

# Seizing the Moment for Transformation:

## *Nine ways school systems can restructure resources for student success*

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### **The Opportunity**

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Across the country, many states are slowly adding money back to education budgets that were cut during the Great Recession. Nonetheless, in most cases the increases are too small to cover the increase in spending over time, and districts still struggle to make the investments that will help their students meet ever higher standards.

With the hopeful prospect of new money before them and the continued pressure to stretch every dollar, school districts face a choice: do more of the same, or seize this moment of change to re-envision schooling to better meet student needs. This means thinking strategically about the resources school systems have and ensuring new funds go toward powerful ideas that will increase student achievement—not toward the same practices and policies that haven't gotten us where we need to be.

Since 2004, we at Education Resource Strategies (ERS) have worked with over 40 urban districts and four state departments of education to analyze how they're using resources—including people, time, and money—and to identify better ways to meet student needs. From our work we have seen that when there is an influx of new funds, there is political pressure to first think about reversing the cuts (particularly following a period of budget cuts). For example, when budgets were slashed around 2008, many districts increased class sizes across the board or reduced staff. It's tempting to use any new funds to undo these changes—and certainly many stakeholders will argue for their favorite program or pet issue—but going back to pre-recession spending patterns will not lead to sufficient improvements in student progress.

Why? First, it continues a cost-prohibitive pattern of spending. Across the country, most districts' spending patterns reflect antiquated cost structures—automatic increases in teacher salaries and benefits cost districts an estimated three to five percent more each year (before inflation) just to maintain services.<sup>1</sup> Rigid use of staff and time, and limited use of outsourcing for cost and quality purposes leads to inefficiencies. Second, many districts' student achievement scores did not grow rapidly under the old, expensive models. And now the stakes are even higher with the introduction of more rigorous college-and-career-ready standards, the need to invest in attracting and keeping great teachers, higher student need, and the exciting potential of new technology

and data systems to deliver learning in new ways. Given these factors, why would we want to go back?

To seize this moment of transformation, district leaders should make two big shifts. First, they should **empower strong, redesigned schools**. Stories abound of single schools that “beat the odds” and achieve high performance for all students despite a high concentration of student need. But these schools are still the exception, rather than expectation. Our work suggests that part of the reason it is so challenging to create strong schools at scale is that districts and schools don’t consistently organize people, time, and money in ways that are likely to accelerate student performance. So, to ensure higher performance across all schools, district leaders, policy makers, and board members need to make changes that enable high-performing school designs.

Second, they should **strategically invest and organize resources**. It would be easy (and tempting) to simply undo the cuts of the last few years, but an influx of new funds presents opportunities for districts to fundamentally transform the way they use people, time, and money.

Both of these steps require a vision for the role of a school system and how it can evolve to better support schools to accelerate student learning.

## Empower Strong Redesigned Schools

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Resource use in some schools looks very much the same as it did 60 years ago. Students are divided into classrooms of 20 to 30 students and receive instruction from one teacher about a particular subject for a set period of time—usually about 50 minutes per day for 180 days. Teachers have roughly the same set of responsibilities on the first day of their job as they will have on the last day of their career. They often work alone to plan and deliver instruction, rather than as part of a highly functioning team.

Through years of research and experience working with school systems, ERS has found that high-performing, high-growth schools use people, time, money, and technology in ways that look significantly different than the status quo. Although there is not one “right way” to organize resources, high-performing schools serving at-risk students organize around six common design essentials. We argue that to sustain high performance, schools must eventually address all these design essentials—but the specific ways in which schools organize their staff, time, and student assignments may change over time to fit evolving student needs, teacher capacity, and lessons learned. These design essentials revolve around implementing curriculum and instructional strategies that are both rigorous and empowering.<sup>2</sup>

## Six Design Essentials

### 1. Instruction

Uphold rigorous, college- and career-ready standards and use effective curricula, instructional strategies, and assessments to achieve them.

### 2. Teacher Collaboration

Organize teachers into expert-led teams focused on the design and delivery of instruction, and provide ongoing, growth-oriented feedback.

### 3. Talent Management

Attract and retain the best teachers, and design and assign roles and responsibilities to match skills to school and student needs.

