# The Metropolitan District Case Study

## A Fictional Case Study of a District’s Challenge of Change

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Introduction to The Metropolitan District Case Study: An IFL Case Study of a Fictional School District

Abstract:
This case study concerns the Metropolitan Public Schools, a fictional school district. Like other urban districts, Metropolitan struggles with tensions between different groups, the trade-offs involved with every decision, and the inherent difficulties of changing practice while practice is ongoing. Rather than serving as an exemplar, the Metropolitan story is intended to prompt conversations about implementing and sustaining reforms in actual districts, given these realities.

The text has several intertwined storylines that pose different problems: elementary/ middle literacy implementation, high school reform, and curriculum planning.

Recommended participants:
The Challenge of Change is designed for use by any and all role groups in a district. It can be used by individuals and role-alike study groups, but the richest and most varied discussions are likely to develop if the case is used in mixed-role small groups.

Case Design:
Educators learn from the case by studying and analyzing a written case first individually and then in a small group. Learning and discussion are supported by a series of tasks. The estimated time for the small group discussion is 2.5 hours.

By studying this case, educators learn about analyzing, planning and tracking school reform in more effective ways. They have the opportunity to build professional habits of practice for analyzing past work and for planning future work.
Preparing to Facilitate a Discussion of “The Metropolitan District Case Study”

Prospective facilitators need to familiarize themselves with the case before they plan to lead a session. As a general proposition, before you use these materials to assist the learning of others, you should always:

- Review all the material you are going to use ahead of time. We strongly recommend that you complete all the tasks in their entirety on your own before leading it with others. This is the best way to discover how to provide clear directions for your participants.
- Think through answers you are likely to get, problems you may encounter and how you may deal with them.
- Read the case study.
- Print out copies of all necessary documents for participants.

Before the session, send the case and the accompanying materials listed below to participants. Send them well in advance so that participants have time to carefully review the case.

**Documents to Send to Participants Before the Session**

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Explain to participants in a cover letter that they will be working with Task 2 during the session, but that they might find this helpful for organizing their reading of the case ahead of time. Remind them to bring all documents to the session.

The case covers two large areas of reform: elementary/ middle implementation and high school reform. You will have time to discuss only one of these during a 2.5 hour session. Choose your focus ahead of time.

During the session, work through the tasks in order. The sequence of the tasks allows participants to:

- Build community around their discussion of the case
- Understand the case from the MPS perspective
- Interpret the case from the perspective of the participants
- Reflect on the case study to support participants’ own work
**Documents to Copy and Bring to the Session**

**Before you begin**

*The Metropolitan District Case Study: An IFL Case Study of a Fictional School District*

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**Task 1: Building Community Around the Case**

**Task 2a: Understanding the case from the MPS perspective: What did MPS do, why and with what outcomes?**

**Task 2b: Reading Organizer**

**Task 3: Interpreting the Case from Your Perspective**

**Task 4: Reflecting on the Case Study to Support Your District Work**

On the day of the session, you should have on hand:

- An easel
- A tablet of poster paper
- Markers
- All participant materials
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- Tablets of writing paper
**Background: IFL Case Studies**

IFL Case Studies provide instructional leaders opportunities to learn from the practice of others and to use that learning to reflect on and influence their own practice—past, present and future.

Cases are not meant to be exemplars of practice but vehicles for learning from practice. “A case, properly understood, is not simply the report of an event or incident. To call something a case is to make a theoretical claim—to argue that it is a ‘case of something,’ or to argue that it is an instance of a larger class… [T]here is no real case knowledge without theoretical understanding.” (Shulman 1986).

Learning from cases can be thought of as the intersection between theory and practice. The learning is not from the story, as compelling as it might be, or from any handful of tips we might glean from it. Rather, the story becomes a case when we grapple with it in order to understand something bigger, to articulate and test generalizations and theories. Thus, case studies are not designed to teach what to do but how to think about what to do.

Wisdom accretes in a continual cycle of experience followed by reflection and generalization followed by experience, *ad infinitum*. The study of just one case is of value but of limited value. The ideal is to link the study of cases to the study of one’s own practice.

Many disciplines have taken up the case method as a means for educating professionals. The Harvard Business School was the pioneer of the case method in the United States. A seminal article, published in 1940, sums up the value of studying cases in its title, “Because Wisdom Can’t be Told.” (Gragg, 1940). Gragg’s observations about why future business professionals need to learn wisdom are equally pertinent to learning for instructional leaders:

> It can be said flatly that the mere act of listening to wise statements and sound advice does little for anyone….

> We are all familiar with the popular belief that it is possible to learn to act wisely only by experience—in the school of hard knocks. But everyone knows from a practical point of view, strict adherence to the literal meaning of this belief would have a decidedly limiting effect upon the extent of our learning. Time is all against it.

Yet, educators are greatly in need of the wisdom of experience, their own and that of others. The job of any educator would be exponentially easier if doing it well were simply a matter of learning a list of rules or strategies and applying them to daily practice. Fortune is neither so kind nor so neat. Teachers in the classroom make child-by-child moment-by-moment decisions about instruction based on constant assessment and reassessment of student learning.
Superintendents make district plans for the future in the face of great financial and political ambiguity and are then confronted by circumstances which challenge those decisions. Every professional in a district faces similar and constant ambiguity and decision-making.

Case studies are one means for learners to acquire wisdom from others' experience. By working with cases, we sharpen fundamental leadership qualities or habits of practice:

- **UNDERSTANDING**: “the ability to see vividly the potential meanings and relationships of facts, both those facts having to do with persons and those having to do with things;”
- **JUDGMENT**: “capacity to make sound judgments on the basis of these perceptions;”
- **COMMUNICATION LEADING TO ACTION**: communicating judgments “so as to produce the desired results in the field of action.”

(Gragg 1940).

In the education arena, Shulman anticipates a similar use of case studies:

- For developing strategic understanding
- For extending capacities toward professional judgment
- For decision making

(Shulman 1986)

By engaging in case studies in a group setting, participants experience first-hand socializing intelligence or, as Gragg puts it, “the pleasure of group pooling of intellectual efforts.” Learning from case studies is one way to develop or enhance communities of practice. And, the case method is by its very nature constructivist.

What knowledge do we construct? The goal of studying a case is to be able to answer, “What is this a case of?” and “What is this a case of for me?” “How will what I learned inform my own practice?”

