



School System 20/20 Discussion Group: Questions for District Leadership Teams

Introduction

The School System 20/20 case studies on Lawrence Public Schools (Massachusetts) and Aldine Independent School District (Texas) provide two examples of districts that transformed their policies and practices to raise student achievement among high-need student populations. Each district chose different actions to meet their unique conditions, but each took on systemwide, structural reforms rather than layering new programs on top of broken foundations. School System 20/20 provides a common lens through which to compare and contrast their approaches.

Instructions

Read the [School System 20/20 Infographic](#) and the Executive Summaries or full case studies of [Back to the Brink: A Case Study of Lawrence, MA](#) and [The Rewards of Perseverance: A Case Study of Aldine Independent School District](#). You can also consult [the School System 20/20 Diagnostic Assessment](#) for more information on how ERS measured progress in those districts. Gather an informal group of your district's leadership team to consider the following discussion questions:

- 1) How does your district compare to Lawrence Public Schools (LPS) and/or Aldine Independent School District (AISD)? Which of their challenges are similar to yours?
- 2) Which of LPS or AISD's actions resonated with you? Which are the most innovative or bold? Which seem the best fit for the challenges they were facing?
- 3) Which of the actions that LPS or AISD took could best work in your district? Which address a challenge you also face, and how would your district pursue them?
- 4) What are some of the potential barriers your district might face in implementing those same actions? Can you see any creative ways around those barriers?
- 5) How did LPS or AISD link a series of actions together? Which steps have to go together? Which have to come first?
- 6) Think about a recent initiative or program your district has put in place to address a problem. Was it approached in a "systematic" way? Could it be adjusted to address a root cause, rather than an outward symptom?
- 7) Consider using ERS' [Resource Check](#) tool to identify which of the seven School System 20/20 areas might be more challenging for your district. Use your results to compare the actions that LPS or AISD took to your context.