

## Promising Designs for Middle and High School Reform

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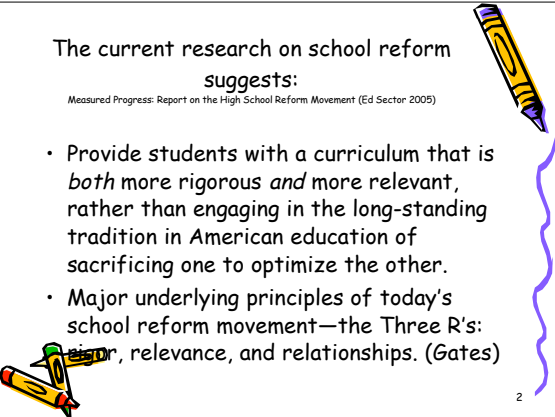
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### The current research on school reform suggests:

Measured Progress: Report on the High School Reform Movement (Ed Sector 2005)

- Provide students with a curriculum that is *both more rigorous and more relevant*, rather than engaging in the long-standing tradition in American education of sacrificing one to optimize the other.
- Major underlying principles of today's school reform movement—the Three R's: *rigor, relevance, and relationships.* (Gates)

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### The current research on school reform suggests:

Measured Progress: Report on the High School Reform Movement (Ed Sector 2005)

- Five major strategies—
  - improving school climate,
  - strengthening curriculum and instruction,
  - raising graduation requirements,
  - helping freshmen get up to speed academically, and
  - preventing students from dropping out.

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<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/WholeSchoolModels.asp>

- [Accelerated Schools](#)
- [America's Choice](#)
- [ATLAS Communities](#)
- [Carbo Reading Styles Program](#)
- [Coalition of Essential Schools](#)
- [Community for Learning](#)
- [Co-nect](#)
- [Core Knowledge](#)
- [Different Ways of Knowing](#)
- [Direct Instruction Model](#)
- [Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction](#)
- [Expeditionary Learning](#)
- [Outward Bound](#)
- [First Things First](#)
- [High Schools That Work](#)
- [High/Scope Primary Grades Approach to Education](#)
- [Literacy Collaborative](#)
- [Middle Start](#)
- [Modern Red School-House](#)
- [More Effective Schools](#)
- [Onward to Excellence](#)
- [Quantum Learning](#)
- [QUEST](#)
- [School Development Program](#)
- [School Renaissance](#)
- [Success for All/Roots & Wings](#)
- [Talent Development High School with Career Academies](#)
- [Talent Development Middle School](#)
- [Turning Points](#)
- [Urban Learning Centers](#)



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### Many middle and high schools face several key issues:

Works in Progress: Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs, 2005, CSDE.org

#### Priority Topics

- Middle school—
  - Transition from elementary to middle school.
  - Literacy and reading.
  - English language learners.
  - Violence and bullying.
  - Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
  - Parental involvement.
- High school—
  - Transition from middle to high school.
  - Literacy and reading.
  - English language learners.
  - Dropouts.
  - Violence.
  - Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Transition from high school to a postsecondary setting.



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### Many middle and high schools face several key issues:

On going issues:

Middle and high schools need more effective approaches:

- to teaching mathematics and science,
- increasing student engagement and attendance,
- educating students with special needs, and
- reducing teen pregnancy.



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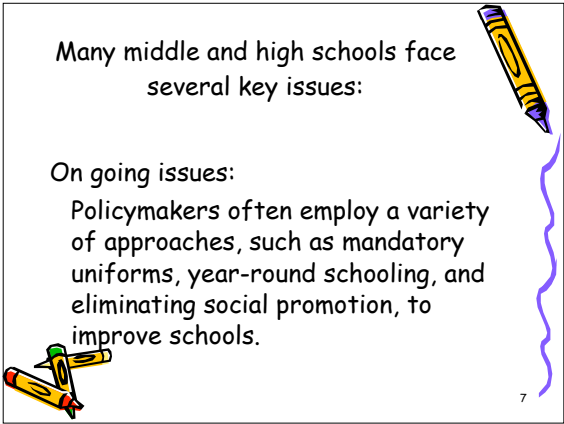
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Many middle and high schools face several key issues:

On going issues:  
Policymakers often employ a variety of approaches, such as mandatory uniforms, year-round schooling, and eliminating social promotion, to improve schools.