**References:**


Before you begin

This case study concerns the Metropolitan Public Schools, a fictional school district. Like other urban districts, Metropolitan struggles with tensions between different groups, the trade-offs involved with every decision, and the inherent difficulties of changing practice while practice is ongoing. Rather than serving as an exemplar, the Metropolitan story is intended to prompt conversations about implementing and sustaining reforms in actual districts, given these realities. The text has several intertwined storylines that pose different problems. Following are questions to consider mentally as you read.

Elementary/middle literacy implementation:
Metropolitan uses literacy coaches to promote implementation of their literacy programs.

- What would constitute evidence of change in teacher practice, given their choice of strategies and the context of their district?
- What is likely to happen if they continue on the same path?
- District leaders provide some supports at different levels to sustain implementation. What else could they do?
- What else could district leaders do to encourage teacher/principal “ownership” of efforts to change practice? Assess the levels of ownership shown in the case and consider the implications for sustaining the work.

High school reform:
Metropolitan begins its high school reform with a flawed planning process.

- How could they have used the opportunity of planning to build in ownership at all levels?
- A middle school principal becomes chair of a Task Force at the beginning of a second planning process in the story, due to his interest in high school reform. What issues/concerns will he raise as the Task Force continues its work, given his position in the district?

Curriculum planning:
At the end of the story, district leaders consider making a curriculum change that will affect all levels of the system.

- How should they begin planning? What do they need to consider?
- What should they have learned through the other storylines that can guide them?
• How will they be able to ensure “spread,” as Coburn defines it,∗ taking into account the district’s demographics (i.e., increasing numbers of ELL students, increasing concentrations of poverty in certain schools)? What evidence should they look for after a year... five years?

All storylines:
In the case, are there structures that support the district as a learning organization, or not?

The Metropolitan District Case Study
A Fictional Case Study of a District’s Challenge of Change

As you begin to read the case, please note: sources of information for the issues raised in this case study include previously-conducted interviews, research reports, and articles about IFL districts and other urban districts. No character in the case study represents a real person.

One day early in her tenure, the new CAO of the Metropolitan Public Schools visited one of the 65 elementary schools in the 50,437-student district. The CAO and the school’s principal were approaching a fifth grade classroom when the school’s social worker pulled the principal aside to discuss an urgent issue. The CAO stood in the shadows just outside the classroom door and looked into the lighted room.

A young female teacher was writing a list of words on the blackboard: space, cent, city, spicy… As the CAO watched, she started another column: crack, can, crash… “Meanwhile,” the CAO recalls, “the children at the front of the room sat there waiting. Some students on the far side were looking out the window. One girl seemed to be silently reading a trade paperback she was hiding on her lap. The teacher picked up a pointer and directed the students to read each word with her.”

The principal ended her conversation and ushered the CAO into the room. After introductions, the principal asked the teacher to carry on with her lesson. “The teacher hesitated. Her face flushed and she said, ‘We were reading a story out loud but some people didn’t know how to pronounce c as an s sound.’ At that, there were rustling noises from the class and at least one student kicked his chair.

“Of course, I knew coming in that the district was struggling,” the CAO says. “I knew the superintendent and the school board had a real sense of urgency about change. But I didn’t feel it until that morning.”
A DISTRICT IN DECLINE
The CAO was hired in June of 2004 to help the superintendent bring a greater level of instructional focus and coherence to the district, prevent a “No Child Left Behind”-related state takeover, and restore confidence in the city of Metropolitan’s public schools. While the city’s population was growing as the region transitioned from a manufacturing to a high-tech economy, the school district was confronted with challenging shifts in its enrollment. White and black middle-class parents were leaving the system and increasing numbers of new students were English Language Learners, including some whose families were migrant workers in a range of agricultural industries located just outside the city’s border. Many of the new families were moving into neighborhoods that had been declining for years, increasing the city’s economic segregation. The topography of the region, with neighborhoods divided by steep hills and rivers, left the district with no clear path for reducing economic segregation in the schools. Concentrated poverty was increasing in schools that had been low-performing for decades.

That August, Metropolitan’s major newspaper the Metro Record had published a report assigning a grade to each school in the region based on their most recent scores on the state test, student attendance and graduation rates. The report purported to be “a clear-eyed look” at absolute scores, disdaining the state’s provisions for schools to make “Adequate Yearly Progress” by recognizing subgroup growth through “safe harbor” or averaging two or three years of scores. Not one of Metropolitan’s schools was graded higher than a “C” on the report, all the middle schools received “Ds” or “Fs,” and all but two of the high schools received “Fs.”

Though school leaders believed the report painted Metropolitan in the worst possible light, the district’s NCLB rating was bleak enough. Out of the city’s total of 111 schools, 8 of 65 elementary schools were in the first or second year of school improvement. Twelve were in the third or fourth year, and 6 were in corrective action. Twelve of 17 middle schools and 8 of 21 high schools were in improvement or the first year of corrective action. Elementary reading scores and middle school reading and math scores on the state test hadn’t budged for several years, and high school scores were abysmal, especially in math—less than 20 percent of high school students were proficient. On the positive side, the district’s 8 K-8 schools had escaped sanctions so far and elementary math scores had risen for the past two years. Principals in corrective action schools were working under a performance contract for the first time. Computer-based reading intervention programs were in place in schools at all levels; some high schools had new math labs.

LITERACY: A NEW FOCUS
The current superintendent had been appointed in 2001 with a mandate to improve student literacy. He had persuaded the elected school board that given
rising numbers of students in ELL programs, increased student mobility and
growing poverty, Metropolitan’s elementary schools could no longer be allowed
to choose their own textbooks and leave reading instruction up to the judgment of
the individual teacher. To jumpstart reading achievement, he had argued, the
district needed an elementary program with a strong phonics component and
explicit teaching approaches, and a “catch-up” program for the middle grades. In
2002, the district adopted Open Court Reading for K-5 over the opposition of the
teachers union (Metro Record headline: “Reading choice ‘insulting’ to teachers’
professionalism, says union chief”) and Read 180 for sixth through eighth grades.
Together, the superintendent and the board set a four-year goal for elementary
literacy: scores on the state test would go up by ten percent each year, or there
would be an overall gain of 40 percent within four years. Read 180 would be
monitored for a year before they set goals for improved middle grades scores.

