As you sign into the session today, we’d like for you to complete a reflective response to the question below. When responding, consider this:

*Agility is the ability to adapt quickly and easily, in response to internal or external changes.*

How “agile” was your school’s response to COVID-19?

A. We slowly responded to the crisis, and we did not truly launch e-learning.

B. We responded quickly, and we did launched e-learning that met the needs of some students.

C. We responded quickly, and we had e-learning in place that allowed for some differentiation and personalization.

D. We responded quickly, and we continued to adapt e-learning plans to differentiate and personalize learning.
Beyond Quarantine: Resetting School Culture, Collaboration and Community

Dr. Matthew Clifford, American Institutes for Research

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mclifford@air.org
How agile was your school’s response to COVID-19?

N=96 principals

- We slowly responded to the crisis, and we did not truly launch e-learning.
- We quickly responded to the crisis, and we did not truly launch e-learning.
- We responded quickly, and we did e-learning that was the same for all students (without differentiation or personalization).
- We responded quickly, and we did e-learning that could be tailored to different student needs (with differentiation or personalization).

What’s happening here? What is the principal doing?
Schools exhibiting strong culture, higher levels of collaboration, and strong sense of community tend to retain staff and be higher performing.

What we know from research is that school culture, staff collaboration and staff sense of community makes a difference when attempting to retain staff and rapidly improve student performance.

• Strong school culture is positively associated with high student academic performance and with academically improving schools.
• Strong school culture is associated with high teacher retention.
• Strong school culture and teacher collaboration is positively associated with school change.
• Effective principal leadership that focuses instruction and talent management is associated with stronger school cultures.
Schools exhibiting strong culture, higher levels of collaboration, and strong sense of community tend to retain staff and be higher performing.

In research, school culture has different definitions and is measured by different survey items. Meta-analyses of school culture studies identified some common features:

- Trust in colleagues and school administrators
- Physical and emotional safety
- Staff engagement together in solving problems
- Mutual accountability and support
- Autonomy to innovate
- Common sense of school mission
- Time to teach and to learn
Schools exhibiting strong culture, higher levels of collaboration, and strong sense of community tend to retain staff and be higher performing.

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- Time to teach and to learn

During school closures, traditions, practices and policies have been interrupted. How can principals restart school culture to improve differentiation and personalization for students during these uncertain times?
Resetting school culture and collaboration: Structural supports now and for the future

Some national organizations and school districts are creating functional teams within schools to personalize and differentiate learning through the period of COVID-19. The functional teams are either being created or an existing team is addressing the content.

Previous research on what school principals can do to distribute leadership effectively in teams suggests:

- Clarify team responsibilities and responsibilities to collaborate
- Set a simple goal focused on equity and improvement
- Put the right people in place
- Trust teams to struggle and innovate
- Supply the right information and other resources
- Over-communicate
## Resetting school culture and collaboration: Structural supports now and for the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Supports</th>
<th>Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School leadership</strong></td>
<td>• What’s our school culture like now?</td>
<td>• What supports and information will be coordinated among teams?</td>
<td>• How can we collaborate and coordinate work across the school?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do students needs and what are our priorities?</td>
<td>• How can we balance change?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What assets are in place?</td>
<td>• What health screening measures should be in place?</td>
<td>• What decision rules prompt our response?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health and safety</strong></td>
<td>• How well did we meet students’ instructional needs and what do</td>
<td>• What are scope and sequence expectations now?</td>
<td>• How can grade-level and content teams continue to meet together?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students need now?</td>
<td>• What’s the oversight and accountability for learning?</td>
<td>• How should learning be coordinated, personalized among teachers?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who participated regularly and advanced, who did not, and why?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• How can we support collaboration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and learning</strong></td>
<td>• How well are we prepared to support students and educator in the</td>
<td>• Who will work with students and staff to address needs?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>long term?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What communications must we prepare to provide?</td>
<td>• What tiered mental health supports need to be in place to restart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Who did we reach and not reach, and why?</td>
<td>schools?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How well did we meet students’ instructional needs and what do</td>
<td></td>
<td>• What routine can we establish to celebrate our accomplishments?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students need now?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• How can we respectfully support educators who struggle with stress?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What diverse “channels” are available to listen and speak with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>families?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social and emotional health</strong></td>
<td>• Who will communicate with families and community organizations?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What tiered mental health supports need to be in place to restart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>schools?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family and community</strong></td>
<td>• How should we respectfully and thoughtfully communicate with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>families?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What partnerships can we leverage to support communication?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What routine can we establish to celebrate our accomplishments?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How can we increased transparency and trust with families and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>communities?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How can we integrate health and education services for the benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of communities?</td>
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</table>
Questions for small group discussion