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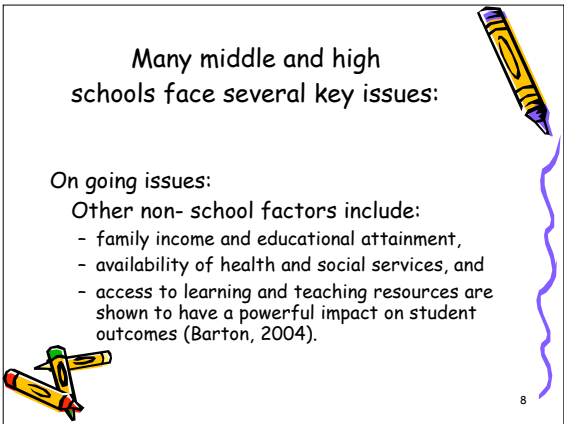
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Many middle and high schools face several key issues:

On going issues:  
Other non- school factors include:  
- family income and educational attainment,  
- availability of health and social services, and  
- access to learning and teaching resources are shown to have a powerful impact on student outcomes (Barton, 2004).



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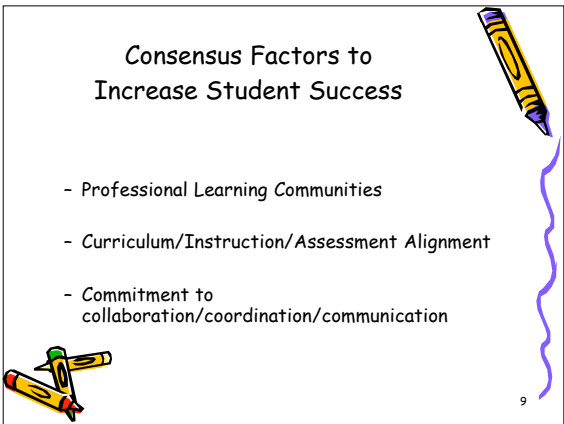
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Consensus Factors to Increase Student Success

- Professional Learning Communities
- Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment Alignment
- Commitment to collaboration/coordination/communication



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### Common Challenges to Increasing Student Success:

- Teacher Capacity & Staffing Needs
- Student Performance Outcomes
- Finances/Budget
- Technology
- Retention of good staff, especially teachers
- Coordinated and focused professional development
- Program Options Information
- Parental Involvement
- Programs for Non-English Speakers



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### Frequent Key Recommendations:

- Monitor over-saturation (and lack of coordination) of professional development for teachers
- Rebuilding spirit with teachers
- Change pedagogy
- Provide counseling and emotional support to students
- Support quality teachers, particularly new teachers



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### Frequent Key Recommendations

- Re-conceptualize gigantic high schools
- Prioritize limited resources
- Address shortages of teachers
- Establish stability for new principals
- Start individual career plans for students in elementary schools
- Address language and mathematics barriers for English language learners
- Increase post-secondary connections



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## How we Organize Middle and High Schools

Schools most often adhere to one of two primary instructional philosophies or ideologies of their districts:

- Managed Instruction
- Portfolios of Instruction



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## Attributes of a "Managed Instruction" District

- Common performance standards and assessments
- Deep commitment to a powerful instructional model and curricular approach
- District systems aligned with equity and consistency
- District control of and support for curriculum and instruction activities at the school level
- Strong district capability to intervene in low performing schools
- Central office services are fully aligned with the district's instructional model
- Broad-based commitment to leadership development within a shared instructional culture



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## Attributes of a "Portfolio" District

- Common performance standards and assessments are applied to all students and all schools
- Commitment to multiple instructional models and academic programs
- District systems aligned with equity and flexibility
- Significant decision-making authority at the school level
- Strong district capability to intervene in low performing schools
- Flexible and supportive central office services
- Broad-based commitment to leadership development and shared decision-making.



