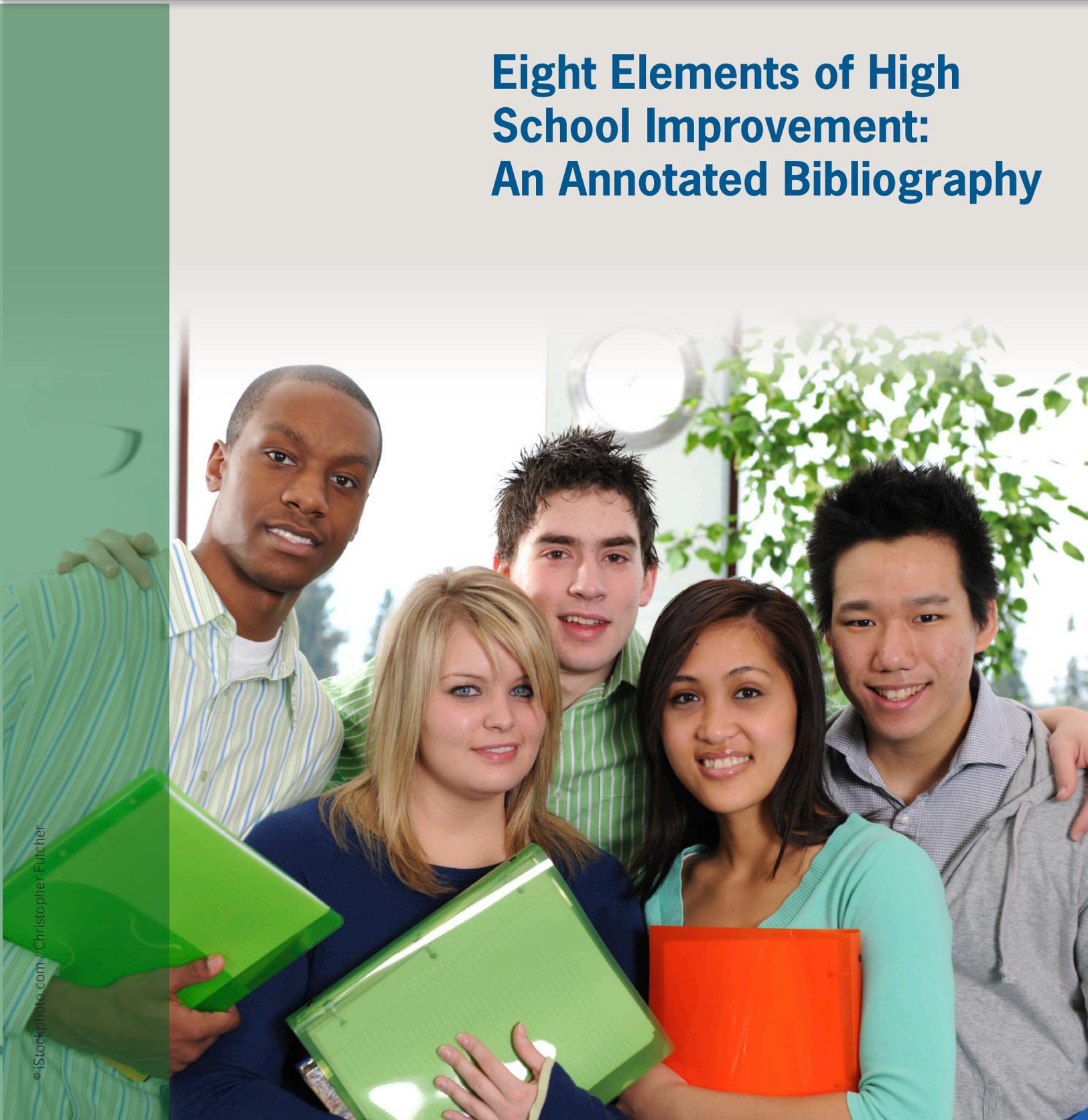


# **Eight Elements of High School Improvement: An Annotated Bibliography**



## **Eight Elements of High School Improvement: An Annotated Bibliography**

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By Wehmah Jones, Ph.D., of the National High School Center at AIR

The following table is a summary of resources available that support the National High School Center's *Eight Elements of High School Improvement: A Mapping Framework*. This framework is based on eight common elements of systemic school reform and provides a structure for understanding, aligning, and prioritizing reform initiatives to develop coherent and contextually appropriate approaches to high school improvement at the state and local levels. The elements are:

- Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
- Assessment and Accountability
- Teacher Quality and Professional Development
- Student and Family Supports
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Leadership and Governance
- Organization and Structure
- Resources for Sustainability

Resources are categorized by the framework element(s) they address and include research studies (quantitative and qualitative), meta-analyses and syntheses, and tools and products. The table is followed by a brief annotation of each resource. Please note that this list is not comprehensive.

