Integration of Multiple Technology Initiatives Is the Key to Effective Education Under ESSA.

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Implementing innovation Correctly Makes or Breaks Educational Effectiveness

The track record of effectively implementing technology into K-12 education is poor. Technology-based initiatives have failed to bring about the quality pedagogy, efficient management, and student engagement that was promised.

ESSA is a new and more complex ballgame than the previous environment for innovation.

- The **ESSA legislation provides schools with flexible funding** to address staff development, curriculum, adaptive assessment, and technology devices, **but the law will also impact a variety of areas** such as teacher evaluation, the state of under performing schools, personalized instruction, and use of data.
- **Education has gone digital, and print is receding.** There are a plethora of new materials and initiatives such as blended learning, data analytics, adaptive assessment, adaptive instruction, individual student devices, digital curriculum, integrated management systems, 1:1 computing, ubiquitous wifi access, and others.
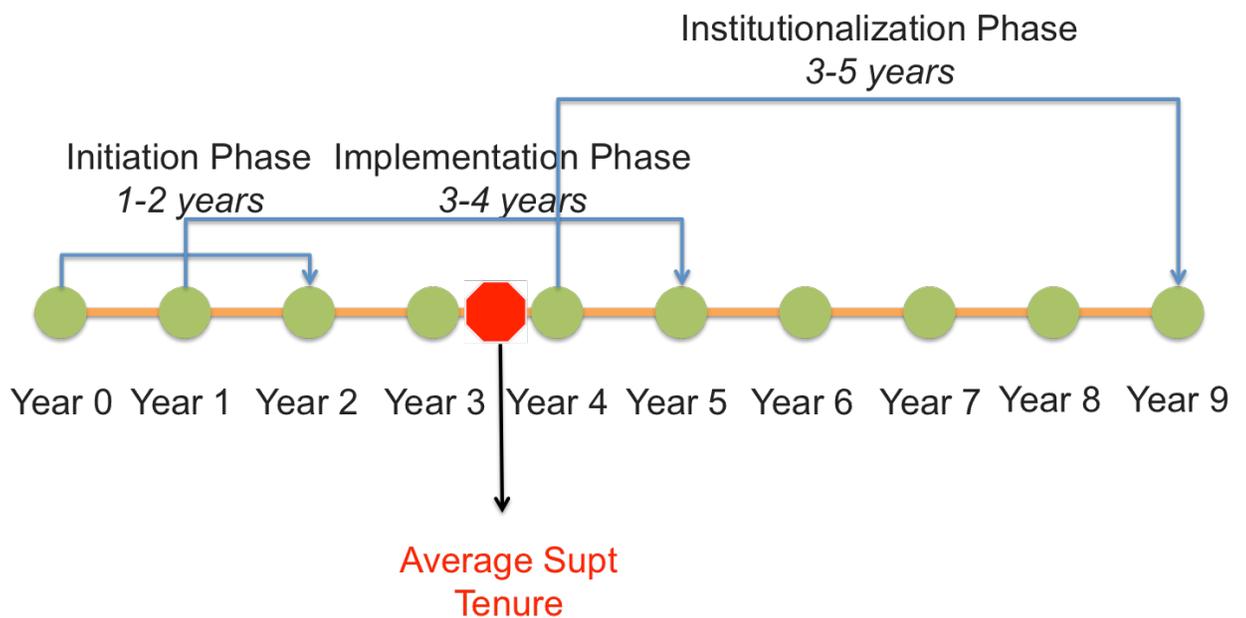-

School districts are tasked with simultaneously implementing interdependent initiatives.

Issues That Educational Decision makers Need to Understand

- *Why implementation of education technology initiatives ha sfailed to create greater effectiveness*
- *What school and industry leaders need to know about implementation to make education initiatives stick?*

Ken Eastwood, Superintendent of Schools in the Middletown Extended City School District in New York, has been utilizing technology to improve pedagogy for the last fifteen years. His efforts have been effective. In a 90% Title I, predominantly Hispanic district, the scores have moved for all schools previously under performing and with graduation rates of 54% to all schools being proficient and with graduation rates at 84%. Middletown, a district of 7,000 students, has had a Race to the Top (RTT) Grant for the last two years. The district is simultaneously working with data analytics, personalized learning, outsourcing of professional development, and a variety of educational software initiatives. Eastwood's 26 years of experience utilizing technology-based improvement initiatives has enabled him to reflect on the complexities of initiating, implementing, and institutionalizing innovations so that they permanently stick. Through the lens of Middletown and other successful district experiences with managing innovation, the full lifecycle from initiation of an idea to permanent institutionalization can take as long as nine years or more, far longer than the average leader stays in his or her position.

Initiation to Institutionalization Life Cycle

Institutionalization Phase
3-5 years

Initiation Phase   Implementation Phase
1-2 years   *3-4 years*

Year 0 Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6 Year 7 Year 8 Year 9

Average Supt
Tenure

In the course of one full lifecycle a district could experience three superintendents

Initiation: Development of a vision and then the subsequent planning that is necessary to move all of the district's constituencies into a readiness for implementation takes at least 1-2 years.

Implementation: This phase takes approximately four years. Eastwood has found success starting this phase with a two-year volunteer model in order to build capacity and validation for others to feel more comfort to follow. The third year is generally for the 5-8 percent who need a more direct type of motivation, and the fourth year is what he calls the year of solidification, where continuation of feedback, practice, and data analysis is paramount to build a sense of mastery and further build justification for sustaining the change/innovative effort into an institutionalized practice/program.

Institutionalization: This phase could take 3-5 years or longer and focuses on avoiding digression from the plan or vision and prohibiting downsizing. It is also a time to be cautious of allowing flexibility as too much flexibility often leads to a lower percentage of and weak or no institutionalization. Additionally, this is the time to re-establish pressure and assure that the change program stays on course. Another caution is that this is the time when new leadership comes ion the scene, often creating new efforts that erase the push and accomplishments of the previous leader's implementations.

o Finally, there is a need to take emphatic steps to incorporate the change initiative into the culture. At Middletown, this is accomplished by requiring all new employees to be properly in-serviced and mentored to mastery of the program's intent and pedagogy.

o **Innovations do not get to the point of sticking and being institutionalized are:**

  ▪ Most districts implement the first two phases and fail to implement institutionalization, which is the critical one for making innovation stick.

- The process for technology-based innovation to create effective education can take up to nine years, and the average tenure of a superintendent is 3.6 years.
  - When a superintendent leaves a district, her/his successor frequently brings in new initiatives and doesn't support the original ones.
  - When initiatives are started, school boards often do not commit to a 5-9 year process.

The ability to persist through *the three phases of implementation* is what makes innovation stick. School systems usually struggle with or ignore the last phase of implementation. **The grit to persist through all three phases of implementation will sustain innovation**

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