



The Rhode Island Department of Education

Exploring a partnership with the
Charles A. Dana Center to
improve student achievement statewide

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The Charles A. Dana Center's Equity Beliefs

- All children, regardless of differences in race and socioeconomic status, have the capacity to learn and succeed at equally high academic levels.
- It is the responsibility of all adults in the system to ensure that all children succeed academically.
- Equitable and excellent student learning should be the primary focus of all education systems.



The Charles A. Dana Center

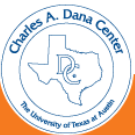
- Managed the development of the Texas mathematics and science curriculum standards (the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS).
- Conducted research on “turnaround” schools.
- Developed
 - integrated curriculum materials and online resources aligned with the TEKS,
 - statewide professional development program in mathematics and science education,
 - statewide seminar series in instructional leadership, and
 - the Partnership for High Achievement to strengthen district capacity.
- Collaborated with the state of Washington in successful revision of their K–12 mathematics standards.
- Partnered in national efforts through our Urban Mathematics Leadership Network and with organizations such as Achieve.



QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Reflection

Why is it so difficult to improve
student achievement?



It is not about---

- Fixing the students
- Fixing the teachers
- Fixing the schools



Transforming District/School Culture

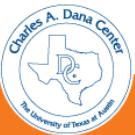
“Substantive and lasting change will ultimately require a transformation of culture—the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and habits that constitute the norm for the people throughout the organization.”

DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R., Eds. (2005). *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, p. 11.



Reflection

What are the current norms of the culture of schools and districts in Rhode Island?



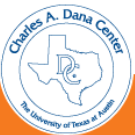
Our Systems Approach

- Levels of the education system:
 - National
 - State
 - District
 - School
 - Classroom
- We work at multiple levels simultaneously.

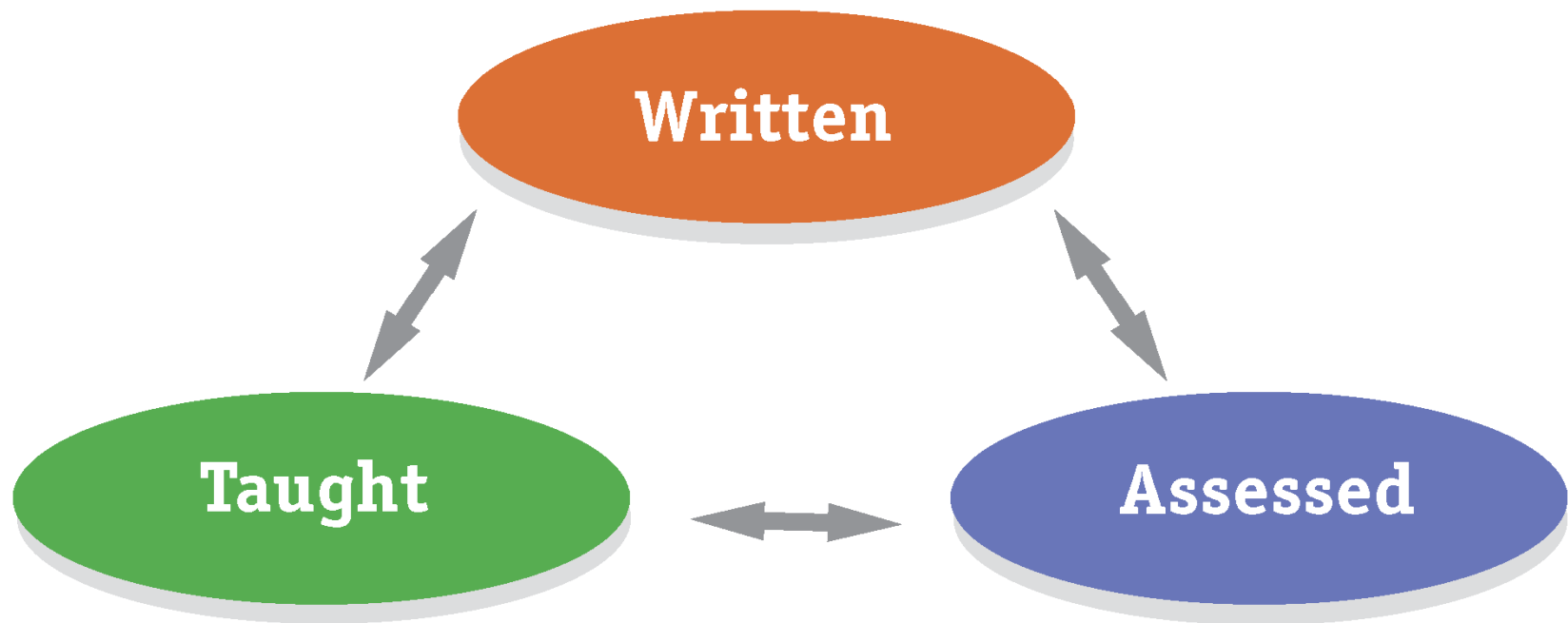


We work on parallel, connected paths to build the capacity of ---

- Leaders,
- Teachers, and
- Students.



A Basic Alignment Principle



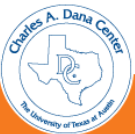
Adapted from the work of Fenwick English



What We Know From Research

The norms necessary for continuously improving student achievement include:

- implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum,
- create a culture of collaboration, and
- establish structures at all levels of the system to support and monitor the implementation of the guaranteed and viable curriculum.



Statewide norms necessary to attain the desired results in student achievement:

- State-level alignment of policies, standards, and assessments.
- Continuous and simultaneous improvement of the system at the district, school, and classroom levels.
- Models of what is expected for districts, campuses, leaders, and teachers.
- New knowledge, skills, and tools for individuals and systems to do what is expected.
- A coherent and consistent approach using common tools, processes, and procedures.



Reflection

What might we do together to implement the norms necessary to improve student achievement?



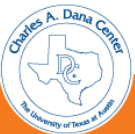
Underlying assumptions of the proposed work...

- The Rhode Island education system wants to bring coherence and consistency to its school-improvement efforts.
- Coherently and consistently implementing the Rhode Island standards should be the focus of school-improvement efforts.
- Coherence and consistency can be achieved by identifying a common set of tools and resources to be used throughout the system to support the successful implementation of the Rhode Island standards.
- An identified cohort of intermediaries from the state of Rhode Island should deliver these tools and resources through ongoing professional development in districts and schools.



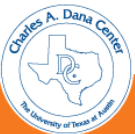
Underlying assumptions of the proposed work, *continued...*

- Improvement will result from strengthening the system from the district level through the schools to the classrooms.
- Improvement efforts must develop leader and teacher capacity in parallel processes.
- School and classroom improvement depends on the consistent implementation of three key ingredients:
 - Making the instructional expectations clear,
 - Supporting teachers and leaders in working collaboratively to meet or exceed the expectations, and
 - Monitoring implementation to provide feedback and support.



The Dana Center provides:

- A foundation set of tools and resources.
- The experience and expertise necessary to work with education system stakeholders at the state and/or district level to
 - Build on existing capacity in the system.
 - Connect and focus policies and practices on student learning.
 - Tailor the foundation tools and resources to the context and needs of the system.
 - Codevelop new tools and resources needed by the system.
 - Train and provide ongoing support to intermediaries.
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance to support scaling up and sustaining the work.
- Structures and feedback loops to enable participants to learn from their work and make in-course adjustments to sustain and improve their efforts.



If you would like more information on Dana Center work with education systems and schools, please...

- Pick up a folder from the table in back.
- Contact me at wdhill@mail.utexas.edu.
- Visit our website, www.utdanacenter.org.