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Note: This annotated bibliography supports the National High School Center's Eight Elements Framework developed by Joseph R. Harris, Ph.D., Phyllis Cohen, and Todd Flaherty, Ed.D.

Short Citation	Type <sup>1</sup>	Level <sup>2,3</sup>	Eight Common Elements of Systemic School Reform <sup>4</sup>										
			Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction	Assessment & Accountability	Teacher Quality & Professional Development	Resources for Sustainability	Leadership & Governance	Organization & Structure	Student & Family Supports	Stakeholder Engagement			
Adelman (2006)	Quantitative	1	✓										
American Institutes for Research (2005)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
American Productivity and Quality Center (2000)	Product/Tool	NA		✓									
Bomotti & Dugan (2005)	Synthesis	2								✓			
Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown (2002)	Meta-Analysis	2	✓							✓			
Canter, Klotz, & Cowan (2008, February)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		
Catsambis (1998)	Quantitative	1											✓
Darling-Hammond (2000)	Quantitative	1			✓	✓							

<sup>1</sup> Products and tools include research, policy, and issue briefs; tool kits; field guides; snap shots; and fact sheets.

<sup>2</sup> All quantitative and qualitative research studies that pass the preliminary screen are reviewed using the National High School Center research review criteria. Studies are sorted by the initial rigor of the research design and placed on a research continuum from 3 to 1, with 3 representing the more rigorous designs. The studies are then reviewed against quality indicators specific to each design. Studies can be “downgraded” by one or two levels or fail out of the review if there are threats to causal validity. The level of downgrade depends on the severity of the threat.

<sup>3</sup> NA is used for products and tools because these resources are screened and reviewed using a different set of criteria than that which is used for research studies. These criteria addressed the quality, relevance and utility of the resource. Only those with above average ratings were included in this document.

<sup>4</sup> Some interventions may address several elements; however, the categorization of resources is based solely on the elements that are specifically addressed in the document reviewed.

Short Citation	Type <sup>1</sup>	Level <sup>2,3</sup>	Eight Common Elements of Systemic School Reform <sup>4</sup>												
			Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction	Assessment & Accountability	Teacher Quality & Professional Development	Resources for Sustainability	Leadership & Governance	Organization & Structure	Student & Family Supports	Stakeholder Engagement					
Garcia & Ortiz (2006)	Product/Tool	NA								✓	✓				✓
Henderson & Mapp (2002)	Synthesis	2										✓			✓
Hughes, Bailey, & Mechur (2001)	Synthesis	2	✓		✓										✓
Kemple & Snipes (2000)	Quantitative	3	✓							✓		✓			
Lachat (2001)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓			✓								
Langer (2003)	Qualitative	3	✓							✓		✓			
Langer (2000)	Qualitative	3	✓				✓								
Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Aphorpe, Snow, & Martin-Glenn (2006)	Meta-Analysis	3	✓									✓			
Lee & Smith (1995)	Quantitative	2											✓		
Legters, Balfanz, Jordan, & McPartland (2002)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓		✓
Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓		✓
Lewis, Dugan, Winokur, & Cobb (2005)	Quantitative	2												✓	
Marsh (2000)	Literature Review	NA											✓		✓

Short Citation	Type <sup>1</sup>	Level <sup>2,3</sup>	Eight Common Elements of Systemic School Reform <sup>4</sup>										
			Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction	Assessment & Accountability	Teacher Quality & Professional Development	Resources for Sustainability	Leadership & Governance	Organization & Structure	Student & Family Supports	Stakeholder Engagement			
McLaughlin & Talbert (2003)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
National Association of Secondary School Principals (2004)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newmann & Wehlage (1995)	Literature Review	NA	✓		✓	✓	✓						
Reeves (2003)	Product/Tool	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skrla, Scheurich, & Johnson (2000)	Qualitative	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlithy (2002)	Quantitative	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Stodden, Dowrick, Stodden, & Gilmore (2001)	Literature Review	NA	✓									✓	
Unger, Lane, Cutler, Lee, Whitney, Arruda, & Silva (2008)	Product/Tool	NA				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Waters, Marzano, & McNulty (2003)	Meta-Analysis	2					✓	✓	✓	✓			
Wart, Powell, Mendiola, & Cossio (2006)	Quantitative	2	✓	✓		✓					✓		
White, Haslam, & Hewes (2006)	Quantitative	3	✓										

## DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCES

**Adelman, C. (2006).** *Answers in the tool box revisited: Academic intensity, attendance patterns, and bachelor's degree attainment.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction

**Summary:** Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Studies of 1988 and 2000, this follow-up study explores the characteristics of formal schooling that contribute to the completion of a bachelor's degree by the time students reached their mid-20s. The rigor of students' high school curriculum, particularly rigorous mathematics courses, continued to count more than any other precollegiate factor in determining degree completion. Results indicated that not all students have the same access to a rigorous curriculum. For example, the study found that Latino students are less likely than White and Asian students to enroll in schools that offer trigonometry. In addition, students with low socioeconomic status are less likely to attend schools that offer mathematics above Algebra 2.

**American Institutes for Research. (2005).** *Toward more effective school districts: A review of the knowledge base.* Washington, DC: Author.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report synthesizes selected literature about district effectiveness in improving student achievement and identifies key characteristics of high-performing, high-poverty districts. Several primary themes emerged from the literature including: focusing first on student achievement and learning, having a theory of action on how to produce change, emphasizing data-based decisionmaking, and being committed to meaningful professional learning opportunities. The report discusses the limitations of the existing literature on the topic and provides additional resources that have been developed to help districts implement reform.

**American Productivity and Quality Center. (2000).** *Benchmarking best practices in accountability systems in education.* Houston, TX: Author.

**Elements Covered:** Assessment & Accountability

**Summary:** This report presents the results of a benchmarking study designed to identify best practices in accountability that allowed school systems to meet their goals or benchmarks. The authors identified seven key component areas that characterized strong accountability systems: leadership, climate/context, operations, human resources, data measurement/management, communication, and standards for teaching/learning. The report describes best practices for each component.

**Bomotti, S. S., & Dugan, J. S. (2005).** *Smaller learning communities: A synthesis of evidence based research.* Berkeley, CA: MPR Associates, Inc.

**Elements Covered:** Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This report presents a systematic review of the quantitative literature examining the effects of smaller learning communities on student achievement. Although the authors did not find enough evidence to support a causal relationship between small schools and achievement, they concluded that the available research suggests an association with higher academic achievement under certain circumstances, particularly for disadvantaged students, and improved achievement equity. The authors also concluded that the number of qualified empirical studies was too small to draw conclusions about the effects of schools-within-schools on student achievement.

**Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002).** *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis (Report No. 59).* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This meta-analysis reviewed research on 232 studies of the 29 most widely implemented comprehensive school reform (CSR) models. Overall, CSR models appear to have greater effects than other interventions intended to serve the same populations. Eighteen of the 29 models served students in Grades 9–12. The report provides details on the research base of each model.

**Canter, A., Klotz, M. B., & Cowan, K. (2008, February).** Response to Intervention: The future for secondary schools. *Principal Leadership*, 8(6), 12–15.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This article examines Response to Intervention (RTI) and its role in improving secondary schools. The authors describe RTI and how it can be used to improve outcomes for all students, not just those requiring special education. The report discusses elements of effective RTI programs, including administrative support and systematic data collection.

Catsambis, S. (1998). *Expanding the knowledge of parental involvement in secondary education: Effects on high school academic success* (Report No. 27). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

**Elements Covered:** Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This study examines the relationship between parental involvement and various educational outcomes. Using the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, this report looks at data from more than 13,500 parents and their students who remained in school through the 12th grade. In the analysis, the author identifies and uses several different indicators of parental involvement. Findings show that in general parental involvement has a positive influence on students' academic achievement; however certain indicators of involvement have greater effects than others. For instance, encouragement for postsecondary attendance has the strongest positive effects for 12th-grade students. The study also includes a longitudinal analysis of parental involvement at Grades 8 and 12 and their effects on academic achievement in Grade 12.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Teacher quality and student achievement. A review of state policy evidence. Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 8(1).*

**Elements Covered:** Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability

**Summary:** This report examines the relationship between teacher qualifications and other school factors, such as class size and student achievement. The study found a strong positive relationship between teacher certification and preparation and mathematics and reading achievement. This relationship held up even after controlling for student characteristics such as language and socioeconomic status. The report also discusses implications for state efforts to improve the quality of education.

