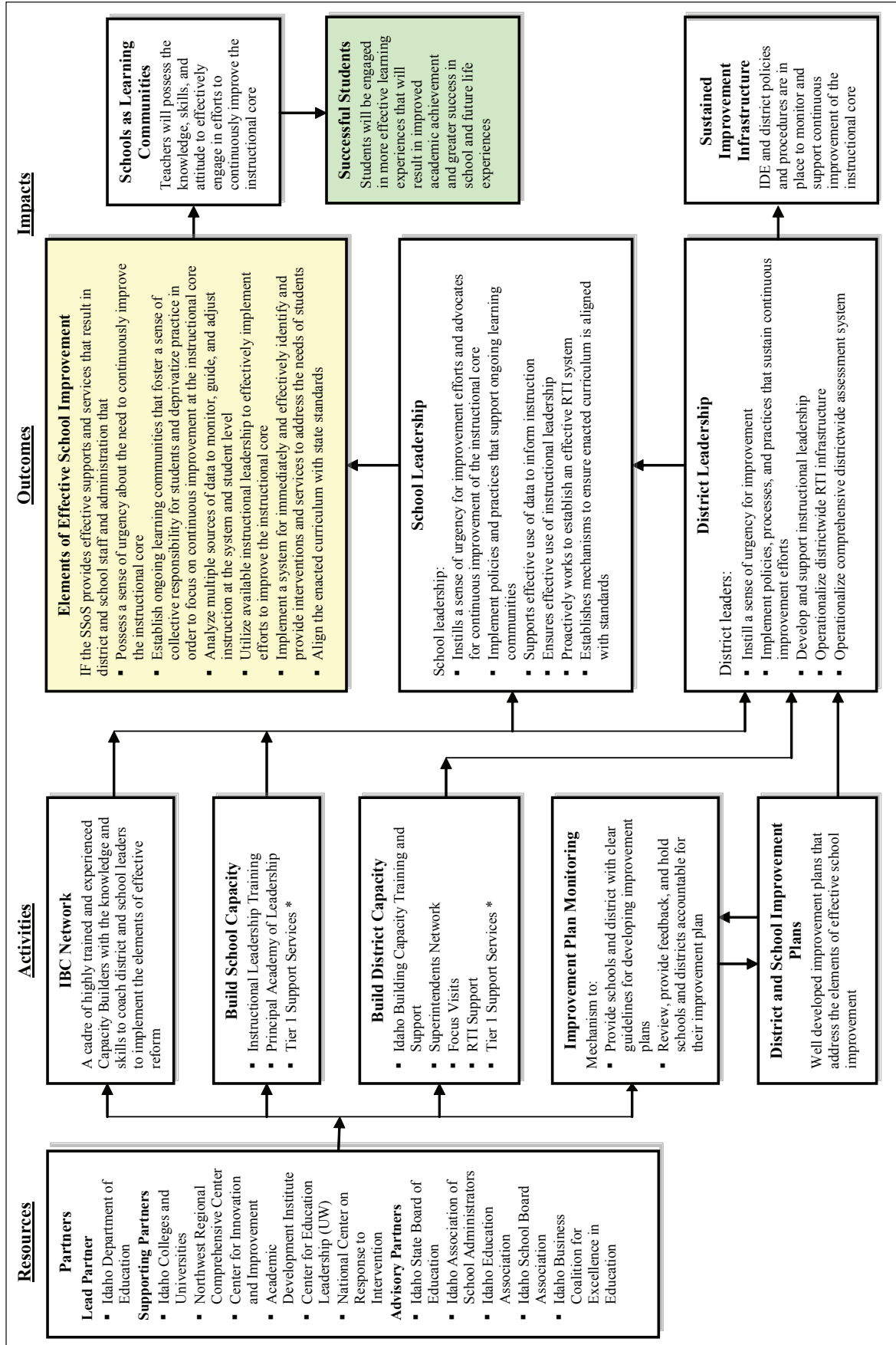
- A. Idaho Statewide System of Support Logic Model
- B. Idaho Building Capacity Project: Description
- C. WISE Tool: Description and Purpose
- D. Idaho State Action Plan
- E. Crosswalk of School Indicators and Danielson's Framework for Teaching
- F. Methodology, Data Sources, and Protocols





Appendix A: Idaho Statewide System of Support Logic Model

Idaho Statewide System of Support Logic Model—DRAFT



## **Idaho Statewide System of Support Theory of Action**

### ***Definitions***

Instructional Core-Interaction between teachers and students in the presence of content. Key aspects of the instructional core include:

- Teacher and the student understand the purpose and expected outcomes of the instruction
- Students are intellectually engaged with the appropriate content standards at high cognitive level
- Instruction and tasks are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students
- Instruction is continuously adjusted in response to objective interpretation of data available through a comprehensive assessment plan
- Students take responsibility for their own learning and recognize that their learning can be attributed to their efforts