The superintendent knew that teachers would need support for learning new
instructional approaches, both in schools where years of “doing their own thing”
had produced pockets of success and schools where it had ensured failure. As
part of his literacy initiative, he planned to work with principals and the curriculum
director to identify strong reading teachers to be hired as reading coaches at the
end of the first year. Despite the objections of some principals, funding that had
been under their control for site-based professional development was diverted to
help pay for coaches—a full-time coach in each low-performing elementary
school and one coach shared between two or three higher-performing schools.
Middle schools, which would be experiencing fewer instructional changes, would
have access to a coach at the principal’s request.

The superintendent spent much of the rest of that year in negotiations with the
teachers’ union over the access coaches would have to teachers, teachers’
professional development time, and assurances that coaches would not
supervise or evaluate teachers. To prepare principals, he scheduled
presentations on the coaching model and on literacy instruction at their monthly
meetings. Some area superintendents had told the superintendent that their
principals didn’t know enough about reading instruction to supervise a coach.
Others—already fielding teacher complaints before a single coach was hired—
focused on the “disruption” a coach would cause in the school.

In a Metro Record article at the beginning of the following year, the
superintendent described this new phase of the literacy initiative. “Everything is in
place now for it to succeed,” he was quoted as saying. “Principals are being
supported as instructional leaders. We’ve eked out time in the elementary
schools for teachers to meet together and to study with their coach. So there’s
support for every group. That was the missing piece.” By the end of that year,
however, he privately reflected with dissatisfaction on his most recent visits to
several of the district’s elementary schools. You could sense the tone of a school
even on a brief visit, he believed, and there had been something stale and
discouraging in the atmosphere.
When his deputy superintendent left for a job in another district, the superintendent followed the lead of some other urban districts and created a CAO position. He deliberately chose an outsider who would be able to see with a fresh eye and would have the advantage of being new. To make the most of the honeymoon period, he charged the new CAO with developing a plan to reform the district’s high schools, which seemed to be in free fall (Metro Record editorial headline: “CAO’s impossible task: fix failing high schools”). In her first week, they met with the Gates Foundation and formed a planning committee with an area superintendent, staff members from the budget and facilities offices, a few high school principals, one middle school principal who had indicated interest, and the executive director of a local education fund.

The CAO’s less public charge was to figure out why the literacy initiative was not raising student achievement. Scores had gone up only slightly, more schools had failed to make AYP that year and the school board was demanding results. The superintendent, who was thinking of retiring in a few years, didn’t want to leave with a sense of failure, especially with his key reform.

**SPINNING WHEELS**

“First, I had to reorganize Central Office,” the CAO recalls. “I saw the existing structure as counterproductive. I don’t think the superintendent recognized it because he came up through the ranks and things had always been done in certain ways.” At that time, department heads and area superintendents who oversaw schools in the district’s five regions all reported to the superintendent. But because he didn’t have time to help them plan or to shape their work, their interaction with him was limited to reporting. While area superintendents met together regularly, department heads functioned as chieftains in their own provinces, with little joint planning or even communication with one another. Meanwhile, schools suffered from their competing demands.

At the CAO’s request, the area superintendents and the heads of departments in instructional areas—including directors of content areas, special education, ELL, and Title I—began meeting with her every Wednesday afternoon. Along with the change in structure, there was a purposeful focus on planning, problem-solving and communicating about instruction. Minimal time was allotted for operational issues, as most could be handled through phone calls and e-mail.

Early on, the CAO told the group she wanted to “get a handle on” reading achievement. New curricula and computer-based interventions had been adopted two years ago, reading coaches and teacher planning meetings had been in place for a year, and reading coaches had been on the job for a couple of months. How was it going? After discussing the limitations of available test data for answering this question, the group agreed that each one would visit a classroom, a teacher planning meeting, a coach/teacher conference, and/or a principal/coach conference. Each person would observe first and then ask the
participants which aspects of the literacy plan were going well and which needed more support.

A transcript of debriefing notes from a dry-erase board reads:

Principal said everything going well.

Principal/coach meeting: Frustration with teachers who refuse to confer with coach. Coach in tears.

Classroom visit: everything seemed okay. Most kids paying attention.

Teacher meeting: Principal supposed to participate, but in office on phone whole time. Many teachers said they hated Open Court—killing creativity. Glared at me with folded arms. One said it didn’t matter that principal wasn’t there—he didn’t know enough to help them or answer my questions.

Coach/teacher conference: focused on specific strategies for ELL students.

Teacher meeting: Discussed feeling unprepared for second grade test. Viewed it as trial run for state test at third grade—accountability measure, not useful data for them.

Principal said nothing going well—clearly frustrated.

“We had a long discussion,” says the superintendent, who attended the debriefing meeting. “By the end of it, we had realized what was going on, and it made a big impact on everybody. We thought we had set up support systems, but we were just skimming along the surface. At the school level, they were literally disengaged from the work. Teachers, and to some extent principals, weren’t feeling supported or experiencing success, and their anger over that was blocking any sense they might have had of urgency for improvement.”

THE HIGH SCHOOL MANDATE

That evening, the superintendent was attending a community function when he received a call on his cell phone from the chief of school police. Simmering tensions between adjoining neighborhoods whose residents attended different high schools had boiled over at a basketball game and a large fight had broken out. Fifteen students had been arrested and several others had to be treated for minor injuries. A gun had been recovered from the bushes outside the stadium.

While the superintendent was meeting with the security chief in his office in the darkened administration building, more calls came through on his cell phone: reporters, a school board member whose district included the neighborhoods involved, and a member of the mayor’s staff who had met with the superintendent about safety issues and was aware that planning for high school reform had been going on. The mayor was issuing an ultimatum, the staff member said. If the superintendent didn’t announce a plan for dealing with the
high schools within 48 hours, the mayor would announce another kind of plan—one the superintendent wouldn't like.

The following afternoon, after an emergency meeting of the high school planning group, phone conversations with board members, and a visit to the mayor's office, the superintendent held a press conference to announce new safety measures and the broad outlines of high school reform. The district would be working with the mayor's office on a plan for greater collaboration between school police and the city police force, he said. He then revealed that the district had already met with the Gates Foundation and would be seeking funding to transform some of the district's large high schools into small schools, or small learning communities within an existing building. Research had shown reduced violence, pregnancy rates and dropout rates in small schools, as well as increased graduation rates and levels of student engagement in learning. With this change, he asserted, Metropolitan would be joining a growing trend for urban districts.

