

A series of grey silhouettes of graduation caps (mortarboards) falling from the top of the page, scattered across the upper half.

High School Redesign

**Mike Contompasis, Executive Chairman and
Senior Consultant, Mass Insight Education**

A grey silhouette of a crowd of people at the bottom of the page, with many arms raised in celebration, some holding up graduation caps.

Today's Agenda

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------|
| I. | Welcome and Introduction | (5 min) |
| II. | The Challenge | (15 min) |
| III. | The Opportunity | (30 min) |
| IV. | Group Discussion | (30 min) |
| V. | Wrap-up and Questions | (5 min) |

Objectives

- 1 Examine why past efforts to improve comprehensive low-performing high schools have failed in the past
- 2 Consider how smaller learning communities can be an opportunity to redesign the current high school structure
- 3 Share a high-performing school redesign framework that includes academic, organizational, and community engagement strategies
- 4 Discuss roadblocks districts face when looking to adequately support their high schools, and explore avenues to overcome these impediments

Today's Agenda

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------|
| I. | Welcome and Introduction | (5 min) |
| II. | The Challenge | (15 min) |
| III. | The Opportunity | (30 min) |
| IV. | Group Discussion | (30 min) |
| V. | Wrap-up and Questions | (5 min) |

Alliance District Fast Facts

Alliance Districts have **48** Turnaround, Review, and Focus high schools.

Collectively, these schools serve over **35,000** students.

17 of these high schools are larger than **750** students.

13 of these high schools are larger than **1000** students.

Only **23%** of the Alliance Districts met their DPI target in CAPT.

Graduation rates in Alliance District high schools are as low as **44%**.

What has NOT Worked?

Urban students need seamless supports and a coherent K-12 pathway

The lack of vertical integration and articulation between middle schools and high schools is problematic, particularly in cities with lots of choice. How many middle school teachers are deeply familiar with the high school curriculum they are preparing students for?

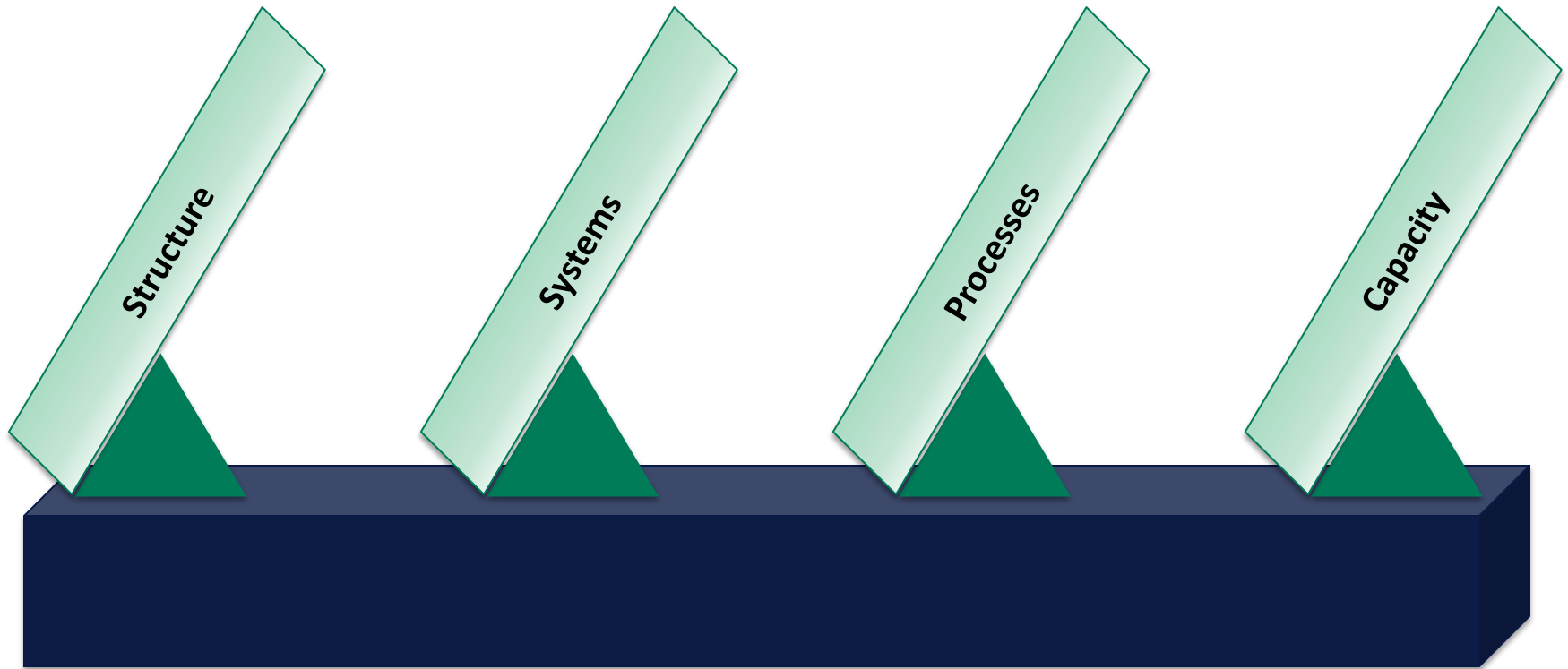
The traditional central office model is broken and unfixable in its current form

How many urban districts have transformed their central offices into high-performing units and sustained that performance and culture across two superintendents or more?