### **Idaho SSoS Theory of Action**

**IF** the SSoS provides effective supports and services that result in district and school staff and administration that

- Possess a sense of urgency about the need to continuously improve the instructional core
- Establish ongoing learning communities that foster a sense of collective responsibility for students and deprivatize practice in order to focus on continuous improvement at the instructional core
- Analyze multiple sources of data to monitor, guide, and adjust instruction at the system and student level
- Utilize available instructional leadership to effectively implement efforts to improve the instructional core
- Implement a system for immediately and effectively identify and provide interventions and services to address the needs of students
- Align the enacted curriculum with state standards

### **Then**

- Teachers will possess the knowledge, skills, and attitude to effectively engage in efforts to continuously improve the instructional core
- Students will be engaged in more effective learning experiences that will result in improved academic achievement and greater success in school and future life experiences

### ***Meeting Notes***

#### **If**

##### Group 1

- Build capacity at the district and school level
- Focus on the instructional core
- Create a sense of urgency
- Identification of the real problem/issue based on data (Slap up side the head)
- Serve as a critical friend
- Deprivatizes practice through school-based PD
- Fosters collaboration and coordination—What happens between SEAs desire, the districts interpretation, and school implementation

## Group 2

- If the IDE increases its capacity to inspire, lead, and provide information and services. Examples include Ffocus visits, heightened awareness of the impact of current instructional core.
- If schools analyze multiple sources of data to monitor, guide, adjust instruction at the individual student level. Because we have to get to individual student level and we must link outcome data to the input of instruction. Examples are Reading First, RTI, WISE Tool, CBs, and 9 characteristics webinars.
- If the SSoS provides collaborative peer opportunities for principals and superintendents to engage in learning communities focused on instructional leadership so that they can recognize good instruction and provide strategies and support for achieving good instruction. Examples include PALs, Superintendent Network, and ICB

## Then

### Other Comments

- Fully engaged learning communities (i.e, students, teacher)
- Teachers have the knowledge, skills, and attitude to engage students

### Group 1

- Schools and districts have the capacity to implement effective processes that support and improve the instructional core
- Students are fully engaged in authentic learning tasks that are implemented with purpose and require a high level of cognitive demand.
- Instruction and tasks are differentiated to address student needs and is informed by assessment
- Districts have a system for immediately identifying and provide immediate interventions and services to help students at risk
- Have the resources, infrastructure, systems, and leadership at all levels.
- Enacted curriculum is aligned with standards
- Districts have a comprehensive assessment system
- Teachers use formative assessment to inform instruction to address the needs of students

### Low Priority Comments

- Increase student achievement
- District satisfaction with IDE services, particularly among rural districts
- Within 1 year of graduation, graduates are engaged as citizens => Employed and or post secondary, or community engagement
- Increase student achievement plus develop the whole student including behavioral and physical health, cultural and social competencies, habits of mind along with the hard and soft skills

## Group 2

### Priorities

- Collective responsibility for continuous improvement for all students
- Culture of participation in achieving continuous improvement
- Achievement: All students perform at proficient level
- Increased student learning--Depth of understanding

*Transforming A Statewide System of Support*

- Perception and reality—Coherent delivery of services and access to services
- Improved readiness for postsecondary success including aspects beyond academics-College readiness
- Culture and routine practice of effective use and analysis of data from multiple sources
- Increased leadership of change
- Increased student and teacher engagement
- Comprehensive3 assessment plans by districts and schools

*Other Comments*

- Culture of expectation of continuous improvement
- Improved graduation rate and decreased drop-out rate
- School safety-discipline
- Increased internal capacity at the IDE to inspire and lead others and provide information and services-efficiently, effectively, and uniformly
- Improved district capacity to support schools
- Improved IDE capacity to support and lead districts
- Districts networking with each other and making connections across the state
- More integrated student focus among parents and community
- Appropriate/adequate to learn

## Appendix B: Idaho Building Capacity Project—Description



# Idaho Building Capacity Project Summary

## Statewide System of Support for School Improvement

### Scope of the Project

The Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project is a new system of support for Idaho schools and districts that are in needs improvement status. Based on a needs assessment that indicated a need for increased support and technical assistance to Idaho schools and districts in needs improvement status, additional federal grant funds were obtained to jump start a pilot project to establish a state wide system of support in Idaho. The pilot project (Cohort I) began in January, 2008 and is serving 19 sites for a three year period. The project will provide scaffolded support designed to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in building their own internal capacity to sustain their school improvement efforts. A rigorous school and district selection process has been developed, with a goal to select schools and districts that are in needs improvement status and serve a high percentage of at-risk students (combined percentage of economically disadvantaged, migratory, English language learners, and students with disabilities) and have limited local resources.

