

Working Together Matters For Improvement

What Can Practitioners & Policy Makers Do to Build a Collaborative System?




@shankerinst | @AFTteach | #Teach15

Monday July 13, 2015 | 2:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Washington D.C. | Marriott Wardman Park




ALBERT SHANKER INSTITUTE





Improvement is as much about the capacities of educators and school leaders (human capital) as it is about the capacities and resources that are created between them (social capital) through interpersonal interaction, trust and cooperation, at all levels of the school organization and broader school system.





Shimon Waronker

Founder, The New American Academy




Reflective Question 2



On the one hand we, as a country, espouse the belief that we need to raise standards, have greater accountability, and measure student achievement; on the other hand, we want our students to become critical and independent thinkers who are collaborative and innovative.

The above gap doesn't even discuss relationships. How should we frame what the national discussion should be?





THE NEW AMERICAN ACADEMY

A New Vision for Education

Working Together Matters for Improvement: What Can Practitioners & Policy Makers Do to Build a Collaborative System?

Shimon Waronker, Founder
July 13, 2015

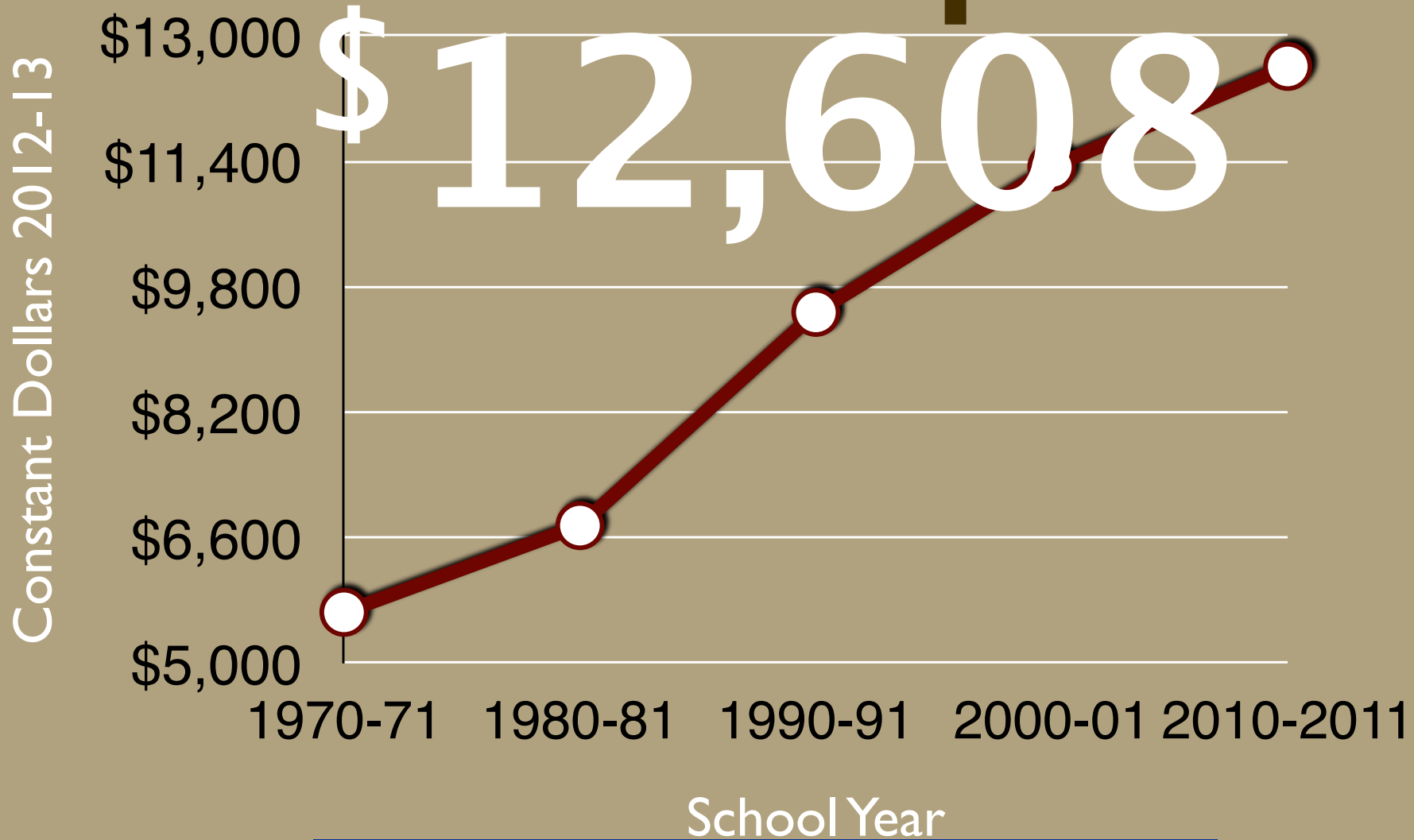
“Our Nation is at risk . . . the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people . . . If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves

