Organizing Resources for a Learning-Centered School

What can you expect to get from this module?

This module helps participants understand how elements of the school environment (time, space, people and financial resources) impact student achievement. They learn that they have the ability as leaders to shape the learning environment in ways that promote student achievement.

What *shouldn't* you expect to get from this module?

This is not a time management or a classroom management module. There is not a great deal of focus on how to manage one's personal workload or time; instead, the focus is on looking at the learning environment schoolwide.

Who should take this training?

This module is for school leaders and potential school leaders. The audience may include school teams of principals, aspiring leaders, teacher leaders and others who are members or potential members of the school's professional development team. **NOTE:** In order for this training to have significant impact, the principal **MUST** be part of the school team being trained.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module:

This module is most appropriate for those who have a strong background in data analysis, curriculum, assessment and instruction, and culture (SREB foundational modules).

What will you have to do to get the most from this module?

Participants must commit to attending as a team, completing the prework, attending two initial days, completing homework assignments and attending one follow-up day. It is important for teams to have time to reflect and apply what they have learned between the initial training and the follow-up session.

Big Ideas in This Module

- Time, people, space and resources are all entities that leaders can organize in ways that detract from or maximize student achievement.

- Time spent by school leaders, other school personnel and students may be value-added, necessary, or wasted. You can systematically identify which activities fall into each category and take steps to maximize value-added time, minimize necessary time and eliminate wasted time.

- For school leaders, examples of value-added time include professional development for staff, effective meeting management and instructional leadership.

- The physical environment should be assessed against criteria validated by research to have an impact on student learning.

- The ability to create and maintain a quality teaching and learning environment in a school is limited not by teacher supply, but by high turnover among the teachers who are already there — turnover that is only aggravated by hiring unqualified and under-prepared replacements who leave teaching at very high rates.

- Data should be used to determine the most effective way to assign teachers to students and classes in such a way as to maximize achievement for all students.

- "Because we have always done it this way" is not a good rationale for the allocation of resources. Research provides you with many options on how to increase and reallocate resources to improve student achievement.

Module Design. *Organizing Resources for a Learning-Centered School* **is a three-day workshop (2+1). It also includes prework and homework assignments. Each section is described below.**

Prework (four to five hours). The prework assignment revolves around organizing time. Participants read several articles and reflect upon activities that add value and increase student achievement. They also keep a one-week time log and (based on the readings) categorize how they spend their time. Finally, they do some research to determine state and local policies/laws governing local authority on decisions affecting the organization of the learning environment.

Introduction (one hour). In this introductory section, participants get to know one another, get an overview of the course and explore the goal of organizing the learning environment as well as some barriers to meeting this goal.

Organizing Time (four hours, 30 minutes). As a follow-up to the prework, participants work on synthesizing this information and reflecting on ways to improve their use of time. Then, they look at ways to make four tasks (staff meetings, supervision, common planning/professional development and parent conferences) more efficient. They are given a selection of readings to help with this task. Finally, they look at student time, in terms of how school leaders can schedule time for increased student achievement.

Homework. Participants form study groups and look at various schedule alternatives for their schools.

Organizing Space (one hour, 10 minutes). This section helps participants to see what aspects of the physical environment have an impact on learning and how their own schools stack up against standards. Participants complete a large-group activity on facts and myths related to the physical environment. Next, the participants are given a series of instruments that they can use to evaluate their school environments, and they complete one of these tools in class.

Organizing People (two hours, 15 minutes). *No Child Left Behind* requires "a highly qualified teacher in every classroom." What does this mean? How are teachers assigned to students and courses now, compared to what would be most effective for boosting student achievement? These are issues that participants grapple with in this section.

Organizing Financial Resources (one hour, 30 minutes). Participants first think of the resource issues related to the goals they have set for time, space and people, and the principles related to best practices in resource allocation in schools. Then they answer several questions — some of which they have posed on their own — about what they can control when allocating resources.

Homework. Throughout Days One and Two, participants keep a list of possible action items based on what they learn. Their assignment between Days Two and Three is to prioritize this list and choose a few items to start working on. They bring to Day Three a description of their progress and issues, along with learning points from the process.

Day Three (five hours, 15 minutes). Day Three follows up on and extends the work of Days One and Two. Participants work more on the physical environment and participate in critical friends groups to help them reflect on their own work to date and plans for the future. Finally, they complete a case study and prepare for their portfolio assignments.