### Capacity Builders (CBs)

A key component of this state wide system of support is the utilization of recently retired, highly distinguished educators that are trained by the state to assist school and district leaders as they facilitate the work of school improvement in Idaho's neediest schools and districts. Capacity Builders (CBs) are assigned to a school or district site within the IBC network. They are provided with monthly training and given guidance on the work of school improvement. However, the IBC project does not prescribe to a cookie-cutter approach to school improvement. Capacity Builders are provided with a "tool kit" of school improvement resources, and then in partnership with school and district leaders, help create and implement a customized school improvement plan.

### Regional Extension of IBC

The coordination for the Idaho Building Capacity project was initially located at the Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies (CSI & PS) at Boise State University (Southwestern Region). Regional IBC Support Centers have also been established at the University of Idaho (Northern Region) and Idaho State University (Southeastern Region) and began serving sites statewide in February, 2009. While individual centers have been created in each region, there will be a uniform and systematic approach for delivering services, in order to establish continuity in the state wide system of support. The coordination of IBC regional centers will operate through the Idaho State Department of Education and the State School Improvement Coordinator. The three regions combined will be serving 35 sites representing Cohort II and 39 sites representing Cohort III. Combined with Cohort I, this totals to 91 sites currently being served in the IBC project.

### IBC Application Process

Applications are continually accepted and are filed out by interested Title I school principals and superintendents together. If selected, Capacity Builders are assigned to participating schools and districts.

Applications for Cohort IV of the IBC project are due to the School Improvement Technical Assistance Office no later than 5:00pm on October 29, 2009. Schools and districts will be selected and matched with a Capacity Builder by early December, and Cohort IV services will begin in January, 2011.

Appendix C: WISE Tool: Description and Purpose

**School Improvement Technical Assistance**

In partnership with the Idaho State Department of Education, this project provides technical assistance to districts & schools classified in one of the stages of Needs Improvement, as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act. Technical assistance to these districts & schools includes the provision and coordination of professional development, leading collaboration, and the enhancement of regional, district, and school capacities to better serve students.

**School Improvement Webinars**

CSDE/PS leads webinar workshops based on the *More Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. These webinars are available to all interested educators and stakeholders. Archived recordings of the webinar presentations can be accessed on the [idaho.gov](http://www.idaho.gov) Digital Learning Academy website at <http://idaho.gov/dla/hsa/hsa.html> or <http://idaho.gov/dla/hsa/hsa.html> at <http://idaho.gov/dla/hsa/hsa.html>

**The Idaho Building Capacity Project**

The Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) Project is a new system of support for Idaho schools & districts that have been identified as needing improvement, per INCLB. The project is currently serving 81 sites statewide in partnership with IBC regional service centers housed at the University of Idaho (North), Boise State University (Southwest), and Idaho State University (Southeast). This project, which provides scaffolded support over a three-year period, is designed to assess educational leaders in building their own internal capacity to sustain school improvement efforts.

A key component of this support is the utilization of highly distinguished education leaders, titled Capacity Builders (CBs). CBs are provided with a tool kit of school improvement resources, and collaborate monthly. Each CB works in partnership with school and district leaders to assist in the creation and implementation of a customized school improvement plan.

**Regional Support for School Improvement**

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**Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center**  
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**Information • Tools • Training**  
Positive results for students will come from changes in the knowledge, skill, and behavior of their teachers and leaders. They will be supported through the WISE Tool, research, resources, and opportunities available only to the state of Idaho to help with this effort.  
The Center for Innovation & Improvement helps regional comprehensive centers to work with educational leaders, schools, and families with the opportunity, information, and skills to make their schools better.  
The Center for Innovation & Improvement is administered by the Institute for Educational Leadership, 1400 Massachusetts Ave., 10th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138.  
A student record center operated by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.  
About IdahoHistory  
The open-source handbook and glossary reflect the position of no reporting agencies and all other information about the state.

# WISE TOOL

Ways to Improve  
School Effectiveness



# WISE Tool: Ways to Improve School Effectiveness

## The WISE Tool

Change is made and sustained through focus, sequence, and shared accountability. The WISE Tool provides the focus and sequence while accommodating flexibility in approach.

### Think Global Positioning System, Adapted.

The WISE Tool is a web-based tool for planning and navigating improvement's sometimes broad and unsteady course. It unites people within and across systems, aligns them in effort, deploys them in partnership, and guides them to success.

The WISE Tool functions similar to a global positioning system (GPS) in that it uses Success Indicators to:

-  Determine current position relative to the destination
-  Provide detailed routes for achieving it
-  Adjust to variations and even accommodate diversions along the way...
-  Without losing sight of the destination, systemic and lasting improvement in teaching and learning.

But results don't improve unless performance improves. In order for performance to improve, people must know what good performance looks like and have a clear path for achieving it. The WISE Tool provides the "what" but leaves the "how" to those who know best.

## A Complicated Pursuit ...

There are few systems that are more complex than the public education system. Most state education systems have at least four levels to their structure - state, district, school, classroom - with dozens of layers in and around and connected to each level - such as federal government, state government, local government, boards of education, PTAs, business roundtables, supplemental education service providers, advocacy groups, and student councils. To name a few.

