

New Policies for 21st Century Demands Linda Darling-Hammond

Key Points:

- 21st Century common skills and content have been identified: LDH exclaims that **policies** need to be changed to actually change behavior in schools
- We are behind other similar nations due to our lost opportunity for progress due to philosophical pendulum swings. Pendulum swings result in loss of instructional focus and continuous training for teachers and administrators.
- International assessments show loss of progress since 2003 in problem solving. These assessments (Programme for International Student Assessment) reveal areas of concern and instructional methods that allow for other students to excel. For example; fewer topics, addressed more deeply, focus on reasoning skills and applications of knowledge and a thoughtful sequence of expectations based on developmental understanding of students.
- Other countries don't use external assessments. They use teacher generated assessments that inform ongoing instruction.
- School leaders need to be able to manage organizational development enough to redesign schools to meet the needs of students as well as manage constructive change

Three practices for school leaders

- Constructing time for teachers to work together on the development of curriculum and assessments
- Designing and implementing comprehensive professional development programs
- Helping teachers find another profession if they are unable to improve after having received purposeful support

Questions for Discussion:

1. The current push for reform seems to have moved beyond the Back to Basics conversation. From your perspective, has it?
2. To what degree do we use local assessments? How realistic is it to use these types of assessments with accountability expectations and limited professional development time to develop and refine assessments?

Policy Proposals:

1. Aligned standards, instruction and assessment system
2. Build an infrastructure so that teachers and school leaders have sufficient time to do alignment work
3. Redesigning schools so that they become more supportive of in-depth teaching and learning
 - a. Use of time
4. More equitable distribution of resources

“We have great schools in some places and great classrooms in some schools, but we need to be able to spread that greatness more uniformly across the national system, following a straighter path without those destructive pendulum swings.”

