

Implementing Student-Centered Learning: Lessons Learned from Leaders in the Arena

October 13, 2020

Welcome

- Introduce yourselves.
 - Share who you are, where you are from, and one hope you have for this school year.
- Ask and answer questions.
 - Use the chat function to pose questions of our panelists. All attendees are encouraged to respond.
 - We will leave time for our panelists to answer questions.
- Share your learning.
 - Tell your colleagues what you are learning. Use #Aurora2020 on Twitter and mention @Aurora_Inst.
- We are recording and archiving the webinar.
 - The slides and video will be available on **aurora-institute.org**.



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Presenters

- Heather Williams, Ph.D. Asst. Professor & Program Coordinator, Executive Educational Leadership, College of Education, Boise State University
- Donell McNeal Principal, Central Academy High School, Meridian, Idaho & Graduate Student, College of Education, Boise State University
- Jen Wright Principal, Notus Elementary School & Federal Programs Director, Notus School District, Notus, Idaho & Graduate Student, College of Education, Boise State University

Background



Findings based a survey given to **district & school leaders** in Idaho aimed at exploring their perceptions of how **leading the implementation** of SCL (aka mastery education) policies had changed their leadership role or day-to-day work, and what supports, or resources were most needed to for successful policy implementation.



Data was from Jan. - March of 2019

Idaho's History

"Mastery education" emerged as policy lever for system improvement as part of the "Task Force for Improving Education K-12"		m f the IM	EN selects and fund bator sites" to imple mastery education	ement	daho removes the	сар
	Q		P		•	
	2013	2015	2016	2017-2019	2019	2020
House Bill 110 passes unanimously in both chambers signed into law IC 33-1632 allowing "personalized and differentiated learning experiences" and establishes the Idaho Mastery Education Network.			mbers im 632 : and ng nes the	AEN incubators work plement and learn fr successes and failure	om	IMEN continues to support 2016 teams and new grant recipients

Study Participants n= 51

Leadership role (primary)	Percent
Elementary Principal	32
Secondary Principal	35
District level admin, not superintendent	13
Superintendent	20
Years serving in current position	Percent
1 st year	20
2-5 years	52
>5 years	28
How long have you been implementing SCL/mastery?	Percent
1 st year	12
2 or more years	46
Planning to start full implementation next year	8
Exploring the concept for future	34

Research Questions

Do school leaders perceive the implementation of SCL policies and/or practices changed their role and/or responsibilities? If so, how?

 What resources and support do school leaders implementing SCL policies and leading the shift to SCL systems perceive as being most needed?

Big Aha's from leaders: How implementatio n changed the work of leaders with...



Students: training students to take ownership (agency) for their learning.



Teachers and staff: preparing teachers to offer rapid, differentiated supports to students, and to structure learning so students can advance upon mastery.



Parents: ensuring parents understand how mastery/SCL will be implemented; and maintaining two-way communication during implementation.



School Board and Community stakeholders: Fostering a growth mindset regarding implementation and logistics of shifting the system. It requires common definitions, time, policies, and the navigation of politics.

40 percent had to significantly change their leadership style to better lead the implementation of SCL policies.



- "I should be a building leader, but instead I am a fireman putting out fires every day. Implementation of mastery is more than I anticipated."
- "I have been able to change a lot as a leader as the needs of my school for both teachers and students has changed."
- "Implementation takes time. Our leadership team has worked with teachers for two years and we foresee needing more time to really have a solid understanding of mastery or SCL. We didn't know what we didn't know."

71 percent indicated their thinking about teaching and learning had changed either a moderate amount to a great deal as a result of implementing SCL initiatives.



 "Mastery based education changes the focus from teaching to learning. It provides clarity and evidence regarding the skills that students are able to successfully demonstrate. Students are met where they are in the learning continuum and they are not limited by the amount of time they have to become proficient in a certain skill." 57 percent indicated the basic structure of their school day and schedule involved changing to a non-traditional structure where classes incorporated flexibility in both pace and place of learning for students to demonstrate competency.



"It boils down to three things:

- 1) the best teachers are not necessarily who you traditionally thought were the best teachers,
- 2) students need to be taught selfregulation/ self- agency strategies, and,
- 3) it takes a lot of personal energy to make significant changes to education."

Stories from leaders

- "In society, we do not have a common set of beliefs, morals, or values!"
- Second order change
 - Teacher Challenges Lack of confidence, competence, and consciousness
 - Student Challenges Low Emotional Intelligence
 - "The ultimate mastery is not mastery of content but MASTERY OF SELF"
- Scheduling
- Student achievement What does the data suggest?
 - Graduation Rate
 - SBAC (ISAT, IBAs)
 - Retention of Teachers Purpose-driven, diverse staff members

What resources do leaders say are most needed?