Efforts to work hard and do the right thing at every level and within layers sometimes compete.



Lines get messy. Gridlock ensues. Kids lose.

Too much effort, not too little, is often to blame - the result of well-intentioned people, absent common focus, shared vision, and clear understanding of their role. But if that effort could be streamlined and channeled in the same direction, couldn't schools really get somewhere?  
We think so.

## Simplified

In 2007, the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) released its Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement. The Handbook was designed to provide states, districts, and schools with a synthesis of the research surrounding what works in school improvement. At the spring 2008 annual convention of the American Educational Research Association in New York City, AERA's Division H named the Handbook the "Outstanding Publication of the Year".

CII turned the Handbook's research into Success Indicators - guideposts of successful improvement at both the district and school level.

These Success Indicators are the backbone of the WISE Tool.

## Indicators of Success for Idaho School Improvement

### Rapid Improvement

Idaho will be using the Rapid Improvement track of the WISE Tool. A set of Rapid Improvement Indicators is used to anchor the work of the school or district team in working towards rapid improvement of student learning and achievement.

School and district teams will assess their current position relative to each Success Indicator. Using the WISE Tool, schools will plan, execute, and monitor improvement measures prompted by the Success Indicators.

### Steps in the WISE Tool

1. Register District/School
2. Provide District/School Information
3. Form District/School Team
4. Assess District/School Indicators
  - District Rapid Improvement Indicators: 34
  - School Rapid Improvement Indicators: 88
5. Create District/School Improvement Plan
- B. Monitor District/School Improvement Plan

For more information contact:

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# IDAHO STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (SSOS) ACTION PLAN



## Action Item 1:

**Develop and implement criteria and procedures for differentiating SSOS services**

**How will this action reach through to improve classroom instruction?** This will identify areas of need in the classroom and match services to that need.

**How will this action build local capacity for sustained improvement and raise local desire for rapid change?** Since it will be customized support, capacity will be built at the local level. It will also help sustain effective practices at the local level.

**Person chiefly responsible:** Marybeth Flachbart

**First Step:** Schedule meeting to discuss criteria (AYP % and trajectory of growth, quadrant ranking, chronically low performing, improvement attempt history) and services matched to those criteria. Data needed: TQ data, AYP, Special Ed disproportionality. SSOS team members will attend this meeting (September 25, 9:00 – 12:00).

**Benchmark 1a:** Development of final criteria

**Benchmark 1a Target Date:** October 9

**Benchmark 1b:** Identify schools using criteria

**Benchmark 1b Target Date:** October 23

**Benchmark 1c:** Identify services that match criteria

**Benchmark 1c Target Date:** November 6

**How will this action item look on June 1, 2022?** This action item will be operationalized by June 1 and will result in a Level IV rating on the rubric (full level of implementation)

## Action Item 2:

**Develop an SSOS Operations Manual**

- Organization of the SSOS
- Intensity and duration of service
- Assessing operations, performance, need
- Monitoring progress



## IDAHO STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (SSOS) ACTION PLAN



**How will this action reach through to improve classroom instruction?** The development of an Operations Manual will institutionalize the work that's being done to ensure it will be sustainable. In addition, this will ensure the IEC work continues to focus on classroom instruction.

**How will this action build local capacity for sustained improvement and raise local desire for rapid change?** Schools will know exactly which services are available. The public document will make it clear to all what's available.

**Person chiefly responsible:** Lisa Kinnaman

**First Step:** Meet with Regional Coordinators to create action plan for developing the Operations Manual. SSOS team will review drafts of manual at regular monthly meetings.

**Benchmark 2a:** Draft Operations Manual

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**Benchmark 2a Target Date:** March 1, 2010

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**Benchmark 2b:** SDE reviews draft manual and provides feedback

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**Benchmark 2b Target Date:** April 15, 2010

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**Benchmark 2c:** Final Operations Manual

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**Benchmark 2c Target Date:** June 1, 2010

**How will this action item look on June 1, 2010?** Finalized Operations Manual in hard copy, with intent to put on-line.