• What has helped you to maintain a positive school culture during school closures?
• What functional groups do you have in place and which ones might be developed to support school restart?
  • Think about....
    • School leadership
    • Health and safety
    • Teaching and learning
    • Social and emotional health
    • Family and community

• How will the teams’ work be coordinated to support problem-solving in the school?
• How can the teams’ work help to restart school culture?
Beyond Quarantine: Resetting School Culture,
Collaboration and Community
Rashidah Lopez Morgan
June 2020
Culture and Collaboration

Schools exhibiting strong culture, higher levels of collaboration, and strong sense of community tend to retain staff and be higher performing.
Collaboration Continuum

The Coherence Lab Fellowship’s Collaboration Continuum is intended to help leaders intentional choices about working relationships within their teams and across their organization.
### Characteristics of the teams that compete include:

- May view their initiatives as distinct and/or conflicting
- Low levels of trust
- Guard information and resources
- Adept at micro-politics and workarounds
- Do not have regular ways to exchange information or work together
- Information moves through traditional, hierarchical routines and relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacities</th>
<th>Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of trust exist. Communication and coordination skills and time to work together is neither needed nor valued. Colleagues may have an instinct to guard information and resources, rather than develop productive relationships. Successful individuals become adept at micro-politics and workarounds. The organization may have a strategic plan and vision, but it is not well understood, shared or owned by departments.</td>
<td>Individuals, teams and departments are siloed and do not have regular ways to exchange information or work together across teams and departments. Information is shared only when requested and may be inaccurate or easy to misinterpret. Information moves only vertically (up and down) in the organization through traditional, hierarchical routines and relationships (such as manager/employee meetings, staff meetings and cabinet meetings). Internal and external communication and messages are likely to be disjointed, redundant or even conflicting, because they are the result of the competitive internal environment. Performance review processes may not exist or have consequence, or they may reward individual performance without taking account of team or department goals or impact.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Co-exist

Teams and departments operate as well-meaning but independent silos. Competition or turf issues are infrequent and accidental, rather than the norm, but employees are expected to “stay in their lanes” and may face difficulties if they try to coordinate or collaborate with other employees.

Characteristics of teams that co-exist include:

- Operate as independent silos
- Team members are expected to “stay in their lanes”
- Little expectation to build trust and partnership
- Do not seize opportunities to build mutually beneficial relationships
- Decision-making routines vary based on leadership styles
- Information is easily shared throughout the department but not across departments

There is little need, incentive or cultural expectation to build trust and partnership across the organization. Trust and time to work together may exist within a team and department only. Team members and leaders do not recognize nor seize opportunities to build mutually-beneficial relationships across departments. The organization may have a strategic plan and vision, but goals/mandates/strategies/initiatives are developed and delivered independently. Once developed and underway, team and department members and leaders do not identify or develop interdependent connections among the goals/mandates/strategies/initiatives. Communication is an independent function that varies in terms of quality and skill across teams and departments.

