

Chapter 10

Labor-Management Collaboration

The Benefits to Student Achievement

Studies of school districts in Baltimore, southern California, Chicago, Cincinnati, and elsewhere have found gains in student achievement after teachers and administrators developed strong, collaborative partnerships. The U.S. Department of Education has called labor-management collaboration "the most promising path to transforming American education."

U.S. Department of Education, *Shared Responsibility: A U.S. Department of Education White Paper on Labor-Management Collaboration* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Accessed March 16, 2017 at <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/labor-management-collaboration/white-paper-labor-management-collaboration.pdf>

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has said that collaboration is an essential tool to build trust, collective responsibility and public confidence in schools.

And we see sustainable results in districts that embrace collaboration. It's a vehicle for implementing solutions that help kids succeed, evidenced by what happens when resources are deployed for community schools, early-childhood education, project-based learning, music, art, and multiple pathways for graduation, including career and technical education programs.

"Randi Weingarten's Response to a Critic," *Education Week*, November 6, 2014. Accessed March 16, 2017 at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/11/06/12weingarten.h34.html>.

A recent study found that schools with more extensive collaboration on curriculum, teaching practices, mentorships and student performance data showed greater gains in academic progress. It focused on ABC Unified, a southern California district operating 30 schools and enrolling 21,000 primarily Latino and Asian students. The study found that even in impoverished schools, strong partnerships added as much as 76 points to a school's API ranking, a widely used measure of campus quality.

Rubinstein, Saul A. and John E. McCarthy, "Union-Management Partnerships, Teacher Collaboration, and Student Performance," *ILR Review* 69 (2016): 1114-1132.

Another study, which focused on 400 Chicago schools over a period of 15 years, found that the campuses that improved the most had developed an unusually high degree of "relational trust" among staff.

Bryk, Anthony S. and Barbara Schneider, "Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform," *Educational Leadership* 60 (2003): 40-45. Accessed March 16, 2017 at <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Trust-in-Schools@-A-Core-Resource-for-School-Reform.aspx>.

The New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative

In partnership with the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, the New Jersey School Boards Association has taken a leading role in a project to validate the impact of positive management-labor relations on teaching and learning in New Jersey’s public schools.

Other partners include the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

Now in its second stage, the project has received a grant of approximately \$150,000 from the Federal Conciliation and Mediation Board. The grant will fund training for the school districts that comprise Cohort 2 of the project. They include:

- Atlantic County Institute of Technology
- Bergenfield
- Clearview Regional
- East Brunswick
- Evesham
- Hamilton (Mercer)
- Hawthorne
- Lower Cape May County Regional
- Milltown
- New Brunswick
- Pompton Lakes
- Ocean City
- Plainfield
- Secaucus
- South River
- Teaneck Community Charter
- Wanaque

Based on research literature and anecdotal reports from administrators and teachers in districts with extensive experience in formal labor and management collaboration, the NJSBA Task Force on Student Achievement believes that such collaboration can be effective in facilitating student learning for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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FOR LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

75. Assess the status of labor-management relations and formal collaboration within the district.
76. Consider the positive impact that adopting formal labor-management collaboration practices could have on student achievement and school climate.

FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHING STAFF

77. Follow the progress of the New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative and discuss with one another its impact on student achievement.