Notes on the dry-erase board from the morning meeting told a less confident story:

Issues to deal with:

Different kind of plan for 9th graders? Many coming in far behind.

What about Metro Arts [High School]? Already small and high-performing. Promised a new facility. Can’t be left out. Plus these are middle-class parents.

How do we deal with creating separate schools in existing buildings? Where can we get more buildings?

Which principals? Which teachers? Which students?

What does this mean for our administrative systems? What does this do to our staffing allocations?

Reality: Most high schools low-performing—state test scores need to go up.

Teacher seniority rules—negotiate with union?

Even though it was her special charge, merely the thought of high school reform made the CAO feel tired. Just the previous day, they had discussed the need for a deeper level of engagement with elementary and middle principals and teachers. If the work had not gained traction at those levels, how would they ever gain the trust and the commitment of high school teachers to invest their time and energy in significant instructional change?

The media jumped on the plan for high schools. The *Metro Record* reported on a community meeting sponsored by the Urban League (“Parents question how changing high school size will solve systemic problems”). The article quoted parents who were concerned about whether or not a small high school could
have a football team or enough advanced courses for college-going students, and a parent who asked, “How will this change the attitudes of racist teachers who just don’t care about our kids?”

NEW STRATEGIES

The area superintendents, pushed by their middle and high school principals, wanted answers for their teachers and parents, but the CAO insisted that the next Central Office meeting focus on the problems with the literacy initiative they had identified. If the underlying issues were lack of capacity and support at the classroom level and lack of teacher/principal “ownership” of the plan, what were they going to do about it? Two strategies emerged from a wide-ranging discussion.

First, district-wide committees of teachers and curriculum specialists would be formed to write instructional guides, to help teachers understand which aspects of the curriculum were most important to teach and how much time to spend on them. As a way to gain more widespread teacher acceptance of the guides, the area superintendents agreed to work with principals to get at least one teacher from each school to serve on a committee. The second strategy was to plan for school walk-throughs the following year as a way to monitor implementation.

HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING CURVE

Meanwhile, with the media focus on high schools, the superintendent had gone out in front, and he was on a steep learning curve. NCLB had forced the district to look at dismal graduation numbers for African-American and Hispanic students, but the high school planning committee had obtained different kinds of information about subgroups from the data office. Why had no one ever told him that—as one example—only seven African-American students in the entire district had received a score of 4 or 5 on an AP exam last year, and only one of the seven was male? With smaller schools, he hoped, these kinds of disparities would be more visible and schools would be forced to deal with them.

He hired a consultant to conduct focus groups with high school students. Her preliminary report drew these conclusions:

Students feel teachers’ expectations are too low. Many shared this view: “I really shouldn’t say this, but teachers should be making us do the work. You can come up with any dumb-ass excuse and they take it.”

Students are disengaged from teachers and content. “My English teacher just stands up there and drones on,” a female student said. “She’s not even interested in what she’s saying, I swear to God.”

Students want personal relationships with teachers. “My math teacher has this fakey attitude,” said a male student, “like he wants to be our bro’—which is lame anyway—but he doesn’t even remember my name.”
Students are concerned about school safety and believe measures taken are inadequate. Several students agreed with this comment: “Our school has metal detectors but there’s more than one door you can sneak in, or if you come in late, you don’t always have to go through it. Metal detectors don’t mean nothing—they’re just there to make the teachers feel safe. And while the teachers are feeling so-o-o safe, kids are scared to use the bathrooms.”

Students notice resource disparities and segregation by group within their schools. A female student said, “I’m in the honors program, and we have, like, this whole wing to ourselves. The only time I see other kids, especially Hispanic kids, is before or after school or at a game. It doesn’t feel like we go to the same school.”

Students want a venue for communicating with the superintendent. When I told them the superintendent wanted to hear their views, one of the first things a student said was: “Where is he? If he says he wants to hear from us, how come he’s not here? We should be able to talk to the man himself.”

Next to the last item, the superintendent wrote a note in the margin. “Student government in the schools. Student advisory group to meet with me.”

He was prepared with research to share at the next community meeting. “The superintendent reeled off a list of benefits of small high schools,” reported the Metro Record, “including more personal relationships between teachers and students, fewer students slipping through the cracks, and student involvement in school decision-making. Increased student engagement in the school will improve student attendance and better attendance will increase graduation rates, he said. However, he deferred answering parents’ questions about which students will go to these schools, which teachers and principals will staff them, how they will be phased in, and where they will be located. A committee will be issuing a report, he told the group.”

The committee had been working to identify which large school buildings could be transformed into small learning communities, whether there were suitable buildings the district could acquire, and how much it all would cost. They had also begun to consider student assignment issues and teacher staffing. The CAO met with them once and pleaded with them to complete their work so the district could apply to the Gates Foundation for a grant.

**Literacy Status Check**

After spring testing later that year, the CAO asked everyone in the C.O. group to discuss implementation of the literacy plan, bringing evidence if possible. At the meeting, they listed accomplishments, challenges, and questions.

Committees working on instructional guides—some grades will be ready by fall.

Principals directed to use walk-throughs as a means of monitoring implementation.
Coaches’ role in walk-throughs?

Some principals still angry that their site-based PD money was diverted to pay for coach.

Does anyone know how teachers are using their common planning time?

How is coaching going?

When the CAO asked for evidence from the classroom, several people passed around student work samples. The curriculum director for literacy pointed out that on one sample, a teacher had crossed out “then” and written “than” when the student clearly intended to use “then.” Another teacher had written “Great Job!” and attached stickers to a sample of third grade writing that contained no capital letters, punctuation, or interesting details. An area superintendent read aloud a well-written account from a coach’s journal about working with a teacher to develop a “Concept/Question Board” with questions students raised and information they contributed about a unit theme. Another area superintendent reported a visit to a fifth grade classroom where he watched students pose questions to one another during a class discussion with very little prompting from the teacher—something he had never before seen in a classroom, he said.

“A few months ago, we were in a boat with only a few oars in the water, each paddling toward their own destinations and going nowhere,” the CAO recalls thinking. “Now, at least, we have agreed on where we need to get to, most have put their oars in the water, and a few are attempting to paddle in the same direction.”