Total decentralization and autonomy at the school level don't make sense either

Think about transportation, food services, and data systems. It also makes sense for central offices to, at least, pre-qualify the best research-based curriculum so schools can make good academic choices.

Importance of Multiple Levers



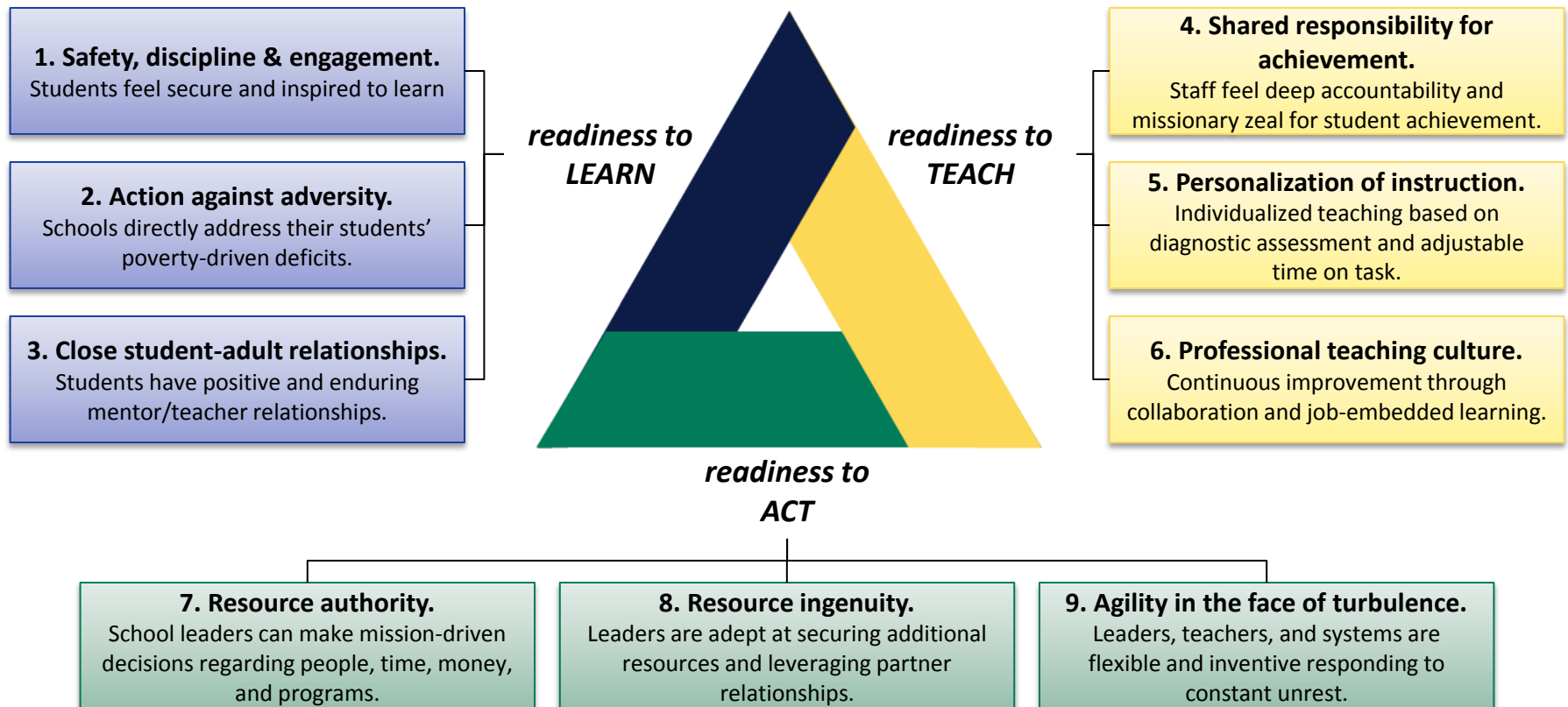
Discussion/Reflection

What makes high schools so complex and challenging?

What difficulties are you facing in supporting a comprehensive high school(s) in your district?