. . . We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.”

NATION AT RISK

A Nation At Risk, 1983

Total Expenditure Per-Pupil



Source: NCES, Digest of Education Statistics, 2014.

THE CHALLENGE

16.8%
in 5 yrs
50%
of teachers leave

national teacher turnover

Nearly half of all teachers who enter the field leave it within a mere five years, and the best and brightest teachers are often the first to leave. Teacher attrition has grown by 50 percent over the past 15 years. The national teacher turnover rate has risen to 16.8 percent. In urban schools it is over 20 percent.

\$7.3 billion

teacher turnover cost

The national cost of public school teacher turnover could be over \$7.3 billion a year.

In
1970
in New York
City

...a starting lawyer going into a prestigious firm and a starting teacher going into public education had a differential in their entry salary of about \$2000.

Today
including salary and bonus, that starting lawyer makes \$160,000, while starting teachers in New York make roughly \$45,000.

TODAY'S STUDENTS

FACE A COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT



The 21st Century economy is increasingly interconnected and **knowledge-driven**¹.



For colleagues on a team or members of a community, **strong interpersonal skills** have become rare and valuable assets².

To be successful,
today's students must
be
**empowered to
innovate**
and
**wired to
collaborate.**



BUT OUR SCHOOLS ARE CONSTRAINED BY AN OUTDATED DESIGN

Large, static classes student-teacher ratios at ~25:1



Limited flexibility for:

- collaborative group work
- project-based learning
- inter-teacher mentoring

Teachers are stuck with the same material but new pupils each year



Lost time and flat lessons:

- 20%+ of each classroom year spent establishing systems & relationships
- teaching innovation stifled by monotony



AND OUR TEACHERS

ARE NOT EMPOWERED TO DELIVER

Developing high-level skills like **innovation** and **collaboration** is difficult, particularly for teachers in under-resourced schools, given:

**Minimal
practical
training**

in managing group work and project-based learning

**Scant
planning
time**

to tailor their instruction

**No long-term
incentives**

to continue honing their craft

We are working to create a new brand of schools, where design **constraints are removed** and **teachers are empowered** to deliver.



OUR SOLUTION

RE-IMAGINES SCHOOL DESIGN & TEACHER SUPPORT

Optimized Design

- Grade-wide **teaching teams**, spaced along a career ladder, plan and work together every day
- Teams **“loop” with students** (i.e. progress through grades alongside their pupils)



Empowered Teachers

- **Deep Training**
daily mentoring, Summer Institute
- **Broad Autonomy**
common planning time, flexible student grouping
- **Pathways for Growth**
performance-based advancement

Our empowered teachers, working together in a school structure optimized for building deep relationships, can instill high-level skills like **innovation** and **collaboration**.



EMPOWERED TEACHERS

ARE WELL-EQUIPPED, INDEPENDENT AND MOTIVATED

Deep Training

- 5-week summer training institute
- Daily, in-class mentoring from master teacher on their team
- Bi-weekly professional coaching sessions

Benefits

- Teachers master the challenges of managing inquiry-driven curricula, center-based learning and individualized instruction
- Teams can incorporate new members, gel and co-plan well before September

Broad Autonomy

- Teaching teams leverage 90 minutes of daily planning time to design and deliver tailored instruction across all subjects

Benefits

- Flexible groupings allow for supported growth of struggling students and new teachers
- Collaborative approach promotes strong peer accountability