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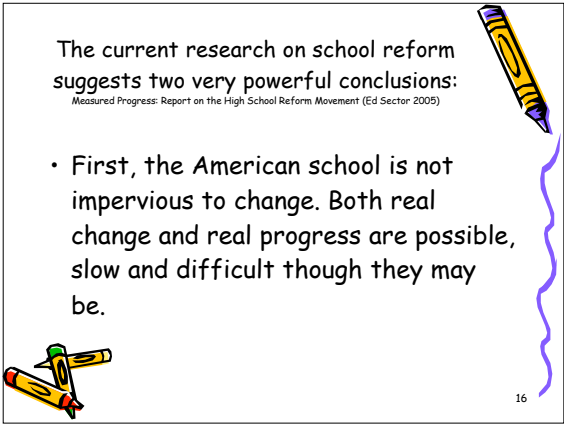
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The current research on school reform suggests two very powerful conclusions:  
Measured Progress: Report on the High School Reform Movement (Ed Sector 2005)

- First, the American school is not impervious to change. Both real change and real progress are possible, slow and difficult though they may be.



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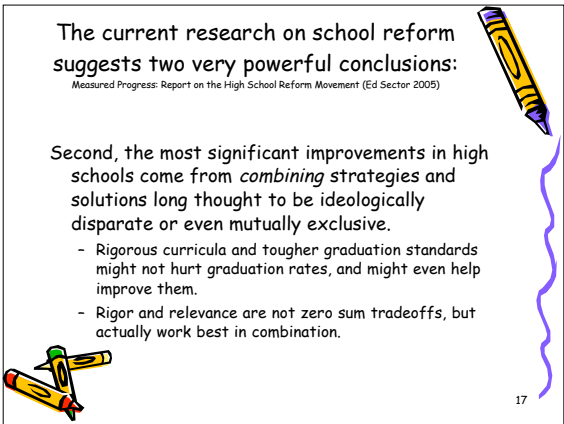
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The current research on school reform suggests two very powerful conclusions:  
Measured Progress: Report on the High School Reform Movement (Ed Sector 2005)

Second, the most significant improvements in high schools come from *combining* strategies and solutions long thought to be ideologically disparate or even mutually exclusive.

- Rigorous curricula and tougher graduation standards might not hurt graduation rates, and might even help improve them.
- Rigor and relevance are not zero sum tradeoffs, but actually work best in combination.



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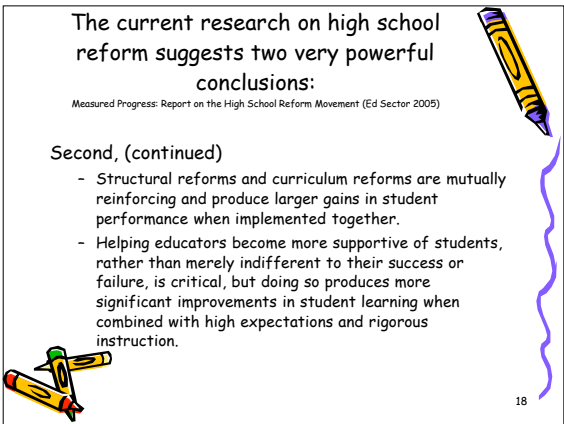
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The current research on high school reform suggests two very powerful conclusions:  
Measured Progress: Report on the High School Reform Movement (Ed Sector 2005)

Second, (continued)

- Structural reforms and curriculum reforms are mutually reinforcing and produce larger gains in student performance when implemented together.
- Helping educators become more supportive of students, rather than merely indifferent to their success or failure, is critical, but doing so produces more significant improvements in student learning when combined with high expectations and rigorous instruction.



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## The current research on school reform suggests:

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- Reforming schools requires overlapping solutions.
- The challenge is how to create the conditions that allow such solutions to flourish together and how to get them into the communities and schools that need them the most.
- Middle & High school reform is achievable, but reformers *must leave very little to chance* to be successful.



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## Discussion & Analysis

- Participants will develop optimum, effective designs for middle and high schools best suited to their own settings.



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