

SESSION B

Panel: The Past, Present and Future of District Financial Management

Presenters

Victor De La Paz | New Haven Public Schools
Jason Willis | San Jose Unified School District
Marques Whitmire | Indianapolis Public Schools
Jamie Van DerWalle | Indianapolis Public Schools
Chris Rinkus | Allovue

Context

A - In San Jose we are working to keep finances on track
B - I work on financial systems upgrades and implementations (timekeeping, Allovue, etc) At state district and local levels we are fully supported and in a good time for change
C - Dedicated to student outcomes and in a good position for school and finance reform
D - Leaving the district soon, but I can tell you what not to do WRT student based funding

Key Points

A - In California the president of the state board took it on. It starts with finding a board and community who is passionate about it. Need enough inertia to begin a true conversation around education finance and innovation. D - Newhaven has inequity now because there was a long-term superintendent.
B – Allovue’s Balance was the first tool in the toolkit to prepare principals for what's coming in 2017; now building out PD to complement that, help them be strategic with their school planning. Are in the process of focus groups and conversations around the end goal, the direction that we're moving in. Our systems are good at collecting data, not necessarily at reporting and sharing it out in an accessible way. We need more innovation in the edtech and edfintech space, to make our platforms more date more user friendly and accessible and at a better price point for district budgets
C - Picture the role of the principal -- what is being requested of them, what are they thinking, what questions might they have -- and work from there. How do we get to the point where parents understand?

One thing that you're optimistic about

A - The opportunity to garner a conversation about equity and its importance, and building it into the policies (at every level) that we have is very encouraging. That wave will continue to push us to think about how public policy, government agencies, and K12 education is supporting our kids.
B - The conversation that we're having locally, statewide, and nationally around equity -- it's something that wasn't happening 10 or 15 years ago.
D - The conversation is much more sophisticated today that it has ever been, and the possibility that common core -- and the comparisons that it allows -- are bringing to the table is very exciting (albeit also frightening).

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Other Key Takeaways

Working on a professional development plan it was hard to get measurable metrics that Principals need to know, it was more useful to me to say "what questions are principals asking? what problems are they solving?". We're waiting on certain grade levels to test, and to ensure that things happen before middle school, but also that they stay on track in middle school. 3rd grade, 7th grade, 9th grade. There are key periods where you have to run checks and follow up

A - When we went to reconsider how funds were spent there was lots of great collaboration because it takes all sides of the house (academic + business) allow you to create more value and bang for your buck, and make better decisions for the kids. How do we help Parents to understand our finance procedures? Engagement is left to the principal and other adults in the schools to make those connections.

D - 18% ell and 41% latino. When you look at our investment in that subgroup of families, you can see that you're not spending enough on the language learning programs when you can easily see the big picture. Just because that's your makeup, doesn't mean that's how you're spending your money. When you review you can adjust. School Governance Council model can be used to involve groups of citizens to "sign off" on school budgets. Technology allows us to give easy access and digestible info.

B - over 85% of our students are on free/reduced lunch. Poverty is easy to identify, it's easy to correlate the struggling groups and correlate the funds so that they are focused where they're needed. Innovation happens when there's competition.