### Action Item 3:

Research and explore alternate methods to recruit, train and retain highly effective (turnaround) administrators:

- Financial rewards for working in hard-to-staff districts and schools
- Increase the supply of teachers and school leaders
- Channel highly-qualified teachers and leaders to districts and schools in need of improvement

**How will this action reach through to improve classroom instruction?** Will provide highly effective and instructionally-skilled leaders

**How will this action build local capacity for sustained improvement and raise local desire for rapid change?** Potential for increasing the availability of strong leaders; could also affect the hiring procedures and policies in districts; has the potential for changing the culture in schools

## IDAHO STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (SSOS) ACTION PLAN



**Person chiefly responsible:** TBD by Superintendent

**First Step:** Seek executive sponsorship from Supt. Luna

**Benchmark 3a:** Attained executive sponsorship

**Benchmark 3a Target Date:** August 30

**Benchmark 3b:** Explore non-traditional methods for administrative preparation, recruitment and retention

**Benchmark 3b Target Date:** June 1, 2010

**Benchmark 3c:** Recommendations to Superintendent and State Board

**Benchmark 3c Target Date:** June 1, 2010

**How will this action item look on June 1, 2010?** Clear direction (next steps & timeline) for alternative preparation methods for administrators

### Action Item 4:

Develop plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the SSOS:

- Goals, objectives, benchmarks
- Evaluation criteria
- Evaluation process
- Modification in response to evaluation
- Communication of evaluation and modifications
- District and school evaluation of services received
- Evaluation of effects on student learning
- Monitoring and reporting ongoing progress of SDS toward goals, objectives, benchmarks
- Monitoring and reporting progress of districts and schools receiving services

**How will this action reach through to improve classroom instruction?** Allow state to monitor and adjust SSOS to ensure best meeting needs of Idaho's students

**How will this action build local capacity for sustained improvement and reverse local desire for rapid change?** Provide data for the SDE to make adjustments to better meet the needs of schools and districts

**Person chiefly responsible:** Steve Underwood and NWRCC

**First Step:** Schedule meeting with Steve Underwood and NWRCC staff (August 11)

**Benchmark 4a:** Draft evaluation plan and preliminary instruments and protocols

**Benchmark 4a Target Date:** February 1, 2010

**Benchmark 4b:** SSOS team reviews draft plan, instruments and protocols, and provides feedback

## IDAHO STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (SSOS) ACTION PLAN



**Benchmark 4b Target Date: March 1, 2010**

**Benchmark 4c: Approved evaluation plan and developed instruments and protocols**

**Benchmark 4c Target Date: June 1, 2010**

**How will this action item look on June 1, 2010? Approved evaluation plan for implementation in 2010 – 2011.**

### Action Item 5:

Identify a system for recognizing accomplishments.

**Person chiefly responsible: Marcia Beckman**

**First Step: Look at existing criteria and processes used by other programs (i.e. Blue Ribbon Schools, Distinguished Schools, and CI's APAT).**

**Benchmark 5a: Draft criteria and process**

**Benchmark 5a Target Date: December 1, 2009**

**Benchmark 5b: SSOS team reviews draft and provides feedback**

**Benchmark 5b Target Date: January 30, 2010**

**Benchmark 5c: Awards are given**

**Benchmark 5c Target Date: April 15, 2010**

### Action Item 6:

Reinstitute school support teams and visits

**Person chiefly responsible: Jodi Mills and Gail Hamrinen**

**First step: Brief Jodi and Gail on the task (Marybeth, Marcia and Jacque meet with Jodi and Gail by August 14).**

**Benchmark 6a: Adapt CI's PGP for focus visit process**

**Benchmark 6a Target Date: November 1, 2009**

**Benchmark 6b: Establish schedule, conduct trainings and begin focus visits.**

**Benchmark 6b Target Date: February 1, 2010**

**Benchmark 6c: Complete phase 1 and evaluate effectiveness of focus visit process**

**Benchmark 6c Target Date: June 1, 2010**

Appendix E: Crosswalk of School Indicators and Danielson’s Framework for Teaching

**WISE Tool: Ways to Improve School Effectiveness**  
**Crosswalk of School Indicators and Danielson’s Framework for Teaching**

<b>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</b>	
<b>District Context and the Improvement Plan</b> Focusing the principal’s role on building leadership capacity, achieving learning goals, and improving instruction	
<b>IE06</b>	<b>The principal keeps a focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes.</b>
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b> Engaging teachers in aligning instruction with standards and benchmarks	
<b>IIAD1</b>	<b>Instructional Teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction for each subject and grade level.</b>
<b>IIAD2</b>	<b>Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery.</b>
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b> Engaging teachers in assessing and monitoring student mastery	
<b>IEB01</b>	<b>Units of instruction include pre-/post-tests to assess student mastery of standards-based objectives.</b>
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b> Engaging teachers in differentiating and aligning learning activities	
<b>IC01</b>	<b>Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives.</b>
<b>Classroom Instruction</b> Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Preparation	
<b>IIAD1</b>	<b>All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</b>
<b>IIAD2</b>	<b>All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.</b>
<b>IIAD5</b>	<b>All teachers maintain a record of each student’s mastery of specific learning objectives.</b>
<b>IIAD6</b>	<b>All teachers test frequently using a variety of evaluation methods and maintain a record of the results.</b>
<b>IIAD7</b>	<b>All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.</b>

<b>Domain 2: The Classroom Environment</b>	
<b>Classroom Instruction</b> Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Student-Directed Small-Group & Independent Work	
<b>IIA28</b>	<b>All teachers travel to all areas in which students are working.</b>
<b>IIA32</b>	<b>All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).</b>
<b>IIA33</b>	<b>All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family).</b>
<b>Classroom Instruction</b> Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Computer-Based Instruction	
<b>IIA35</b>	<b>Students are engaged and on task.</b>

<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound classroom management	
IIIC01	When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.
IIIC04	Students raise hands or otherwise signal before speaking.
IIIC05	All teachers use a variety of instructional modes.
IIIC06	All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.
IIIC08	All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.
IIIC09	All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.
IIIC10	All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.

