

# **Highly Effective Middle Schools and How They Got There**

## **NASSP Pre-Convention Long Conference**

**Cathy Andrews, Becker MS, Las Vegas, NV**

**Sharon Neuman, Lawton Chiles Middle Academy, Lakeland, FL**

**Clara Sale-Davis, Freeport Intermediate School, Freeport, TX**

**Ed Vittardi, Independence Middle School, Independence, OH**

**Tim Hadfield, South Shelby Middle School, Shelbina, MO**

**Jim Fernandez, Julius West Middle School, Rockville, MD**

**Don Clark, University of Arizona (Emeritus), Tucson, AZ**

**Don Hackmann, Iowa State University, Ames, IA**

**Vicki Petzko, Univ. of Tennessee-Chattanooga, TN**

**Jerry Valentine, University of Missouri-Columbia, MO**

**John Nori, NASSP, Reston, VA**

**February 27, 2004**

# Highly Effective Middle Schools and How They Got There

<u>Session Events</u>	<u>Leaders</u>	<u>Approx. Time</u>
<b>Overview Session Activities</b> <b>Explanation of the National Study</b> <b>Profile of the Six Highly Successful Schools</b> <b>Description of Special Interest Breakout Groups</b>	<b>Jerry Valentine</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Special Interest Breakout Groups By School</b> <b>(Participants select 2 of the six groups; each group lasts approximately 25 minutes)</b>	<b>Six Principals</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Panel Discussion Re Selected Topics</b>	<b>Six Principals</b> <b>Four Professors</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Synthesis/Summary of Key Points</b>	<b>Jerry Valentine</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Long-Gruhn-Melton Award</b> <b>Presentation/Recipient Comments</b>	<b>Don Clark</b> <b>Ron Williamson</b>	<b>20</b>

# **NASSP's ML Decade Studies**

- **1980-1982      The Middle Level Principalship**
- **1991-1993      Leadership in ML Education**
- **2000-2003      Leadership in ML Schools**

**Phase I: National Survey of Schools (2000: 14,107 > 1,423)**

**Phase II: Study of Highly Successful Schools (2001-02: 100 > 98 > 6)**

From 14,107 Middle Level Schools to  
6 Highly Successful Schools

# **Phase II: National Study of Highly Successful Schools and Their Leaders**

## **Schools in Each State Identified by Nominators**

- Winter 2001**
- 150+ Nominators (NASSP, NMSA, Universities, State Departments)**
- Nomination Form Required Nominator to Provide Specific Info about School**
- 275 Schools Nominated (all states represented)**

# **Phase II: National Study of Highly Successful Schools and Their Leaders**

## **Nominated Schools' Principals Provided School Data**

- Spring 2001**
- Described Change Processes**
- Identified Implementation of Turning Points' 2000 Recommendations**
- Provided Demographics about Self and School**

# **100 Highly Successful Schools Selected**

## **•Summer 2001: Panel Independently Evaluated Principals' Responses and Selected 100 Schools**

### **•Criteria**

- Processes for Change in Past 5 Years**
- Direction for Change (Values/Beliefs/Mission/Vision/Goals)**
- Address Challenges Facing the School**
- Document Meeting Student Needs (especially achievement)**
- Turning Points 2000 Recommendations**
  - Rigorous Curriculum**
  - Effective Instruction**
  - Expert Staff**
  - Learning Climate/Community**
  - Democratic Governance**
  - Safe/Healthy Environment**
  - Parent/Community Involvement**

# **100 Schools Invited: 98 Participated**

## **Principals Completed Detailed Survey (Fall, 2001)**

- Principal Personal Characteristics and Preparation**
- Leadership by Others**
- Curricular Programs**
- Organizational Designs for Instruction**
- Assessment Practices**
- Articulation and Transition Practices**
- Co-curricular Programs**
- School Improvement Practices**
- Professional Development Practices**

# **98 Schools: Survey Data Collected (Fall 2001)**

- **Teacher Survey**
  - **School Culture and Climate**
  - **Principal Leadership**
  - **Teacher Instructional Practices**
- **Student Survey (10% of oldest class)**
  - **Participation in school**
  - **Self-esteem; self efficacy**
  - **Student behavior**
  - **Parent Involvement**
  - **Homework**
- **Parent Survey (knowledgeable parent leader)**
  - **School Improvement and Change Processes**
  - **Turning Points Recommendations**

# Site-Visit Schools

- Research Team Studied All Data from the 98 Schools
- Invited Six Schools to Participate in an In-depth On-Site Study
- Site-visits were Three Days per school in the Spring of 2002

# Site Visit Events

DAY ONE	DAY TWO
Faculty Meeting	Randomly Selected Teacher Interviews
Tour of School	Parent Interview
Principal Interview	Superintendent Interview
Assistant Principal Interviews Randomly Selected Teacher Interviews	Counselor Interviews Media Specialist/Librarian Interview
Observe Classroom Instruction (Instructional Practices Inventory)	Observe Classroom Instruction (Instructional Practices Inventory)
Student Presentation and Interviews	Faculty Meeting

**Day Three:** Data Collection/Observations/Interviews/Discussions as needed.

# Six Site-Visit Schools

<b><u>School</u></b>	<b><u>Principal</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
<b>Becker Middle School</b>	<b>Cathy Andrews</b>	<b>Las Vegas, NV</b>
<b>Lawton Chiles Middle Academy</b>	<b>Sharon Neuman</b>	<b>Lakeland, FL</b>
<b>Freeport Intermediate School</b>	<b>Clara Sale-Davis</b>	<b>Freeport, TX</b>
<b>Independence Middle School</b>	<b>Ed Vittardi</b>	<b>Independence, OH</b>
<b>South Shelby Middle School</b>	<b>Tim Hadfield</b>	<b>Shelbina, MO</b>
<b>Julius West Middle School</b>	<b>James Fernandez</b>	<b>Rockville, MD</b>

# Special Interest Sessions

- **Becker MS:** Creating Small School Communities in a Large Suburban MS
- **Lawton Chiles Middle Academy:** Fostering a Safe and Orderly Learning Environment Through Positive Parent Involvement
- **Freeport Intermediate School:** Turning Around Academic Achievement in a School of Poverty
- **Independence MS:** Creating an Environment Supportive of Student-Centered MS Practices
- **South Shelby MS:** Using Data and A Teacher Leadership Team to Change Academic Success
- **Julius West MS:** Embracing and Thriving on Cultural Diversity and Academic Challenge

# Summary Thoughts: Implication for Practice

- Persistent Vision, Mission; Common Value/Beliefs
- Commitment to Individual Student Success
- Student-Centered Programs and Practices Grounded in Developmental Knowledge and Best ML Practice
- Continuous and Collective Learning among Teachers
- Environment of Positive Relationships/Respect/Trust
- Culture of Collaboration across School Community
- Leaders Share/Distribute Leadership across School Community