Each department likely sets its own performance target or sets targets in isolation with organization leadership without awareness of the targets of other departments. Lines of responsibility may not be clear. Decision making routines likely vary based on individual leadership styles. Each department likely has its own unique routines to exchange information and work together to create and approve work products. Information is easily shared throughout the department, but not across departments. The ease of finding information across departments may vary as a reflection of the different communication and knowledge management and planning routines. Communication materials and messages are likely to be developed, approved and shared directly by departments to external audiences, often resulting in conflicting or contradictory directives and confusion among recipients.
Communicate

Characteristics of teams that compete include:

- Consistently and regularly exchange information for mutual benefit
- High level of motivation to work together, though may not regularly share resources or work together
- Transparently provides information but does not have clear expectations on how the information is used
- Planning processes may not fully explore the capacity needed to for coordination and collaboration
Characteristics of teams that coordinate include:

- May operate in silos but there are standing or ad hoc cross-functional group efforts to work together
- Efforts to coordinate may depend on individuals rather than systematic implementation
- Provides access to shared resources and information along with structural incentives to work together
- Decisions made by leaders are transparently shared with staff
- Shared information is processed and is used to make modifications during planning processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust and the instinct to coordinate exists. Leaders signal that working</td>
<td>Teams and departments proactively and regularly share information, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together is important, even when doing so requires more time or</td>
<td>use this to inform engagement with the field, including program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lengthier processes. Coordination requires some access to shared</td>
<td>activities and implementation supports. Shared information is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources along with structural incentives to work together.</td>
<td>processed during major interdepartmental/cross-agency events,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization culture supports and spotlights examples of coordination,</td>
<td>including strategic planning and budgeting, and used to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such as through performance reviews, internal communication</td>
<td>make modifications to these if necessary. Routes for ongoing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>updates or staff meetings. Individuals are willing to learn from each</td>
<td>systematic coordination across departments may only exist at the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other and make mid-course corrections to spur continuous</td>
<td>cabinet/senior executive levels. In partnership with organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvement. Decisions made by leaders are transparently shared with staff.</td>
<td>leadership, departments regularly evaluate impact towards the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External communication messages are proactively crafted to resonate with</td>
<td>organization’s strategic plan and goals. External communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>target audiences and the information can spur intended action.</td>
<td>strategies, venues and information are synchronized to coordinate both</td>
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<tr>
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<td>timing and message, or at least they are centrally coordinated to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>indentify and remove conflicting timing and information before</td>
</tr>
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<td>sharing externally.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of teams that collaborate include:

- Cross-functional efforts maximize the opportunity for impact
- Identifies critical interdependencies between priorities and initiatives
- Leaders have shared ownership of risks, rewards and responsibilities for collaboration
- Clear decision-making processes and routines for collaboration
- Commitment to continuous improvement
- Shared moments of learning and reflection
Culture and Collaboration

- **Want to help someone? Shut up and listen?** - Ernesto Sirolli, TedxEQChChc
- Empathy Interviews, Coherence Lab Fellowship

![Diagram showing goals of listening and what not to do]
Example from practice: Leading data conversations

Leading teams with data protocols: Capital City Public Charter School

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdG7_ggEBIk
Example from practice: Leading data conversations

Leading teams with data protocols: Capital City Public Charter School

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdG7_ggEBIk

Structures: Common meeting time
Instructional leadership team

Routines: Leading data protocols
Principal and teacher-leader roles
Information sharing/working together

Capacities: Data sharing
Technology
Teacher training
Trust
Shared vision and ownership
Discussion

• As you reflect on the example, what would have to shift in hybrid/remote environment and what could stay the same?
Resetting school culture and collaboration: Structural supports now and for the future

Resources


Council of Chief State School Officers COVID-19 resources: https://ccsso.org/coronavirus
Resetting school culture and collaboration: Structural supports now and for the future

Resources


National Association of Elementary School Principals Coronavirus Resources: https://www.naesp.org/content/coronavirus-resources