**BEST-LAIRED PLANS**

Before the end of July, the high school planning committee reported to the superintendent and CAO. They proposed a system of 41 themed small schools of choice in 18 buildings, leaving three large existing high schools to accommodate students who didn’t make a choice. The large schools would gain enhanced programs with ninth grade academies and career academies, but eventually, it was hoped, comprehensive schools would be phased out as more students were persuaded to exercise choice. To ensure that the new schools would be set up to address the needs of all students, a lottery system would be established so each school would accept proportionate amounts of low-, middle-, and high-performers, and students receiving special education services.

Although the state had promised to release test scores and AYP ratings before the end of the school year, once again they released scores in mid-August, followed soon after by the new list of schools in improvement. Metropolitan’s third and seventh grade reading scores had risen slightly, but fifth grade reading was flat. Elementary math had leveled off; middle grades saw no other improvement; high school scores had risen slightly but were still extremely low. A few schools that had been in improvement the previous year had made AYP, but overall,
more schools were on the list. At the August board meeting, the superintendent was faced with arguing in favor of staying the course with the literacy initiative, since a slight rise in third grade scores indicated the plan would work given time, and arguing for a radical change in high schools, since a slight rise in scores meant nothing. He won, at the cost of promising real results for the literacy plan that year.

Privately, the superintendent told the CAO to continue to focus on literacy, especially in elementary schools. They must show that student achievement would improve in the critical area of elementary literacy if teachers and principals had the right supports—otherwise, what hope did they have for improvement at any level or in any content area? He had been in the system too long to believe that choosing the right curriculum was the silver bullet, but the board’s next step would be to scrap Open Court and they would have to start all over again.

THE COMMUNITY INTERVenes
The superintendent was in his office putting the final touches on a PowerPoint presentation for a press conference about the high school plan when the communications director stuck her head in the door. She wanted to let him know that “Parents for Equity”—a small parent/community group that had protested a number of district decisions in the past without much, if any, impact—were having their own press conference that afternoon to issue a report. “I don’t think we have to worry about it,” she said.

The following day, this article appeared on the front page of the Metro Record:

**Report Calls Metropolitan Graduates Unprepared for College**

DeShawn Jenkins was getting straight As at Metro North High when rejection letters from colleges started arriving in the mail. “He worked hard for those grades,” said his mother, Carlotta Washington. “Watching CSI on TV got him interested in forensic science so he wanted to go to college. I thought, he has the grades, he’ll get in.”

By the time he heard from all five colleges he applied to, DeShawn had been accepted only at Metropolitan Area Community College (MACC), and there only for the remedial program, in which students must successfully complete one semester of high-school-level classes at MACC before gaining freshman status.

“I couldn’t understand it,” Washington said. “Why would he have to take high school classes when he had already taken them—and gotten A’s?”

After Washington spoke to a MACC admissions officer, she contacted “Parents for Equity,” a group of mostly minority parents and community members formed in 1999 to monitor the Metropolitan Public Schools’ racial achievement gap. The admissions officer told her DeShawn had not enrolled in college-preparatory classes. “She saw ‘Business Math’ on his transcript and she said they didn’t consider that to be a math class. Basically, it didn’t even count.” Washington
contacted Equity because “I knew he wasn’t the only Metropolitan student this had happened to.”

The group has just released a report entitled No More Than A Piece Of Paper: The Metropolitan Public Schools Diploma. According to Wanda Jones, president of the all-volunteer group, members showed copies of high school transcripts to admissions officers at MACC and the eight other private and state colleges and universities located in the city. “We went through the courses on the transcripts one by one and asked if they would accept them,” Jones said. “Some students had only two classes their senior year that were acceptable.”

Jones admitted that not all of the students whose transcripts the group obtained (from parents) were planning to go to college. “But that raises another issue,” she claimed. “Why weren’t they? Who told them that was okay? And what are they being prepared to do?”

Bruce McNeil, a MACC admissions officer, said MACC would “love” to eliminate the remedial program for students like DeShawn. “It’s commendable that he earned good grades,” he said. “But it’s been our experience that students who don’t take a higher-level math course in eleventh grade and preferably twelfth grade also are not ready for college-level work in science and math. At this point, if we didn’t offer the remedial semester, we wouldn’t be able to accept many students from MPS.”

Asked why he signed up for “Business Math” in eleventh grade, DeShawn said he filled out his schedule during a meeting in the cafeteria at which only a few staff members were available to advise students. The report presents data the group requested from MPS showing a counselor-to-student ratio that varies from school to school. At Metro North, for example, it’s about 1:500, compared to 1:75 at Metro Arts, a much smaller school.

Yesterday’s press conference, at which the group exhibited poster boards of enlarged transcripts with certain courses dramatically crossed out with red marker, took place two days ahead of a forthcoming MPS press conference on the superintendent’s high school plan. The timing was no accident, said Jones. “He’s been talking about reducing the size of high schools to increase the graduation rate. What about the post-graduation rate? Look at this report, and then try to tell me that changing the size of Metro North is the be-all and end-all. What they should do is get rid of ‘Business Math.’”

DeShawn enrolled at MACC this month and hopes to be considered a freshman by January. Still, Jones pointed out that his mother will be paying for an extra semester after she already paid taxes to support the schools. “It’s sad,” said Jones. “This is a young man who wanted to go to college.”

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1 The superintendent held an emergency meeting that morning with members of the high school planning group, members of the C.O. group, the communications director, and the CAO. According to the minutes:
The superintendent began the meeting by passing around copies of the “Parents for Equity” report and asking everyone to read and discuss it. After a period of silent reading, the communications director offered her ideas for “damage control,” which were a publication featuring prominent MPS graduates and/or starting an Alumni Hall of Fame. Other comments included:

- “Parents for Equity” is not a credible group. Ms. Jones is seen as a firebrand.
- There’s nothing in the report about the realities of offering an academic program for high school students who come in two or three years behind.
- Someone should contact Bruce McNeil at MACC and tell him his comments, as quoted in the article, are unacceptable.
- The report has a number of typos, misspellings, and grammatical errors.

The superintendent posed a question: “What about taking their advice and getting rid of ‘Business Math’?”

After much discussion, the group came to consensus on the following:

- The superintendent will proceed with the press conference as planned to announce the buildings to be utilized as small schools and to outline the student assignment plan. He also will announce that a Task Force is being formed to study curriculum and instruction for the new schools and to make recommendations for how they should be designed. The Task Force will include representatives from higher education, a representative from the mayor’s office, Ms. Jones, high school principals and teachers, the middle school principal from the planning group, a student leader or recent graduate, and possibly others. The Task Force will draw on the resources of the district data office and the heads of content areas, seek outside expertise if necessary, and visit successful small schools in other cities. The TF will report in December, to allow for planning during the remainder of the school year for the fall 2007 opening of the schools.
- Concurrently, teacher study groups with teachers from all schools will be formed to make recommendations for rigorous curriculum for all high schools.