### 4. Time and Attention

Match student grouping, learning time, technology, and programs to individual student needs.

### 5. Whole Child

Ensure that students are deeply known and that more intensive social and emotional supports are integrated, when necessary.

### 6. Growth-Oriented Adult Culture

Grow a collaborative culture where teachers and leaders share ownership of a common instructional vision and student learning.

Implementing and sustaining these design essentials require *district redesign* to enable the significant reorganization of people, time, and money and the support needed for designing new schedules, staffing models, and budgets. The appendix provides a quick reference for shifts that districts need to make to empower schools.

## Strategically Invest and Organize Resources

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Transformative change requires tough choices to tackle existing spending patterns and the structures that dictate them. It requires a clear vision of how schools accelerate learning and a holistic review of all programs to ensure consistency of approach. Through our work across the country, we typically see nine opportunities that free unproductive resources while simultaneously moving toward higher-performing designs for schools and systems. Districts should pay particular attention to restructuring these nine key areas:

### 1. Restructure one-size-fits-all teacher compensation and job structures to foster individual and team effectiveness, and reward contribution and demonstrated effectiveness.

Most districts employ a teacher compensation schedule with salary increases based on time in the district and educational attainment (i.e., master's degrees or other additional training.) But research suggests that advanced degrees have little effect on student academic success except in the area of math.<sup>3</sup> And while teacher experience in the early years leads to greater student

achievement, there is mixed evidence regarding its effect after five years.<sup>4</sup> In most districts, less than two percent of compensation pays for things that do impact performance, such as teachers' increased responsibility, taking on more challenging roles, or generating consistently higher student results.<sup>5</sup> Further, because teacher salaries rise slowly and independently of effectiveness or contribution (while the structure and nature of the job remains unchanged), many districts lose highly effective teachers to other professions early on.<sup>6</sup> Before restoring lost step increases to address the critical need to reward effective (and most likely underpaid) teachers, districts can use this moment to move away from across-the-board increases and ever-increasing benefits to rethink the entire "value proposition" of teaching—including work hours, benefits, and responsibilities, along with salary.<sup>7</sup> These reports explore these concepts in detail: [First Steps: What School Systems Can Do Right Now to Improve Teacher Compensation and Career Path.](#) " [Misfit Structures and Lost Opportunities](#)" and " [Do More, Add More, Earn More: Teacher Salary Redesign Lessons from 10 First Mover Districts.](#)"

**2. Realign investment in professional learning to focus on rigorous, comprehensive curricula and assessments; content-focused, expert-led collaboration; and frequent-growth oriented feedback—rather than one-off workshops.**

For too long, districts have focused on delivering new knowledge and instructional strategies in bite-size increments. Research suggests that effective professional learning takes place over time and allows for ongoing practice and feedback. Further, it shows that some of the most powerful learning happens when embedded into the daily job of teaching. Instructional coaches and teacher leaders can impact teachers' skills the most by modeling effective teaching practices as part of regular, content-specific planning, because it solves actual issues that teachers need to address. Providing expert support to a team of teachers—and allowing them to learn from each other—multiplies the effect.<sup>8</sup> As districts move toward implementing curriculum and instructional strategies that align with more empowering, college- and career-ready standards, this kind of time-intensive, collaborative professional development will become even more critical. [Igniting the Learning Engine: How School Systems Accelerate Teacher Effectiveness and Student Growth through Connected Professional Learning](#) provides examples of four school systems that have redesigned their professional learning model to emphasize curricula, collaboration, and feedback.

**3. Rethink rigid class sizes and one-teacher classroom models to target individual attention, especially for struggling students.**

Implementation of college- and career- ready standards will exacerbate achievement gaps, making it even more essential to find ways to adjust individual attention continuously to ensure learners don't get left behind. Most students spend their entire day in classes of the same or random sizes, regardless of the subject or their individual academic needs. A more strategic approach that more closely addresses individual needs would have students spend their day in a variety of settings. For one subject, they might be in a somewhat larger class, but for another subject (or even a component of the first subject), they might be in a small group, a one-on-one session, or have computer-based instruction. This kind of flexibility allows school leaders to get the most out of the school's highly effective teachers, as well as provide a

customized approach for each student. In [Designing Schools that Work: Organizing Resources Strategically for Student Success](#), we explain how schools make this possible through “strategic school design,” which involves rethinking traditional uses of people, time, and money.