Garcia, S. B., & Ortiz, A. A. (2006). *Preventing disproportionate representation: Culturally and linguistically responsive pre-referral interventions*. Tempe, AZ: The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems.

**Elements Covered:** Student & Family Supports, Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This research brief, while not specifically focused on high school students, addresses the issues of disproportionality in special education. The authors highlight four key elements of culturally and linguistically responsive pre-referral intervention and provide recommendations for how schools can implement these interventions to help improve the achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

**Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002).** *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.

**Elements Covered:** Student & Family Supports; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report examines the literature on the effects of school, parent, and community connections on student achievement. Although the report includes students in all grade levels, the authors identify studies and report findings that are specific to high school students. The studies fall into three broad categories: (a) the impact of family and community involvement on achievement; (b) effective strategies for connecting school, families; and communities; and (c) organizational efforts of parents and the community to improve schools. Results suggest that students benefit from family and community involvement. Benefits include higher GPAs, better attendance, and improved behavior at home and school. The authors note that the positive results occur when family involvement is accompanied by additional factors, such as high standards and expectations, focused professional development, and effective leadership. The report also describes characteristics of programs that are successful at engaging families and communities and provides recommendations to aid stakeholders in the practical implementation of the findings.

**Hughes, K., Bailey, T., & Mechur, M. (2001).** *School-to-Work: Making a difference in education.* New York: New York Institute on Education and the Economy.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report examines the literature on the school-to-work initiative and its effects on students, teachers, and employers. The study found that these programs tend to foster positive relationships between participating youth and adults. Findings also suggest that the short-term effects of this initiative are promising. Positive effects include improved student attendance, grades, graduation rates, and labor market outcomes. Teachers and employers also reported benefitting from participation in the program. The authors note that research on the impact of the school-to-work initiative on standardized test scores was inconclusive and long-term effects on factors, such as postsecondary enrollment and completion and labor market success, are still unknown.

**Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000).** *Career Academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school.* New York: MDRC.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This study uses a large-scale, multisite, experimental design to determine the effects of Career Academies on a range of student educational, developmental, and work-related outcomes, including student achievement and student engagement. This report provides information on the implementation of Career Academies. According to this study, Career Academies produce positive results, including improved high school outcomes for students at high risk of dropping out, increased likelihood of graduating on time for students at low risk of dropping out, and increased levels of interpersonal support and participation in career awareness and work-based learning activities. Career Academies did not improve student scores on standardized math and reading achievement tests.

Lachat, M. A. (2001). *Data-driven high school reform: The breaking ranks model*. Providence, RI: Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Resources for Sustainability

**Summary:** This report serves as a guide for educators who are interested in using data to improve student learning. The report synthesizes existing literature on data-driven high school reform, discusses barriers to effective data use, and provides strategies for capacity building around data-driven reform. The authors also provide examples of how they have worked with low-performing schools to implement data-driven reform based on the Breaking Ranks Model.

Langer, J. A. (2003). *Beating the odds: Teaching middle and high school students to read and write well*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 837–880.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This qualitative study of 25 middle and high schools investigates characteristics of English language programs that differentiate higher-performing schools from typically performing schools. Schools were demographically similar. Analyses found six categories of characteristics that differentiated the schools: (1) approaches to skills instruction, (2) test preparation, (3) connecting learning, (4) enabling strategies, (5) conceptions of learning, and (6) classroom organization. Although programs in the more typical schools exhibited some of these characteristics, the higher-performing schools presented all of the characteristics all the time.

Langer, J. (2000). *Excellence in English in middle and high school: How teachers' professional lives support student achievement* (CELA-RR-12002). Albany, NY: The National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability

**Summary:** This qualitative study examines middle and high schools that demonstrated widespread success in improving student reading achievement, in an effort to identify the characteristics of teachers' professional environments that contribute to this success. The study identified six key features that contribute to student achievement: (1) coordinating efforts to improve achievement, (2) fostering teacher participation in professional communities, (3) creating activities that provide teachers with a sense of agency, (4) valuing commitment to professionalism, (5) engendering caring attitudes, and (6) fostering respect for learning. The report provides examples of how these features manifest in schools.