<b>Domain 3: Instruction</b>	
<b>District Context and the Improvement Plan</b>	
Focusing the principal's role on building leadership capacity, achieving learning goals, and improving instruction	
IE07	The principal monitors curriculum and classroom instruction regularly.
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b>	
Engaging teachers in assessing and monitoring student mastery	
IIB02	Unit pre-tests and post-tests are administered to all students in the grade level and subject covered by the unit of instruction.
IIB04	Teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.
IIB05	Teachers re-teach based on post-test results.
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b>	
Assessing student learning frequently with standards based assessments	
IID02	The school tests each student at least 3 times each year to determine progress toward standards-based objectives.
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Teacher-Directed Whole Class or Small Group Instruction - Introduction	
IIIA08	All teachers review the previous lesson.
IIIA09	All teachers clearly state the lesson's topic, theme, and objectives.
IIIA10	All teachers stimulate interest in the topics.
IIIA11	All teachers use modeling, demonstration, and graphics.
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Teacher-Directed Whole Class or Small Group Instruction - Presentation	
IIIA13	All teachers explain directly and thoroughly.
IIIA14	All teachers maintain eye contact.
IIIA15	All teachers speak with expression and use a variety of vocal tones.
IIIA16	All teachers use prompting/cueing.
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Teacher-Directed Whole Class or Small Group Instruction - Summary & Confirmation of Learning	
IIIA17	All teachers re-teach when necessary.
IIIA18	All teachers review with drilling/class recitation.
IIIA19	All teachers review with questioning.
IIIA20	All teachers summarize key concepts.

<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Teacher-Student Interaction	
IIIA21	All teachers re-teach following questioning.
IIIA25	All teachers encourage students to paraphrase, summarize, and relate.
IIIA26	All teachers encourage students to check their own comprehension.
IIIA27	All teachers verbally praise students.
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Student-Directed Small-Group & Independent Work	
IIIA31	All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	
Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes Computer-Based Instruction	
IIIA40	All teachers assess student mastery in ways other than those provided by the computer program.

<b>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</b>	
<b>District Context and the Improvement Plan</b>	
Establishing a team structure with specific duties and time for instructional planning	
ID01	A team structure is officially incorporated into the school improvement plan and school governance policy.
ID02	All teams have written statements of purpose and by-laws for their operation.
ID03	All teams operate with work plans for the year and specific work products to produce.
ID04	All teams prepare agendas for their meetings.
ID05	All teams maintain official minutes of their meetings.
ID06	The principal maintains a file of the agendas, work products, and minutes of all teams.
ID07	A Leadership Team consisting of the principal, teachers who lead the Instructional Teams, and other key professional staff meets regularly (twice a month or more for an hour each meeting).
ID08	The Leadership Team serves as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff.
ID10	The school's Leadership Team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.
ID11	Teachers are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area Instructional Teams.
ID13	Instructional Teams meet for blocks of time (4 to 6 hour blocks, once a month; whole days before and after the school year) sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning data.
<b>District Context and the Improvement Plan</b>	
Focusing the principal's role on building leadership capacity, achieving learning goals, and improving instruction	
IE05	The principal participates actively with the school's teams.
IE08	The principal spends at least 50% of his/her time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations.
IE09	The principal challenges, supports and monitors the correction of unsound teaching practices.
IE10	The principal celebrates individual, team, and school successes, especially related to student learning outcomes.
IE13	The principal offers frequent opportunities for staff and parents to voice constructive critique of the school's progress and suggestions for improvement.