**4. Optimize existing time to meet student and teacher needs and expand as needed.**

Many schools organize around an “everything’s equal” philosophy where students are organized into age-based grades and time blocks, regardless of subject or need. High-performing schools use time more flexibly to respond to student needs and devote a higher percentage of time to literacy and math when appropriate. These schools are deliberate in organizing longer periods for more intensive instruction or using labs and shorter periods to practice skills.<sup>9</sup> These schools also extend time as needed, ensuring that extra time builds on the existing schedule. One way to capture more time and more flexibility for scheduling creatively may be to link increases in teacher salary to extended time for teachers and students. On [School Design section of our website](#), you can browse profiles of schools from across the country that are implementing innovative strategies to rethink rigid class sizes and optimize existing time.

**5. Leverage special education spending to provide early intervention and targeted individual attention for all students.**

While no one doubts that educating a special education student should cost more than educating a general education student, spending on special education in the U.S. has skyrocketed—growing from four percent to 21 percent of average district spending between 1970 and 2005, while the dropout rate for students with disabilities is twice that of general education students.<sup>10</sup> Special education is usually funded through categorical funding streams; however, there is often more flexibility in how these dollars can be used than is commonly believed. For example, funding from the federal IDEA can be used for early intervention, which could, in the long term, help reduce the number of students placed in high-cost special education programs. There may be similar flexibilities in how state special education funds can be used. Additionally, we have learned through our work that many districts spend significantly more on special education than they are allotted through categorical streams—in essence, taking from general education funds to support special education. It’s this portion of spending that can be redirected. Imagine a world where most students with special education needs learn together with their peers, where teachers with special education training push in to general education classes, where teachers collaborate, and where all students benefit from individualized teaching strategies.

**6. Support and develop leadership teams.**

Investment in school leadership—recruiting, professional development, career growth, and support—varies widely from district to district and clearly represents a highly leveraged opportunity. Some districts spend very little on this, and few districts have systematic plans for measuring and developing existing school leader capacity. However, strong school leadership is critical to school success, and we know it is one of the things that teachers value the most. A study by Eric Hanushek, Gregory Branch, and Steven Rivkin shows that “highly effective

principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year...[and these results] affect all students in a given school.”<sup>11</sup> To move to a model that builds principals’ capacity to initiate, lead, and maintain instructional improvements, districts must clearly define what effective leaders need to know and be able to do. Districts then need to use that definition to hire and develop the right leaders, place them in the right situations over their careers, measure their performance, hold them accountable, and give them the right support. In addition, being deliberate and consistent about leadership development across the district will ensure a ready pool of high-potential leaders to draw on as opportunities arise.<sup>12</sup>

**7. Revisit school funding to increase flexibility and match need.**

Before making changes to school allocations, it is crucial to understand how dollars and staff are currently allocated, and if these allocations match need. In every district we have worked with, we found wide variations in dollars per pupil at the school level, even when adjusted for differences in school need. These differences happen for a variety of reasons, such as specialty programs, legacy staff positions added at various points in time in response to needs that may have now passed, differences in teacher experience and compensation levels, and school size. Whatever the reason, leaders must be clear about why these differences exist and if they serve strategic purposes.

Schools will need more flexibility than traditionally exists to hire staff, define job roles that fit need and match skills, and to organize time. Student-Based Budgeting (SBB), also known as Weighted Student Funding, can be a way to better create flexibility and align funding with need. SBB allocates dollars to schools based on the number of enrolled students, where each student receives a funding “weight” based on needs, such as special education or economic disadvantage. This contrasts with traditional funding systems that allocate staff and other resources to schools, often absent any consideration of student needs. A helpful resource is [The Student-Based Budgeting Toolkit](#)—a collection of guides and planning tools to help districts understand SBB, decide if it’s right for them, and begin implementation.

**8. Leverage outside partners and technology to maintain or improve quality at lower cost.**

In tough budget times, many districts have been forced to cut all but the “core,” eliminating positions like librarians, elective and non-core teachers, and social-emotional support staff. Before reinstating these positions, consider the alternatives. Many communities have a variety of resources, such as community colleges, local businesses and artists, youth service organizations, and others that may be able to provide some of what was traditionally only offered by schools—and they may be able to do it at improved quality and/or lower cost. This may also be the case with technology providers that can offer online courses and expanded curricular offerings.