Lauer, P. A., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, S. B., Apthorp, H. S., Snow, D., & Martin-Glenn, M. L. (2006). Out-of-school time programs: A meta-analysis of effects for at-risk students. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(2), 275–313.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This meta-analysis reviewed 35 studies about the effectiveness of out-of-school-time (OST) programs on the math and reading achievement of at-risk students. All studies included a control or comparison group. This review attempted to answer the following research questions: Based on rigorous research and evaluation studies, what is the effectiveness of OST programs in assisting at-risk students in reading and mathematics? and how does the effectiveness of OST differ by program and study characteristics? The findings indicate that OST programs have a small but significant effect on students' math and reading achievement. Time of program implementation (e.g., during summer or after school) did not affect the impact of the program. Programs with such components as tutoring in reading showed a larger positive effect size.

Lee, V. E., & Smith, J. B. (1995). Effects of high school restructuring and size on early gains in achievement and engagement. *Sociology of Education, 68*(4), 241–270.

**Elements Covered:** Organization and Structure

**Summary:** This study examines whether practices consistent with the school restructuring movement have an effect on student learning. The study used two dimensions to evaluate high school restructuring: organizational practices (communal vs. bureaucratic) and school size. Schools were grouped into three categories: schools without reform practices, schools with traditional reform practices, and schools with restructured practices. Results found that students in schools with restructuring practices had significantly higher achievement gains and more equitably distributed learning than students in schools with no restructuring practices. In addition, it was found that academic gains were associated with smaller school size. The report also presents policy implications.

Legters, N., Balfanz, R., Jordan, W., & McPartland, J. (2002). *Comprehensive reform for urban high schools: A Talent Development approach*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This book provides an in-depth look at comprehensive reform efforts in urban high schools. The reform was based on the Talent Development Approach and involves curricular, organizational, and instructional strategies. This book describes positive outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing the Talent Development approach in high school reforms.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report examines existing evidence on how leadership affects student achievement. According to this report existing literature underestimates the effects of leadership on student learning when, among school-related factors that contribute to student learning, leadership is second only to classroom instruction. Results also suggest that the impact of leadership is greatest in the most challenging environments. The findings highlight successful leadership practices and support the notion that addressing leadership capacity should be a key part of school reform efforts.

Lewis, C. W., Dugan, J. J., Winokur, M. A., & Cobb, R. B. (2005). *The effects of block scheduling on high school academic achievement*. *NASSP Bulletin*, 89(645), 72–87.

**Elements Covered:** Elements Covered: Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This study examines the effects of block scheduling on high school reading and math achievement. The study compares 4x4 and A/B block scheduling with traditional scheduling. Results indicate that students in 4x4 block scheduling classes experience greater gains in mathematics and reading scores than those participating in A/B block scheduling and traditional scheduling.

Marsh, J. (2000). *Connecting districts to the policy dialogue: A review of literature on the relationship of districts with states, schools, and communities*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

**Elements Covered:** Leadership & Governance; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report reviews the literature on the role of districts in supporting instructional improvement. The report examines state–district and state–school relationships and the limited body of literature on district–community relationships. The literature indicates that districts generally take an active role in the change process and can play an important role in the improvement of teaching and learning.

McLaughlin, M., & Talbert, J. (2003). *Reforming districts: How districts support school reform*. Seattle, WA: Center for Study of Teaching and Policy.

**Elements Covered:** Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Leadership & Governance

**Summary:** This report offers evidence that district-level involvement is essential in supporting and advancing school-by-school reform efforts, despite the notion that districts inhibit effective change. Using survey data and 4-year case studies of three districts undergoing reform in California, the report shows how districts affect the progress of school reform and how districts can overcome difficulties associated with meaningful school change.

**National Association of Secondary School Principals. (2004).** *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for leading high school reform.* Reston, VA: Author.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report builds on the recommendations from the first edition, *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*. Breaking Ranks II recommends strategies to promote academic success for all students, including developing professional learning communities, establishing supportive adult relationships with students, and creating more personalized learning for students. The report also provides strategies to implement these recommendations and specific examples from schools that have made efforts to implement the recommendations.

**Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995).** *Successful school restructuring.* Madison, WI: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This report analyzes research on successful school restructuring based on four large-scale studies. According to this analysis, restructuring efforts must focus on changes that directly address the quality of student learning. The authors identify four key factors that characterize successful school restructuring: student learning, authentic pedagogy, school organizational capacity, and external support for student learning and organizational capacity.