<b>District Context and the Improvement Plan</b> Aligning classroom observations with evaluation criteria and professional development	
IF01	The principal compiles reports from classroom observations, showing aggregate areas of strength and areas that need improvement without revealing the identity of individual teachers.
IF02	The Leadership Team reviews the principal's summary reports of classroom observations and takes them into account in planning professional development.
IF03	Professional development for teachers includes observations by the principal related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.
IF04	Professional development for teachers includes observations by peers related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.
IF05	Professional development for teachers includes self-assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.
IF06	Teachers are required to make individual professional development plans based on classroom observations.
IF07	Professional development of individual teachers includes an emphasis on indicators of effective teaching.
IF08	Professional development for the whole faculty includes assessment of strengths and areas in need of improvement from classroom observations of indicators of effective teaching.
IF10	The principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers.
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b> Engaging teachers in assessing and monitoring student mastery	
IIB03	Unit pre-test and post-test results are reviewed by the Instructional Team.
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b> Engaging teachers in differentiating and aligning learning activities	
IIC03	Materials for standards-aligned learning activities are well organized, labeled, and stored for convenient use by teachers.
<b>Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning</b> Assessing student learning frequently with standards based assessments	
IID03	Teachers receive timely reports of results from standardized and objectives-based tests.
IID06	Yearly learning goals are set for the school by the Leadership Team, utilizing student learning data.
IID07	The Leadership Team monitors school-level student learning data.
IID08	Instructional Teams use student learning data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.
IID09	Instructional Teams use student learning data to plan instruction.
<b>Classroom Instruction</b> Expecting and monitoring sound homework practices and communication with parents	
IIIB01	All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents.
IIIB06	All teachers systematically report to parents the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives.

## Appendix F: Methodology, Data Sources, and Protocols

### Case Methodology

The purpose of this case report was to document how Idaho developed its statewide system of support and as an exemplary case of how a state education agency can quickly and dramatically alter its relationship with, and approach to, districts and schools.

The analytic lens used to frame the case report is based on research and practical experience on how states are developing statewide systems of support. Specifically, we used the framework of statewide systems of support as a mix of incentives, opportunity, and capacity (Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008) as the basis for the questions posed to respondents and our analysis of data.

### Case Report Questions

We used the incentive-opportunity-capacity framework as a lens through which to understand the incentives and opportunities that contributed to the ability of a state education agency to engage in rapid change, and in Idaho's case, to rapidly transform its own system of support to districts and schools. Building upon the idea that incentives, opportunities, and capacity building endeavors have as much to play in state-level improvement efforts as they do at the district- and school-level, we asked the following questions:

1. What were some of the *key incentives* that drove Idaho to make dramatic changes to its statewide system of support?
2. What were the *opportunities* that were presented to Idaho, and how were Idaho's leaders able to use this window of opportunity to initiate and sustain its state-level improvement efforts?
3. How did Idaho *access and build upon external and internal capacity* to accelerate its work towards developing a statewide system of support capable of proactively using incentives, opportunities, and capacity to support local districts and schools?

### Protocol Development and Site Visits

4. **Protocol Development:** Building upon these questions, we developed respondent specific questions and prompts to be used during interviews and focus group sessions.
5. **Site Visits and Data Gathering:** Prior to conducting the site visits, we reviewed relevant documents (e.g., the WISE Tool and documents available from the School Improvement web site), data on the districts and schools being served by the Capacity Builders (CBs), and state policy documents related to school improvement and educator effectiveness. A three-day site visit occurred September 14-16, 2009 and consisted of focus groups and interviews with key state and regional leaders, including CBs (Table 1). The majority of interviews were recorded to supplement onsite note taking. After each visit, site visit notes were cleaned and annotated using audio recordings. Follow up phone interviews with Dr. Kinnaman were conducted on March 8th and July 12, 2010 to review draft versions of the report and collect additional information on the development of Idaho's state system of support.



Table 1. Overview of Case Study Data Collection

Date	Data Source and Participants
September 14	Focus Group: <b>Regional Coordinators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lisa Kinnaman: State &amp; Southwest Regional Coordinator</li> <li>• Southwest Regional Coordinator</li> <li>• Southeast Regional Coordinator</li> <li>• North Regional Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Focus Group: <b>Idaho State Department of Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement &amp; School Accountability</li> <li>• Deputy Superintendent of Innovation &amp; Choice</li> <li>• Deputy Superintendent of School Support Service</li> <li>• NCLB Director</li> <li>• Special Education Director</li> <li>• Systems Improvement Coordinator</li> <li>• LEP Coordinator</li> <li>• Professional Standards &amp; Teacher Certification Director</li> <li>• Response to Intervention Coordinator</li> <li>• Mathematics Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Interview: Dr. Marybeth Flachbart, <b>Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement &amp; School Accountability</b>
September 15	Focus group: <b>Idaho Capacity Builders</b> (Group #1)
	Focus group: <b>Idaho Capacity Builders</b> (Group #2)
	Interview: Dr. William Parrett, Director, <b>The Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies</b>
September 16	Interview and Debrief: Dr. Lisa Kinnaman: Director, <b>Statewide School Improvement Programs and Associate Director, Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies</b>

### Data Analysis

6. Transcribed and annotated notes were analyzed using the constructs provided by the incentive-opportunity-capacity framework. An iterative process of data analysis and framework refinement was used to categorize data and refine framework constructs. Specifically, we read each set of notes, coded information according to the framework constructs and to specific indicators linked to each framework construct, and captured additional themes and findings.

### Final report

7. The full case report was written and organized according to the incentive-opportunity-capacity framework, focusing on how the state used incentives, opportunities, and capacity to build its own statewide system of support.