**9. Redesign central offices for efficiency and school leader empowerment.**

Outsiders often talk of large central office “bureaucracies” that waste taxpayer dollars and frustrate school leaders with rules that don’t seem to make sense. Leaders need to be transparent about their spending on central office functions and how they compare to similar districts—and they need to be constantly vigilant in finding more efficient ways of delivering services. Even though dollars available for reallocation are typically not close to what is needed for the largest opportunities, this can be a starting point for building confidence. In addition, we often find opportunities to devolve certain functions to the school level so they can better match needs. These might include positions for special subjects, coaching positions, or intervention support. By far the most important opportunity for central office redesign involves moving from a compliance organization to a service organization where roles, processes, timelines, and routines shift to match the priorities and needs of schools. Ironically this may require some short-term investment to build new skills, systems, and mindsets, but these can often be offset through other efficiencies gained. [The New Education CFO](#) explores how CFOs can take a leading role in transforming their departments from “siloes,” compliance-driven units to service partners with schools and academics.

**Figure 1:** Summary of Transformation Opportunities

Opportunity Area	“Restore the Old Ways” Option	Strategic Transformation Option
<b>1. Teacher Compensation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across-the-board teacher salary raises regardless of performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link portion of salary increase to more time</li> <li>• Targeted raises based on teacher roles</li> <li>• Targeted raises based on taking on hard-to-staff subjects or schools</li> </ul>
<b>2. Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra salary for course credits</li> <li>• Offsite workshops on varied topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher teams with sufficient collaborative planning time and expert support</li> <li>• Instructional coaches and teacher leaders who model effective practices and provide one-on-one guidance</li> </ul>
<b>3. Individual Attention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across-the-board class size reductions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible grouping and varied group sizes, providing individual attention for high-need students/subjects</li> </ul>
<b>4. Use of Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional (equal amounts of time for all students in all subjects)</li> <li>• 6.5-hour school day, 183 days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher percent of time in core, as needed</li> <li>• Use time more flexibly</li> <li>• Extend time to fit needs, using new partnerships</li> </ul>

<b>5. Special Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High rates of referral</li> <li>• High spending on remediation in specialized settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on early intervention</li> <li>• Special education and general education students integrated, with high level of coordination among teachers</li> <li>• Push-in model that provides for targeted intervention for all struggling students</li> </ul>
<b>6. Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low investment in school leader PD</li> <li>• Undifferentiated compensation and career path</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher investment in school leader recruitment, PD, assignment, accountability, and support</li> <li>• More opportunities for leadership with differentiated rewards linked to contribution</li> </ul>
<b>7. School Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore one-size-fits-all staffing guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make resources more flexible</li> <li>• Weight for student need</li> </ul>
<b>8. Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinstating positions that were previously cut, such as librarians, non-core teachers, and social-emotional support providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look to partner organizations to provide these services at improved quality and/or lower cost</li> <li>• Look to technology providers for online courses and expanded curriculum offerings</li> </ul>
<b>9. Central Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency cuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign restructuring and devolution of dollars</li> </ul>

It would be overwhelming to implement all or even many of these initiatives in a short time period, so districts should start by crafting an overall vision and a plan to implement pieces successively. There may be some quick wins that are either easy to implement or will appease a particular stakeholder; but to achieve sustainable district transformation, districts must also plan to take on the bigger and more difficult changes. The matrix below can be used to help determine which initiatives to consider and how to stage the implementation:

**Figure 2: District Action Prioritization Matrix**

	<b>Impact on Student Performance: LOW</b>	<b>Impact on Student Performance: HIGH</b>
<b>Easy</b>	MAYBE Quick win or to respond to a “pain point”	YES Make the change <i>now</i>
<b>Hard</b>	NO	YES Plan changes over the long term



## Conclusion

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School and district leaders face a unique moment in time. In a world of higher expectations and greater need, as well as the prospect of new resources for education, we can't afford to keep doing the same thing. Fundamentally reinventing schools and districts to move away from practices and structures designed for an earlier time will require collective leadership and sustained engagement from district leaders, school boards, and the larger community.