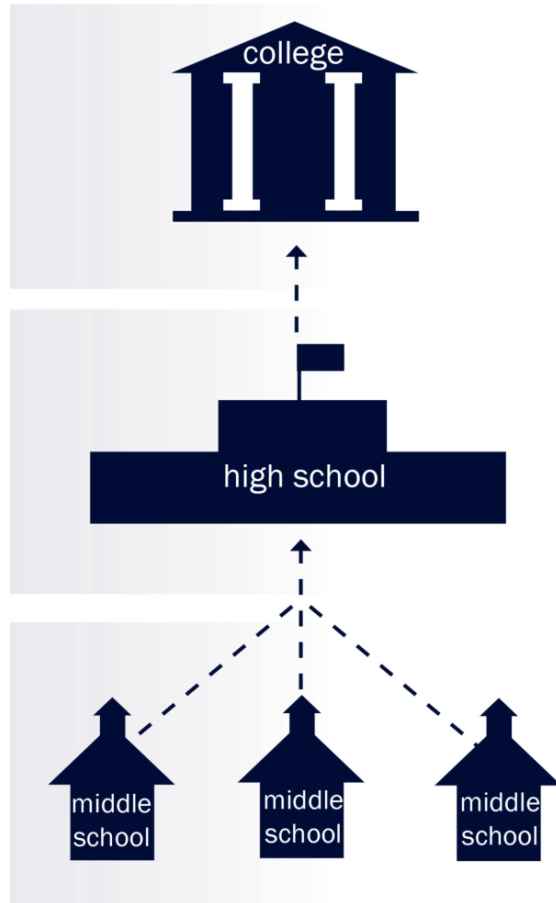
Readiness Triangle

School improvement requires readiness to learn, teach, and act



High School Redesign

High School Redesign



- Support students and teachers.
- Make effective use of external partners.
- Provide a remedy to the fissures between middle and high school, and high school graduation, and colleges/careers.
- Integrate the four elements of education reform (advocacy, instruction, human capital, and support for changing conditions) to address the root causes underlying persistent achievement gaps.

Today's Agenda

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------|
| I. | Welcome and Introduction | (5 min) |
| II. | The Challenge | (15 min) |
| III. | The Opportunity | (30 min) |
| IV. | Group Discussion | (30 min) |
| V. | Wrap-up and Questions | (5 min) |

What are Smaller Learning Communities?



Smaller learning communities are a way to redesign and restructure traditional schools into multiple smaller organizations with different focus areas.

Rationale for Smaller Learning Communities



Student Achievement



Student Engagement/
Personalization



Autonomy

Types of Smaller Learning Communities

Academies

Organize curricula around career pathways or focus areas (e.g., freshman academies). Each academy integrates a unique set of classes aligned to the specific concentration area(s).

House Plans

Assign students within the school to groups, either across all grades or by grade level. Each program has its own disciplinary policy, student activity program, student government, and social activities.

Schools within a School

This approach breaks the traditional large school into small, multi-grade, autonomous schools. These smaller schools may be organized around themes; each has their own culture, program personnel, students, budget, and school space.

Magnet Programs

Magnets usually have a core focus (e.g., math, science, the arts) and selectively draw students from the entire district.

Common Pathways

- Law/government
- Arts and communication
- Travel, tourism and hospitality
- Human services
- Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)
- Business and finance
- Health services

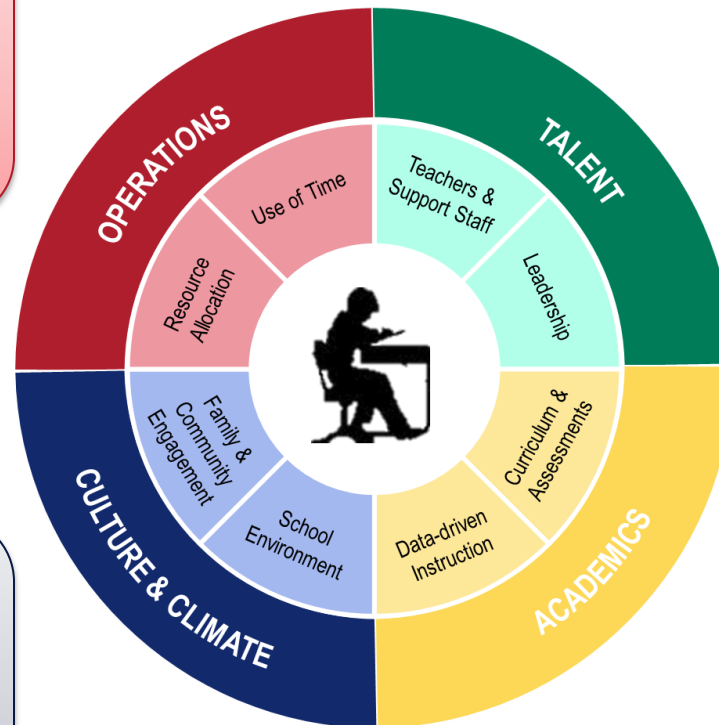
Transitioning to Smaller Learning Communities