**Reeves, C. (2003).** *State support to low-performing schools.* Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure; Student & Family Supports; Stakeholder Engagement

**Summary:** This report highlights the importance of state support to help low-performing schools and districts. The report provides examples of five states (Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, and Texas) that are using different strategies to facilitate ongoing reform efforts. The report describes key aspects of reform including: state assessment and accountability systems, identification of low-performing schools, funding resources, and technical assistance.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., & Johnson, J. H., Jr. (2000). *Equity-driven achievement-focused school districts*. Austin, TX: Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This report analyzes four public school districts in Texas to understand how academic improvement can be realized in districts with racially diverse, low-income populations. Through interviews with various stakeholders, classroom observations, and document reviews, the authors identify features that characterized these successful school districts. Findings were organized into five themes: state context of accountability for achievement and equity, local equity catalysts, ethical response of district leadership, district transformation, and everyday equity.

Snipes, J., Doolittle, F., & Herlihy, C. (2002). *Foundations for success: Case studies of how urban school systems improve student achievement*. New York: MDRC.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Teacher Quality & Professional Development; Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This exploratory study is a compilation of case studies conducted to see how urban districts can aid student achievement. Four urban districts were selected for this study based on their ability to show gains in student achievement: Houston Independent School District, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Sacramento Unified School District, and part of the Chancellor's District of New York City. Data from the study districts were analyzed with findings from two comparison districts. Although many of the findings came from the elementary school level, much of the discussion is based on districtwide practices.

Stodden, R., Dowrick, P., Stodden, N., & Gilmore, S. (2001). *A review of secondary school factors influencing post school outcomes for youth with disabilities*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This literature review discusses the literature on secondary school factors that influence postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities. The discussion focuses on and provides recommendations in four areas: dropout prevention and intervention, improving academic results, secondary school transition practices, and postsecondary education support provisions.

Unger, C., Lane, B., Cutler, E., Lee, S., Whitney, J, Arruda, E., & Silva, M. (2008). *How can state education agencies support district improvement: A conversation amongst educational leaders, researchers, and policy actors*. Providence, RI: The Education Alliance at Brown University.

**Elements Covered:** Resources for Sustainability; Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This report summarizes a symposium in which various stakeholders (e.g., state and district leaders, researchers, and others involved in the educational system) shared their (a) perspectives on challenges to district reform and school improvement and (b) ideas about how state education agencies can design, support, differentiate, and scale up effective district improvement efforts.

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

**Elements Covered:** Leadership & Governance; Organization & Structure

**Summary:** This meta-analysis examines the effects of school leadership on student achievement. The report describes a balanced leadership framework that resulted from a quantitative analysis, a review of theoretical literature on leadership, and insights from the research team. The quantitative analysis was based on 70 studies that met criteria established by the research team. Findings show a positive relationship between leadership and student achievement. The report also examines 21 leadership responsibilities that were found to be significantly correlated with student achievement.

Watt, K.M., Powell, C.A., Mendiola, I.D. & Cossio, G. (2006). Schoolwide impact and AVID: How have selected Texas high schools addressed the new accountability measures? *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 11(1), 57–73.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction; Assessment & Accountability; Resources for Sustainability; Student & Family Supports

**Summary:** This study examines the effects of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) model being implemented in 10 high schools in five districts in Texas over a 4-year period. AVID targets students with grades in the academic middle (i.e., grades of B, C, or D) and prepares them for college. According to the study, AVID schools and districts (a) had a greater increase in accountability ratings after at least 2 years of implementation; (b) showed increases in advanced course enrollment, whereas non-AVID schools showed a decrease in enrollment; (c) had a higher increase in the number of AP/IB test takers, and (d) showed an increase in graduation/completion rates, whereas the rates at non-AVID schools declined. Both AVID and non-AVID schools increased the number of students graduating with the recommended or distinguished graduation plan.

White, R. N., Haslam, M. B., & Hewes, G. M. (2006). *Improving student literacy in the Phoenix Union High School District 2003–04 and 2004–05: Final report*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

**Elements Covered:** Rigorous Curriculum & Instruction

**Summary:** This matched quasi-experimental study compared ninth- and 10th-grade students who participated in Scholastic's Read 180 program in 2003–04 and 2004–05 with students who did not participate in the program. Read 180 is a reading intervention program designed to help struggling readers and increase their opportunities for academic success. Overall, students in the Read 180 program significantly outperformed their counterparts on reading tests. Furthermore, subgroup analyses found that English language learners (ELLs) who participated in the Read 180 program outperformed an ELL comparison group on reading achievement.

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