### TAKE ACTION

**Go deeper on the following ERS resources referred to in this paper.**

- *First Steps: What School Systems Can Do Right Now to Improve Teacher Compensation and Career Path*; [www.erstrategies.org/tap/first\\_steps](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/first_steps)
- *Misfit Structures and Lost Opportunities*;  
[www.erstrategies.org/tap/misfit\\_structures\\_lost\\_opportunities](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/misfit_structures_lost_opportunities)  
See also *Rethinking the Value Proposition to Improve Teaching Effectiveness*;  
[www.erstrategies.org/library/rethinking\\_the\\_value\\_proposition](http://www.erstrategies.org/library/rethinking_the_value_proposition)
- *Do More, Add More, Earn More: Teacher Salary Redesign Lessons from 10 First Mover Districts*;  
[www.erstrategies.org/tap/do\\_more\\_add\\_more\\_earn\\_more](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/do_more_add_more_earn_more)
- *Igniting the Learning Engine: How School Systems Accelerate Teacher Effectiveness and Student Growth through Connected Professional Learning*;  
[www.erstrategies.org/tap/connected\\_professional\\_learning](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/connected_professional_learning)
- *Designing Schools that Work: Organizing Resources Strategically for Student Success*;  
[www.erstrategies.org/tap/designing\\_schools\\_that\\_work](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/designing_schools_that_work)
- The Get Started: School Design section of the ERS website;  
[www.erstrategies.org/get\\_started/school\\_design](http://www.erstrategies.org/get_started/school_design)
- The Student-Based Budgeting Toolkit; [www.erstrategies.org/tap/what\\_is\\_student-based\\_budgeting\\_toolkit](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/what_is_student-based_budgeting_toolkit)
- *The New Education CFO*; [www.erstrategies.org/tap/the\\_new\\_education\\_cfo](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/the_new_education_cfo)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Hawley Miles, Karen. "Transformation or Decline? Using Tough Times to Create Higher-Performing Schools." Kappan (PDK). October 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Hawley Miles, Karen; Ferris, Kristen; and Quist Green, Genevieve. "Designing Schools that Work: Organizing Resources Strategically for Student Success." Education Resource Strategies. May 2017. [www.erstrategies.org/tap/designing\\_schools\\_that\\_work](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/designing_schools_that_work).

<sup>3</sup> Dan D. Goldhaber and Dominic J. Brewer, "When Should We Reward Degrees for Teachers?" Phi Delta Kappan 80 (2) (1998), available at [www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-21239727/when-should-we-reward-degrees-for-teachers](http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-21239727/when-should-we-reward-degrees-for-teachers).

Ozdemir, M. and Stevenson, W., "The Impact of Teachers' Advanced Degrees on Student Learning," the Appendix of "Human Capital in Boston Public Schools: Rethinking How to Attract, Develop, and Retain Effective Teachers." Washington, DC; National Council on Teacher Quality; 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Steven G. Rivkin, Eric A. Hanushek, and John F. Kain, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," *Econometrica* 73 (2) (2005): 417–458, available at [www.econ.ucsb.edu/~jon/Econ230C/HanushekRivkin.pdf](http://www.econ.ucsb.edu/~jon/Econ230C/HanushekRivkin.pdf); Jennifer King Rise, "The Impact of Teacher Experience: Examining the Evidence and Policy Implications" (Washington: The National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, 2010), available at [www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/1001455-impact-teacher-experience.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/1001455-impact-teacher-experience.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> "Misfit Structures & Lost Opportunities." Education Resource Strategies. April 2013. [www.erstrategies.org/tap/misfit\\_structures\\_lost\\_opportunities](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/misfit_structures_lost_opportunities).

<sup>6</sup> Henke, Robin R.; Chen, Xianglei; and Geis, Sonya. "Progress Through the Teacher Pipeline: 1992-93 College Graduates and Elementary/Secondary School Teaching as of 1997." U.S. Department of Education; and National Center for Education Statistics. January 2000. Quoted in "The Strategic Design of Teacher Compensation." Education Resource Strategies. November 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Hawley Miles, Karen; Frank, Stephen; Katz, Nicole; and Wright Apfelbaum, Kate. "Low Teacher Salaries 101." Education Resource Strategies. June 2018. [www.erstrategies.org/tap/low\\_teacher\\_salaries\\_101](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/low_teacher_salaries_101).