The meeting ended with a final comment from the CAO. “I’d like us to acknowledge that we should have been looking at the issues in this report all along. But now we can capitalize on the interest of ‘Parents for Equity’ and get them involved. It’s going to be hard work, but the good news is we don’t have to do it all ourselves.”

The superintendent received the following e-mails the next day:

I am the father of a 10th grader at Metro South and a member of the recently-formed group “Concerned Parents of High Achievers.” (So far the group includes parents from Metro South and Metro Arts but we’re open to all parents.) Many in our group could put their children in private school but we believe in public education—more than some Metropolitan teachers and principals who don’t send their kids to the public schools.

I am writing about yesterday’s Metro Record article. I would like to call your attention to two statements in particular: “Jones admitted that not all of the students whose transcripts the group obtained were planning to go to college” and “The report presents data the group requested from MPS showing a counselor-to-student ratio that varies from school to school.”
Our children are working hard to meet their goal of being accepted to highly selective colleges. They have too little access to the guidance counselors. We have documented evidence that counselors at Metro South—supposedly the best high school in the district—have not always sent students’ transcripts to all the colleges they’re applying to, or have not sent them on time. Go and visit the school and you’ll see these counselors, with their master’s degrees, doing hall duty.

So if you’re considering moving guidance counselors from Metro South or Metro Arts to Metro North, we are opposed. We support equity, but what’s the point of providing more counselors to Metro North when only a small number of their students plan on going to college?

--Bob Smith

Yesterday’s Metro Record article laid out the concerns of parents of African-American students. I support the goals of “Parents for Equity,” but there’s another group of parents who do not have any voice in your district and are too frightened to form a group. I refer to parents of immigrant students, especially those who are undocumented. In my profession as a local midwife, I work with many of these families and I can assure you they care as much about their children as any other parent does.

Someone needs to speak for them, so I’ve taken it on myself to do that, even though I don’t know a lot about the school district. These parents wonder why—when our city has a growing number of immigrant families—there seem to be fewer bilingual teachers today than there were several years ago, especially in the high schools. The article raised the issue of math. How would you know whether or not a student with limited English proficiency can succeed in math, if he/she can’t communicate with the teacher? Some of these students would also like to go to college. Where are the bilingual guidance counselors?

These are only a few of the issues facing immigrant students. A wonderful resource is being wasted.

--Maria Lopez

The superintendent e-mailed them back and invited them both to join the Task Force.

THE POT BOILS OVER
The CAO decided to accompany some principals on their walk-throughs so she could see implementation firsthand. Following are her notes from her walk-through at an elementary school:

Teacher standing at board, working with students on modeled writing as we come in

Buzz of curiosity from students about visitors

Teacher: “Look at what I have now, after I crossed out that part that we said we didn’t want. Is this a sentence?” Student: “It doesn’t have a period.” Student: “It’s just words—it’s not a sentence.” Teacher asks why not. Student: “Because there’s no person in it. You have to have a person.” Teacher: “What can I do to fix it?” Student: “Make it be about somebody.”
Teacher tells them to take out own writing and look at what they need to fix.

In answer to my question about what she is doing, a girl whispers, “Writing.” Can’t doesn’t want to tell me what it’s about. I read it, ask if it’s about her grandfather, she agrees. I ask her what’s good about it. She says “I have interesting details.” Shows me “beard,” “plays the gitar,” “tells scary stories.” I ask how she knows it’s good to have interesting details in your writing. Shows me rubric in her writing folder—rubric is from state assessment.

[Find a way to tell principal not to say “Good job” every time a student answers her questions.]

[Why did teacher look daggers at coach as we left the room?????]

During the next few months, a flurry of grievances were filed. Teachers claimed principals were violating the contract by “evaluating” them during walk-throughs, and that walk-throughs caused disruption in their classrooms. Seemingly in a domino effect, coaches filed grievances about principals requiring them to do clerical work and even lunchroom and bus duty. The union filed a grievance about the instructional guide for second grade, claiming that the guide required teachers to cover certain topics after they had been assessed on the district’s test, “guaranteeing failure.”

The C.O. group came into their next meeting ducking their heads as if protecting themselves from attack. Although they feared hearing more bad news, eventually the group agreed to hire a consultant to hold focus groups of teachers, principals and coaches to hear a wider range of experiences and opinions. A couple of months later they met to discuss the findings. Minutes of their meeting include a sampling of focus group comments and related decisions made by the group:

Participants reviewed comments from the consultant’s report of focus groups.

**Teacher:** “I think the walk-throughs are an interesting idea but most of our teachers don’t see the value of them yet. It would be good if teachers could go on them too. I’d like to see how other first grade teachers do certain things, like managing the room when you’re working with a small group.”

**Teacher:** “It wasn’t enough for them to have coaches spying on us. Now we have principals and people from the administration in our classrooms, trying to catch us doing something wrong. As if they would recognize something right if they saw it.”

**Principal:** “It’s great having the coach. She really has made herself responsible for students’ reading scores in our building.”

The following decisions were made by the group in response to recent grievances and the focus groups:

- Rethink use of walk-throughs
- CAO will visit principals in schools with numerous grievances
ACKNOWLEDGING THE WORK

The next morning, the CAO attended a fifth grade teacher meeting, along with the principal. The principal turned over the meeting to a teacher after telling the group they were going to discuss student talk in the classroom. While the teacher described at length how her students were beginning to build on one another’s comments, two teachers sitting at the other end of the table sorted through piles of papers, whispered, and rolled their eyes. The principal continued to smile pleasantly and leaned further toward the teacher who was talking, as if to model how to listen.

After comments from another teacher about how well her own students had been providing evidence for their assertions by referring to the text, the principal pushed back her chair to conclude the meeting. “Just a minute,” the CAO said. “What are you going to do differently in your classrooms?” she asked, making the question general but looking at the teachers at the end of the table. After a sullen silence, one said, “We’re supposed to continue focusing on student talk, obviously. But I don’t think it works. I had my students doing partner talk and after less than five minutes it was chaos in there.” Before the CAO could respond, the principal said that unfortunately they couldn’t continue the meeting; teachers needed to be in their classrooms when the children arrived.

