

The Power & Potential of School Improvement Networks

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Let's Start with a Quick Jotting of Some Ideas

Please take 5-7 minutes to jot responses to the following questions. At different points in this session, we'll ask you to share your responses with another person.

Question 1: What brings you to this session?

Question 2: What do you see as the benefits of using continuous improvement to solve problems? What do you see as the benefits of networking schools with common problems and aims?

Question 3: What makes continuous improvement work difficult? What challenges and tensions have you seen, heard about, or experienced?

Question 4: What advice do you have for others who are getting ready to undertake a continuous improvement project?



Please take a few minutes to introduce yourself to the person next to you and share what brings you to this session.

What this session is...and isn't

What we'll delve into in this session

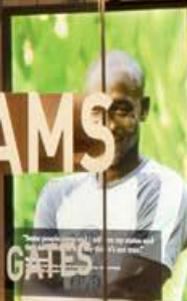
- ⑩ Gates Foundation K-12 team's journey to improvement networks
- ⑩ Why the K-12 team at Gates is excited about the promise of networks for school improvement
- ⑩ What we've heard in these very early days and what your experiences reveal about
 - the challenges and tensions of engaging in improvement work
 - factors that enable the work
- ⑩ What the K-12 team hopes to learn as our strategy unfolds

What we won't delve into in this session

- Detailed information about the K-12 team's RFP process or current status of any applicants
- Tips for writing a better RFP in the future
- Other parts of the foundation's strategy: K-12 or more broadly

WHATEVER THE CONDITIONS
OF PEOPLE'S LIVES,
WHEREVER THEY LIVE,
HOWEVER THEY LIVE,
THEY SHARE THE SAME
HOPES, THE SAME DREAMS
AS YOU AND I.

MELINDA FRENCH GATES



"If you want to go fast,
go alone.

If you want to go far,
go together."

- African Proverb



K-12 Team's Journey to Improvement Networks

Our Destination: Networks for School Improvement

Gates Foundation's K-12 Strategy Goal

Significantly increase the number of Black, Latino, and low-income students who earn a high school diploma, enroll in a post-secondary institution, and are on track in their first year to obtain a credential with labor market value.

Networks for School Improvement Goals

- Improve outcomes for Black, Latino, and low-income students in school networks
- Create tools, materials, and knowledge that allow improvements to be replicated in schools serving Black, Latino, and low-income students

Network for School Improvement

- Intermediary + at least 10 secondary schools with >51% Black, Latino, or low-income students
- Shared problem and aim
- Focused on improving HS & PS outcomes for Black, Latino, or low-income students
- Build capacity to use a continuous improvement process
- Organized to surface learning, uncover meaningful variance, and spread learning and improvement

What We've Heard: **Promise & Power of Improvement Networks**

- Improved student outcomes
- Shrinking opportunity and achievement gaps
- Increased sense of efficacy among educators
- Increased data literacy and effective data use to hone in on student needs
- Collective and collaborative problem solving between and among educators



Turn & talk: Please take 3-4 minutes to discuss your responses to question 2:

What do you see as the benefits of using continuous improvement to solve problems? What do you see as the benefits of networking schools with common problems and aims?

Whole group share: What's missing from this list? What else would you add?

What We've Heard: **Challenges & Tensions**

- Time
- Mindset shift
- Getting stuck in the process
- Data, data, data
- Applying improvement science to instructional improvement
- Co-construction by many vs. front-end creation by a select few
- Right size for network, problem, & aim
- Different needs of schools
- Maximizing power of a network



Turn & talk: Please take 3-4 minutes to discuss your responses to question **3**:

What makes continuous improvement work difficult? What challenges and tensions have you seen, heard about or experienced?

Whole group share: What's would you add to this list?

What We've Heard: **What Enables the Work**

- Commitment, support, and alignment at all levels of the system
- Diverse and committed team
- Front-end planning, including time for team building
- Intentional focus on equity from the start
- Commonalities: shared problem, shared theory, shared aim
- Access to expertise



Turn & talk: Please take 3-4 minutes to discuss your responses to question 4:

What advice do you have for others who are getting ready to undertake a continuous improvement project?

Whole group share: What advice do you have?

A Few Things We Hope To Learn

- What are the features of successful improvement networks? How do successful networks form? How are they organized? How do they do their work? How do they capture, share, and spread knowledge and practice?
- How do effective intermediaries support school-led efforts to improve? How do they help schools to identify and test promising solutions?
- What characteristics and activities account for variations in network and school outcomes? What does this suggest about critical enabling conditions at the school level and at the network level?
- What knowledge, skills, experiences, and expertise do intermediaries need to serve as a network hub?
- How does an intermediary determine a school's, district's, or CMO's readiness to engage in improvement work?
- How do intermediaries build buy-in and ownership? How do they maintain momentum?

Turn & talk: What other questions should we be thinking about? What would be helpful for advancing the field?

Whole group share: What advice do you have for us about questions that would advance the field?



Questions

If there are pressing questions we didn't get to, please feel free to email us at
K-12SchoolNetworkRFP@gatesfoundation.org

THANK YOU

