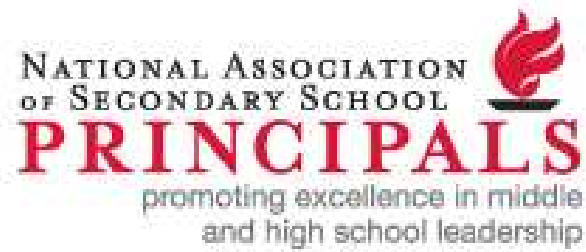




# School Improvement and School Turnaround: Local Accomplishments of MetLife Foundation/NASSP Breakthrough Schools Program

October 24, 2008





# Breakthrough Schools: Background



## *NASSP: Leading Secondary School Reform*

For over 3 decades, we have sought to ...

- Create radically different secondary schools
- Promote continuous improvement
- Raise the bar for every student



## *NASSP: Leading Secondary School Reform*

- 1996 *Breaking Ranks*
- 2004 *Breaking Ranks II*
- 2006 *Breaking Ranks in the Middle*

## *Breakthrough Schools - Overview*

### **MetLife Foundation**

- Economically diverse
- Dramatic improvement
  - Over a 3-year period

## *Background*

Schools are hard to categorize because...

- Each school has its own DNA
  - Size
  - Location
  - Demographics
  - Models and structures



# Breakthrough Schools:

Areas of focus



## *Breakthrough Schools – Equity and Excellence*

“What drives these schools toward excellence is an unwavering commitment to school improvement from every staff and community member.”



## *Breakthrough Schools – Equity and Excellence*

*These schools are about both equity and excellence!*

- Commitment
- Common purpose
- High expectations
- Shared belief that every student can succeed
- Sense of urgency

## *Breakthrough Schools – Data-driven*

*These schools use data to...*

- Systematically identify student needs
- Implement a customized approach
- Provide a rigorous and challenging course of study
- Put support systems in place



## *Breakthrough Schools – Focus*

*A visitor to these schools would see...*

- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Partnerships
- Shared ownership



## Breakthrough Schools:

How have these schools changed?

## *Breakthrough Schools – Focus*

These schools are focused on...

- Reinventing themselves
- Finding solutions
- Research-based
- Best practices

## Breaking Ranks II Recommendations

- Collaborative Leadership
- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
- Personalization

## *Breakthrough Schools – In practice*

# Collaborative Leadership

“Intuition is no longer sufficient.”

- Team decision-making
- Shared governance (all stakeholders)
- Decisions based on data

# Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

The goal is improved teaching!

- Consistent instruction
- Multiple forms of assessment
- Individual plan for each student
- Safety net

## *Breakthrough Schools – In practice*

# Personalization

- Safe, Orderly, Inviting
- Student engagement
- Smaller learning communities
- Student leadership
- Recognition of achievement

## *Breakthrough Schools – Summary*

These schools are beating the odds...

- Culture of success
  - Steady growth and improvement
  - Reduction in the achievement gap
- Hope and Inspiration



# Breakthrough Schools: Policy Implications

## *Breakthrough Schools – Policy Implications*

*“Great schools are not a matter of circumstance!”*

- Diverse, high-poverty schools can achieve at high levels.
- School leaders do make a difference.

## *Breakthrough Schools – Policy Implications*

*“Great schools are a matter of will.”*

- Fund training for school leaders.
  - This is not the 3% solution!

*“No year of school is more important than any other year!”*

- Fund secondary education to the level that we fund elementary education.

## *Breakthrough Schools – Policy Implications*

*“If we use the same methods to fund the same levels of schooling the same way we always have, how can we expect anything but the same results.”*