As she walked to her car, the CAO remembered one of her first visits to a Metropolitan school. She had stood outside the door for a few minutes looking into a lighted classroom, like a stagehand watching the performance from the wings. Here, it seemed some of the actors were close to refusing to go on stage unless they could say the lines they had memorized for a previous play. How could they be motivated to take up their roles in the new play she was trying to produce? Maybe they needed to hear an acknowledgement that teachers and students were the main act—that the central work of the district happened in classrooms—and that everyone else was there to support the show. Maybe they needed to hear some applause.

The CAO took a detour on her way to the administration building. Text of a letter from the CAO to elementary school principals and teachers:

I am writing to thank everyone for their hard work over the past months. We have asked you to accommodate to new practices while you were already doing a difficult job. The superintendent and I commend you for continuing to place children first as we all learn better ways of doing things. The Central Office maintains its commitment to supporting you as you carry out the most important work of our district.

I have seen many positive things going on in our schools over the past months. I want to share with you one thing I have learned.

On a visit to an elementary classroom, I saw a chart entitled “How do we know that our writing is good?” While many teachers are now using rubrics and criteria charts, this one lingered in my mind. I went back again to see it this week so I could accurately describe it in this letter.
The chart is on a large piece of green construction paper. Under the title, students pasted strips of white paper on which they had written criteria for effective writing, in student-friendly language. (Excessive use of paste indicated to me that students, not the teacher, created the chart!) Some of the strips have been pasted over with another strip as corrections were made, and one strip has an addition on a Post-it Note. At the end of each strip there are children’s names, showing which child or children contributed that idea. Although I have seen many charts with criteria for good writing, I had never thought of adding children’s names. This chart vividly expresses the effort of students, and honors children’s contributions to their own learning in a simple, but powerful, way. We are all getting smarter together. Thank you again for your hard work.

A NEW PLAN FOR HIGH SCHOOL REFORM
In December, the Task Force on New High Schools presented their report to the superintendent and the C.O. group. The middle school principal, who had been elected chair, outlined the course of action they were recommending for the design of new schools. He described a process in which groups of teachers, nonprofits, community organizations, local colleges/universities, and cultural institutions would be invited to submit proposals for schools that would be jointly operated with the district. As an undercurrent of interest and excitement stirred the room, he showed PowerPoint slides outlining a preliminary RFP the group had created to capture the elements they believed were essential:

### Academic Program and Student Support
- What is your school’s mission and vision?
- Describe your school’s academic program for each grade level. If your school has a theme, show how the theme will be woven into the curriculum.
- What are the range of ways student learning will be assessed?
- How will data be used to improve instruction?
- Describe how students will know exactly what they need to do to graduate.
- Describe how students who enter below grade level will be able to meet the standards.
- How will the school ensure that all students have equitable access to school resources?
- Describe how student advisories will be scheduled and how they will function to support students.
- How will you ensure that each student has a post-secondary plan, with most students choosing college?

### Staff and Scheduling
- Describe how the principal will serve as an instructional leader.
- Describe your core teacher team, including their content area certifications.
- What kind of ongoing, job-embedded professional development will be provided for teachers? How will it be scheduled?

### Governance and Management
- How will students, staff and parents participate in school governance?
- How will data be used to evaluate the effectiveness of school programs?

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1 Partially adapted from “New Visions for Public Schools” 2003 RFP for the New Century High Schools Initiative.
• Attach your school’s budget and explain how you plan to secure additional funds, if needed.

Parents and Community
• How will your school take advantage of community resources? What partnerships will you establish?
• How will families be involved in the life of the school and in supporting individual student learning?

Student Recruitment
• How will you attract incoming ninth graders?

After the last slide, the middle school principal spoke. “I’d like to share with you some of our discussions about another important aspect of this work: professional development. During our meetings, Task Force members expressed a concern about limiting opportunities for high-achieving students. They felt that some students would be coming in from middle schools that had not prepared them well enough for high school work—not my school, of course” [laughter]. “We’re saying ‘high expectations for all,’ but will we be able to make that stick, or will teachers end up lowering expectations for the whole class because some students can’t do the work?”

“We realized that we can’t wait until all students are coming in prepared to do the work—we have to move forward with high school restructuring with the kids we have now. So our focus turned to professional development. We came up with a framework for a professional development plan—a novel idea for most of us [more laughter]—that could be used for all groups and content areas. The final slide shows the key elements of this framework.”

**Professional Development Planning Framework**

A professional development plan for each content area will be created that addresses:

**Audiences**
Who are the key audiences, by name, role, and location?

**Outcomes**
What are the specific outcomes, with regard to learning and behavior, that we expect as a result of PD? How can these outcomes be described? What evidence of outcomes can we gather?

**Strategies/Interventions**
What kinds of PD activities will produce these outcomes? How will they be sequenced and scheduled? How will materials and programs be chosen? What kinds of follow-up activities and supports will we use? How will accountability be built in?

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* Adapted from IFL materials.
Scheduling/Communication/Resources
How will opportunities be communicated to potential participants? Logistics: who, what, where, when?

Approval
What financial resources will be needed? Who must sign off on the plan?

Public Communication and Dissemination
Who in the school and the wider community needs to know about and support this plan, initially and over the long term? How will it be communicated?

Ongoing Review and Assessment
How will the impact of programs in classrooms be monitored? How will the impact of PD be monitored?

At the end of the meeting, the curriculum director for mathematics approached the superintendent and the CAO. “The teacher study groups that are looking at more rigorous high school curricula are completing their work,” she told them. “One of the groups contacted me with an interesting recommendation. They think that if we really want all students to graduate college-ready, they should be taking algebra in eighth grade.” She laughed. “There is research to support that, but can you see that happening in our system?”

The superintendent and the CAO stared at each other as the math curriculum director walked away. “Of course, we’d have to be sure the middle school literacy program was effective,” the CAO said. “If they can’t read well enough, they can’t do more sophisticated math tasks. And then there are the ELL students.”

“We’d have to take another look at students’ math and reading skills coming into seventh grade,” the superintendent mused, “and sixth grade...fifth grade...fourth grade...”

“What about teachers’ skills? Would we move high school algebra teachers to middle schools?”

“That would never fly. Middle school teachers would have to learn to teach it. And they would have to have ongoing support...math coaches? How would we pay for that? How would that go over in the schools?”