Regarding Students and Parents



Mapping the path for student change

Preparing students to change to a mastery system - training to support implementation and help identify what student skills were necessary for successful mastery-based learning.

Training students to take ownership for learning

Provide overt training of students (and parents) to take ownership/agency for learning and decision making. "Student readiness for mastery starts with teachers and parents buy-in and ownership to a standards-based report card."



Communicating the Why

Leaders said they needed resources and tools to be able to communicate to parents the theory behind mastery education and student-centered learning as well as their implementation efforts.

Regarding Teachers and the System



Tools to better prepare teachers for the shift.

74% of leaders surveyed said that teachers creating meaningful and positive assessments for student learning was highly relevant to their implementation of mastery. This was followed by teachers establishing measurable learning skills and objectives for students.



Clear alignment with district expectations.

Ninety percent (90) of leaders surveyed acknowledged ensuring vision and implementation continually align with school board goals and expectations as "highly relevant" to their success.





Stories from leaders

- Provided safe learning space to fill in the gaps (academic and SE) without being penalized or falling further behind
 - Shift from content to specific skills (standards/learning targets)
 - Innovative & Flexible
- Mastery Ed and SCL focus provided an avenue for equity for rural students





<image>

Stories from leaders

- Collective Teacher Efficacy Staff Huddle
- Buy-In vs Ownership
- SEL Habits of Success Mentor Time
 - **CBE Best Practice Strategies**
 - Ownership of Competencies
 - Student/Teacher Conferencing
 - Flexible Grouping
 - Workflow to address gaps in learning

Summary

- Here is what we learned from the data:
 - Mastery Ed structure and practices closed the academic, social emotional, and demographic gap
 - Content to Skill Development...Strategies beget skills!
 - Explicit skill instruction allows practitioners to 'meet students where they are' and focus on growth

Here is what we know from two leaders who have been working at implementing mastery for 5 years in Idaho:

- Start with the Why
- It's messy work that needs grace and resilience
- Game Changer
- "You'll feel like you never really arrive"
- Alignment How do all of the pieces of the educational experience connect to one another?
- Celebrate and document your journey

Future Research and next steps:

- Systemic Approach (Are there certain framework yielding better system results?)
- Role of a framework (balancing local control with district/state/federal guidance)
- Mindfulness
- The role of families
- Social-emotional component
- Ability to quantify change to garner stakeholder support

Food for thought...

"To truly achieve equity in schools, there is an expectation, obligation, and requirement for educators to possess extremely high levels of personal, emotional, and professional endurance.

For those who struggle to strive for the aforementioned belief statement, they are truly fighting for a teacher-centered learning environment that respectfully belongs in society's prior era."

- Donell McNeal, Principal, Central Academy High School

Contact information

- Heather Williams, <u>hpwilliams@boisestate.edu</u>
- Donell McNeal, <u>mcneal.donell@westada.org</u>
- Jen Wright, wrightj@notusschools.org



One-Minute Survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AuroraWebinar_10-13-20

Symposium Webinar Series

- 1. Lessons from COVID-19: How Competency-Based Education Provided for Continuity of Learning in Three North Carolina Schools and Is Shaping the Path Forward | October 15, 2020 | 2 pm ET
- 2. High School Internships in the Time of COVID-19: Mentorship, Connections, and More in Virtual Work-Based Learning | October 19, 2020 | 2 pm ET
- 3. Choice in Learning: Examination of Students' Use of Flex Time in High School | October 22, 2020 | 2 pm ET
- Competency-Based Education Systems: Performance Assessment Using Proficiency Scales | November 5, 2020
 | 2 pm ET
- 5. Deeper Competency-Based Learning: Making Equitable, Student-Centered, Sustainable Shifts | November 10, 2020 | 2 pm ET
- 6. Designing Engaging, Purposeful, Rigorous Tasks for Remote and In-Person Learning | November 12, 2020 | 2 pm ET
- 7. Supporting the Learner Throughout Their Competency-Based Journey: Examining Tech Standards | November 17, 2020 | 2 pm ET

https://aurora-institute.org/events-webinars/

INSTITUTE

Symposium 2020

OCTOBER 26-28, 2020 VIRTUAL



Stay Connected fyD



www.aurora-institute.org



communications@aurora-institute.org



(703) 752-6216