<sup>8</sup> Hawley Miles, Karen; Rosenberg, David; and Quist Green, Genevieve. "Igniting the Learning Engine: How School Systems Accelerate Teacher Effectiveness and Student Growth through Connected Professional Learning." Part of the "Connected Professional Learning for Teachers" series. Education Resource Strategies. April 2017. [www.erstrategies.org/tap/connected\\_professional\\_learning](http://www.erstrategies.org/tap/connected_professional_learning).

<sup>9</sup> Shields, Regis and Hawley Miles, Karen. "Strategic Designs: Lessons from Leading Edge Small Urban High Schools." Education Resource Strategies. 2008. [www.erstrategies.org/library/strategic\\_designs\\_lessons\\_from\\_leading\\_edge\\_small\\_high\\_schools](http://www.erstrategies.org/library/strategic_designs_lessons_from_leading_edge_small_high_schools).

<sup>10</sup> Hess, Frederick, "Rethinking Special Ed Spending." Education Next. June 2011; 2006 U.S. Budget, Historical Tables; Orfano, Finn, "Why Special Needs Students Dropout—And What You Can Do About It." October 2010. Bright Hub Education (quoting statistics from the U.S. Department of Education).

<sup>11</sup> Branch, Gregory; Hanushek, Eric; and Rivkin, Steven. "School Leaders Matter." Education Next. Winter 2013. [www.educationnext.org/school-leaders-matter](http://www.educationnext.org/school-leaders-matter).

<sup>12</sup> For more on this topic, see the Leadership page on the Education Resource Strategies site: [www.erstrategies.org/get\\_started/leadership](http://www.erstrategies.org/get_started/leadership).

## Appendix

### From business-as-usual to a strategic school system: shifts that school systems need to make

From This:	To This:
<b>Standards and Instructional Resources</b>	
Inconsistent standards that don't prepare kids to think critically, creatively, or collaboratively.	➔ All students can access rigorous curricula and assessments aligned with college- and career-ready standards.
<b>Teaching</b>	
An isolated job, uneven distribution of expertise and experience, and career paths and compensation that are unconnected to results or contribution.	➔ Teachers have the time and support for team collaboration and learning, they are strategically hired and assigned, and their career paths and compensation enable growth and reward contribution.
<b>School Design</b>	
A one-size-fits-all learning environment with rigid schedules and class sizes that don't accommodate different learning needs.	➔ School roles, teams, and schedules are structured to enable personalized time and attention, teacher collaboration, and professional learning.
<b>Leadership</b>	
Limited autonomy, flexibility, and support that do little to develop and promote strong leadership.	➔ Leadership roles have clear goals, accountability, and career paths, with flexibility and support to achieve results.
<b>School Support &amp; Accountability</b>	
A central office focused on compliance and oversight rather than productive partnerships with schools.	➔ The central office is a service and strategy partner in sharing best practices and ensuring all schools reach learning goals.
<b>Funding &amp; Portfolio</b>	
Wide funding differences across schools, with unplanned and inconsistent school sizes, program offerings, and locations.	➔ School funding is equitable, flexible, and transparent; and the portfolio of schools reflects student and community need, equity of access, and cost.
<b>Community Engagement</b>	
Schools struggling to deliver learning outcomes on their own, without a systematic approach to partnering.	➔ Partnerships with families, community institutions, youth service organizations, and online instructors effectively serve students' needs.

Education Resource Strategies (ERS) is a national non-profit that partners with district, school, and state leaders to transform how they use resources (people, time, and money) so that every school prepares every child for tomorrow, no matter their race or income. We tackle challenges such as teacher compensation and career path, funding equity, school design, central office support, and budget development. We also share research and practical tools based on our extensive dataset, and we collaborate with others to create the conditions for change in education.

In all our work we focus on the larger picture: how resources work together to create high-performing systems. Our non-profit status enables a different kind of partnership with districts and states, one where we participate in the transformation struggle, create insights together, and share lessons with others.