“Principals would have to know what they should see in classrooms.”

“We’d have to look at scheduling. If we extended the school day...”

“Parents would have to be on board.”

“Everyone would have to be convinced that the kids CAN do it...Some kind of city-wide campaign with a slogan... ‘Yes They Can.’ No, ‘Yes WE Can.’”

The CAO and the superintendent both took deep breaths and went back to work.
The Metropolitan District Case Study

Rationale

School reform work is hard. It is complex because it is a multi-variable problem. It involves implementing and sustaining change in a multilevel system characterized by multiple and shifting priorities. Moving forward requires planning and managing change in intentional ways while reacting to urgent and emerging issues. Good decisions can have negative outcomes. Negative incidents can be used as opportunities. Unfortunately, districts can get caught up in the relentless forward press of the process of district reform. When this happens, districts are often less intentional and less effective than they could be in learning from what they and others have done in order to direct what they should do next.

In this session, we will study the case of a district caught up in this tangled process. The Metropolitan Public Schools case is a hypothetical one constructed to include many of the real actions and issues that take place in IFL districts and others as they work to change schools for the better. The combination of the Metropolitan Public Schools case itself, the framing concepts, and the tools and habits used in the session will challenge participants to analyze, plan, and track district reform in more effective ways.

Guiding Questions & Framing Concepts

- What are the multiple variables at play in district reform?
- How might a case study engage us in learning how others have addressed multiple aspects of district reform?
- How might we be more effective in identifying and connecting critical problems, decisions, actions, events and outcomes?
- How might we better analyze our past efforts in district reform so that we are better able to decide, plan, track, and sustain what we do in the future?

Professional Habits of Mind

- “Entering into” a case by trying to understand a district’s problems, decisions, and actions from their perspective
- Using evidence to make and support claims
- Using Accountable Talk™ to build community and deepen thinking
- Identifying key ideas and habits from case study work to apply to our own work
The Metropolitan District Case Study

Case Study

Task 1
Building Community Around the Case

We are gathered as a cross-district, mixed role small group to do this case study. We have all been involved in school reform for some time and bring with us a rich and diverse set of perspectives and experiences. Our first activity gives us the opportunity to do two things at once: introduce ourselves and introduce the case.

A. Quick Write (2-3 minutes)
   Jot down your answer and be ready to discuss.

   Although this is a fictional case, what are several specific things that ring true for you in the MPS case in terms of the characteristics and feel of real district reform?

B. Introductions (10 minutes)

   Each person around the table introduces themselves by telling their name, district, role, one thing in the case that rings true, and why it does. Everyone listens to learn a bit about the members of the group and aspects of the case.
The Metropolitan District Case Study

Case Study

Task 2a
Understanding the case from the MPS perspective:
What did MPS do, why, and with what outcomes?

This case provides a description of recent reforms in Metropolitan Public Schools (MPS). MPS identified problem areas based on certain evidence and decided to take specific actions to address those problems and other emergent issues. At this point, they are faced with various outcomes of their actions and other developments. You have been assigned to examine MPS reform efforts either in Literacy K–8 or High School Reform. During this task, we ask you to try to “enter in” to MPS and use the case to understand what they did, why, and with what outcomes. Work hard to understand, not to critique.

The case spans 4 years in the life of Metropolitan Public Schools. Some years, the description provides only the broad moves. Other years, the description brings you closer to the day to day feel of ongoing reform. Please read for the overall direction and actions of the reform. You may find yourself wishing you had more details about particular topics and issues. If so, you may want to note when you would like more information to better understand something. For the tasks and discussions, please try to use the information that is available in the case.

A. Understanding the case from MPS perspective:
   Read, analyze, and take notes (20 minutes)

   Please read or reread the MPS case with a focus on your assigned area (literacy or high school reform). Use the attached reading organizer to frame your reading and thinking. Mark your text and take notes to allow you to answer each of the questions. Be specific. Be prepared to discuss using evidence.

B. Understanding the case from MPS perspective:
   Discussion (30 minutes)

   Work together to answer the questions in each column and to connect the information across columns. Press one another to stay close to the text, offer evidence, “think like” MPS, and refrain from critique.
### The Metropolitan District Case Study

#### Case Study

**Task 2b: Reading Organizer**

**Understanding the case from the MPS perspective:** What did MPS do, why, and with what outcomes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA: LITERACY K-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROBLEMS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What problems did MPS identify?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was their evidence?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### AREA: HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEMS</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What problems did MPS identify?</td>
<td>What actions did MPS take to respond to these problems?</td>
<td>What outcomes did these actions have? (These could be positive, negative, intended, unintended, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was their evidence?</td>
<td>Why did they take these actions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Metropolitan District Case Study

Case Study

Task 3
Interpreting the Case from Your Perspective

During the last task, we asked you to try to “enter in” to MPS and use the case to understand what they did, why, and with what outcomes. Now we would like you to interpret and analyze the case from your own point of view. As you reflect on and discuss the questions below, push to make your own thinking and the thinking of others more explicit. Try to articulate what personal experience or research you are drawing upon when you make claims about what worked, what didn’t or what might have been done differently.

A. Looking Back at Past Work in MPS (15 minutes)

Quick Write & Discussion

1. What were the most powerful moves or good decisions that MPS made? Why were those good points of leverage? What is your evidence?

2. What were some of the critical mistakes that MPS may have made? Why were those mistakes? What is your evidence?

3. What were the biggest missed opportunities for MPS? Why were those opportunities? What is your evidence?
B. Looking Forward: Planning Future Work in MPS (15 minutes)

Based on your experience working through this case and your experience as an educator, answer the following questions.

Quick Write & Discussion

1. What are the most important issues or “real” problems that MPS needs to address at this point as it moves forward?

2. What two actions should MPS take next? Why? What outcomes would these actions have? How would you track their impact?
The Metropolitan District Case Study

Case Study

Task 4
Reflecting on the Case Study to Support Your District Work

Two goals for this case study were:
- To build effective habits for analyzing past work
- To build effective habits for planning future work

Now, sum up what you have learned from working together in these ways and identify how you might use these ways of working to sharpen your own district work.

Quick Write & Discussion

1. Why did we study this case this way? What did you learn?

2. What specific questions and practices did we use in this session that you could use in your own district work to improve your effectiveness in analyzing, planning, and tracking your reform efforts?