Pathways for Growth

- Career ladder: salaries increase and responsibilities evolve based on performance and peer-review, not tenure

Benefits

- Collaboration, effort and academic results translate into financial and professional growth
- Opportunity to blend-in coaching with classroom duties

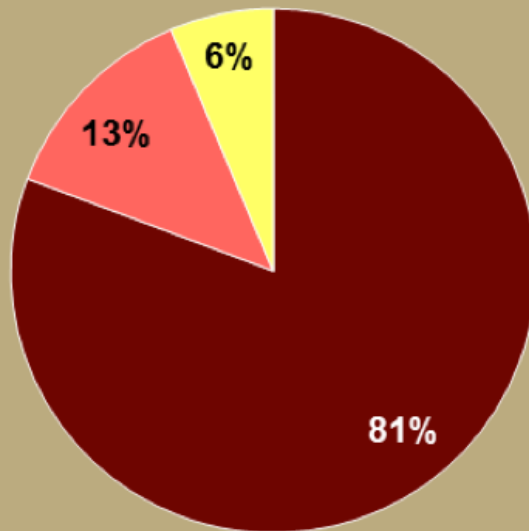


WHO WE SERVE

PROVING OUR MODEL IN HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS

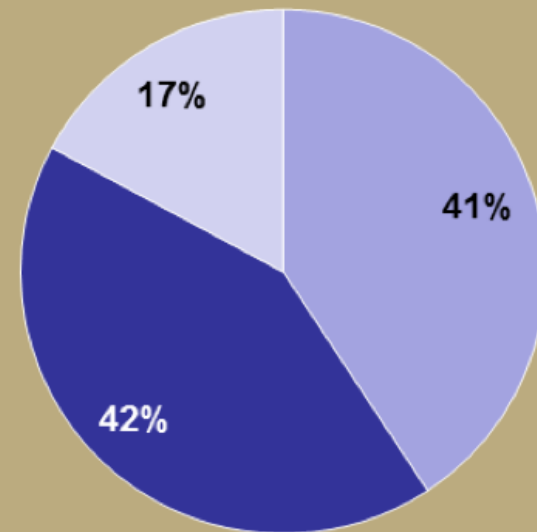
We currently serve 1000 elementary-aged children across three schools in high-poverty areas of NYC: the South Bronx, Crown Heights, and East Flatbush. Each school starts small and adds one grade at a time.

**Student population
by Family Income**



■ Free lunch ■ Reduced-price lunch ■ Full price

**Student population
by Race / Ethnicity**



■ African-American ■ Latino ■ White



HOW WE'RE DOING

THE BEGINNINGS

Because we build one grade at a time, beginning with kindergarten, we do not have meaningful state test data yet. In the meantime...

Parents are lining up to enroll students

- PS 770 has 72 kindergarten students when we wanted to max out at 65 students.
- PS 274 was projected for 385 students this year. We have enrolled 505 students.
- Our Charter school had 488 applications for 90 slots
- **100%** of parents at all three schools said they would either recommend or *strongly* recommend TNAA to other parents

Internal reading data demonstrates great improvement

For example, this past year TNAACS Kindergarten students went from 39% on grade level in September to 69% on grade level by June. While in our 1st grade where 74% of students came in two years behind grade level 34% of students moved 5 or more reading levels, which comes out to 1.5-2 years of growth in just one year.





Jeff Adkins-Dutro


English teacher, Peoria High School (Peoria, IL)
President, Peoria Federation of Teachers



Reflective Question 3



Take some time to map out how shared leadership might work in your particular school building; then, assuming there is success at that level, map out some of the obstacles that might be faced as you attempt to implement your model district-wide, city-wide, etc. as well as potential solutions to these challenges.



Peoria High School - a case study



a case study on
PEORIA HIGH SCHOOL

Video: <http://cecillinois.org/peoria-high-school-case-study/>

Grant application: http://www.isbe.net/sos/sig1003g/funded_fy12/schools/peoria_hs.pdf



Kathy Buzad

Assistant to the Executive Vice President,
American Federation of Teachers



Reflective Question 4



What sources of support do your school or district need to advance collaborative practices that are culture changing?