## Understanding the Development of Statewide Systems of Support

### Building Coherent and Effective Systems of Support

#### Overview

The Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII), a national content center supported by the U.S. Department of Education, provides support to states around the development of statewide systems of support. A portion of the Center's work involves documenting how states, such as Idaho, have developed coherent systems of support and how CII's tools and resources may have contributed to overall improvement efforts. The purpose of our visit is to learn about how the Idaho Department of Education provides support to districts and schools through its statewide system of support, focusing in particular on the Idaho Building Capacity program and its relationship with other supports and initiatives intended to improve the academic performance of students in identified districts and schools. Through our visit and documentation of Idaho's "story", we hope to understand better how states can develop coherent, aligned, and effective statewide systems of support.

Specifically, the purposes of the site visit are to:

- Document how the Idaho Department of Education has developed its statewide system of support, focusing in particular on the role of the Idaho Capacity Building program.
- Document and understand how supports provided by CII (e.g., the statewide self-assessment and web-based assessment tools) may have contributed to Idaho's overall approach to district and school improvement.
- Explore how components (initiatives, offices, regional centers) of the statewide system of support currently work together, focusing on the content and intensity of supports provided to districts and schools and the coherence and perceived effectiveness of the current statewide system of support.

Our questions focus primarily on three main areas:

1. *Support Strategies*—the various approaches and strategies used with schools and districts, including the rationale and assumptions guiding the use of specific strategies.
2. *Leadership Interactions*—how the various components of the statewide system of support work together, in theory and as currently implemented.
3. *Coherence*—How the various members of Idaho's statewide system of support understand their work and how CII's tools and self-assessment process may have contributed to Idaho's system of support.

#### Questions for Idaho Capacity Builders

##### Strategies and approaches to school improvement

***How do you go about working with schools/districts that have been identified as for improvement?***

- What does this look like in practice? Who do you work with? Intensity? Frequency?
- What tools and resources do you use in your work? (e.g., the WISE Tool; Nine Components; Planning Process Guides [school and district])
- What is the intended outcome of your work, or your goal/purpose?

***What are some of the strategies that you have found to be most effective in working with schools?***

OR

***What are some of the triggers, or catalysts, that you feel are critical for your support to have its intended impact?***

## **Purpose, Rationale and Assumptions**

***What is your thinking and reasoning behind the strategies and approach(es) you have described?***

- What has influenced the strategy or approach that you take?
- Does your team (you and others you work with) use a range or variety of approaches, or do you have a well-defined common philosophy?

## **Leadership interactions**

***A statewide system of support is composed of many components and interrelated parts, all of which may impact (positively or negatively) local school improvement efforts?***

- What do you see as the central components of the statewide system of support? Or, which state-level initiatives do you feel have a dramatic impact on your work with schools?
- Tell me how you work together and coordinate your efforts?

***Are there particular aspects of the overall coordination of school improvement efforts—the “footprint” of the state on schools—that enhance or hinder the ability of schools to build capacity and improve?***

## **Evaluation of Impact**

***If your team (or, school assistance teams as a whole) were to be as effective as it could possibly be, what would your team be doing, and how would it be interacting with other elements in the statewide system of support?***

## **External Factors, Policies, and Structures influencing School Improvement**

***In your experience working with identified schools, what are some of the external contextual factors or policies that impact your ability to work effectively with schools to support improvement efforts?***

## **Additional Questions**

### **Questions for State Department of Education Focus Group**

What are the key elements of the state system of support?

What do you see as the state’s role in supporting school improvement?

- provide incentives?
- monitor?
- network?
- support planning?
- provide information?
- provide resources?

How has your collective work evolved over the past 2 to 3 years?

How do you currently work together?

- Role of IHE-based School Improvement
- Impact of CII’s self-assessment process
- Change to WISE Tool

### **Questions for Regional Coordinators**

What are the key elements of the state system of support?

What do you see as the state’s role in supporting school improvement?

What is your role in supporting school improvement?

- Support for Capacity Builders?
- Direct support to districts and schools?
- Coordinate and broker of resources?
- Coach and mentor?

**About the Author:**

Brett Lane is the President and Founding Member of the Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (INSTLL), an education consulting firm located in Providence, Rhode Island. INSTLL provides evaluation and consultative support to state education agencies and districts on a range of education and policy issues related to efforts to dramatically improve our system of public education. Mr. Lane's current work involves research on effective state and district improvement efforts and providing consultative support to state officials and district leaders towards the development of innovative and sustainable systems of support for underperforming districts and schools.

Prior to forming INSTLL, Mr. Lane worked for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Education Northwest) in Portland, Oregon and Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Mr. Lane's areas of expertise include district and school improvement, state and district turnaround strategies, state accountability systems, and charter schools. He is also a Technical Advisor for the Center on Innovation & Improvement. Mr. Lane has an interdisciplinary academic background emphasizing the relationships among law, policy, and the broader community and social issues influencing public education.



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