Operations

- Budget
- Scheduling
- Technology
- Facilities infrastructure

Culture and Climate

- Student and family engagement
- Branding and communications
- Personalization



Talent

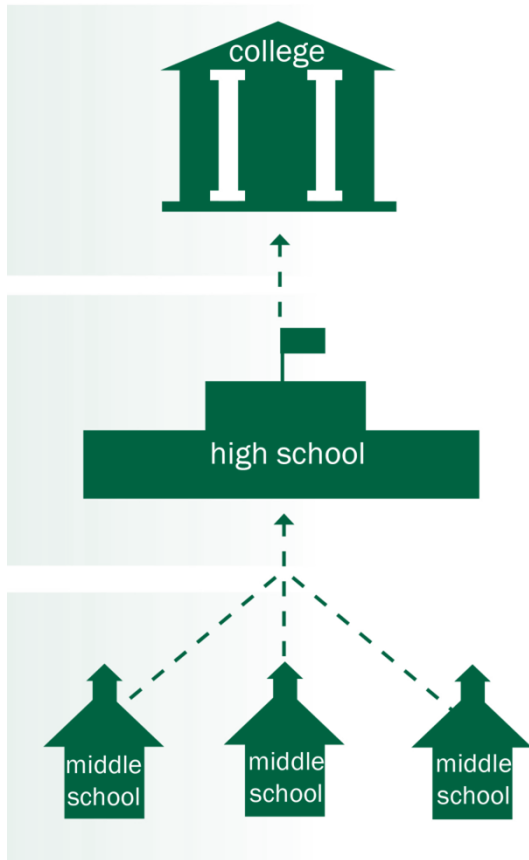
- Leadership/governance
- Staffing
- Professional development

Academics

- Instruction
- Curriculum
- Partnerships
- College and career readiness

Sample High School Redesign Framework

College Success Community (CSC)



Academic Strategy

6-12
Supplemental
Curricula

Common Core
Teacher Training

Student Supports

Online lessons
and resources

Organizational Strategy

Data collection
and analysis

6-12 vertical
teaming

Human Resource
Support

School and central
office design

Community Strategy

Student Partners

High-visibility
local campaigns

Parent
Engagement

College Success
Research and
Tracking

Sample High School Redesign Framework (cont.)

Academic Strategy

- Intensive Summer PD Institutes
- 2 Day seminars during the year to build on summer institutes
- Vertical teaming within departments to align instruction and teaching strategies
- Horizontal teaming to support grade-level teams as they differentiate/personalize instruction
- “Data coaching” over time to develop, implement, and use 6-12 interim assessments
- Customized supports for areas of need such as special education and English Language Learners
- Support identifying and recruiting students who are ready for AP courses

Organizational Strategy

- Support developing schedules that facilitate teacher teaming and student personalized learning
- Support identifying data systems, technology, and curriculum resources to achieve goals
- Support with budgetary analysis and other central office tasks that require technical expertise/support
- Superintendent and Principal Professional Learning Communities customized to the CSC benchmarking
- Support streamlining competing plans and requirements into a single, more sensible system

Community Engagement Strategy

- Support developing community events that win support for reform initiatives
- Support in picking, using, and governing relationships with community partners to improve effectiveness
- Research and publication of CSC success in college admission, retention, persistence, and graduation
- Student Partners programs that provide capital, STEM mentorship opportunities, and in-classroom supports
- Public information campaigns providing parents/community with good information about the ongoing efforts

Today's Agenda

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------|
| I. | Welcome and Introduction | (5 min) |
| II. | The Challenge | (15 min) |
| III. | The Opportunity | (30 min) |
| IV. | Group Discussion | (30 min) |
| V. | Wrap-up and Questions | (5 min) |

Discussion Questions

1. What roadblocks have you experienced and/or anticipate when tackling this work?
2. What avenues are available to provide the flexibility and autonomy necessary to overcome these roadblocks and support your high schools through this transition?
3. What needs to change in your district in order to allow for smaller learning communities in your high school(s)?
4. What support do you need from the state in order to accomplish this work?

Today's Agenda

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------|
| I. | Welcome and Introduction | (5 min) |
| II. | The Challenge | (15 min) |
| III. | The Opportunity | (30 min) |
| IV. | Group Discussion | (30 min) |
| V. | Wrap-up and Questions | (5 min) |

Contact Information

Contact Information:

Michael Contompasis

Executive Chairman and Senior Field Consultant

Mass Insight Education

mcontompasis@massinsight.org

617-778-1514