WHEN CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SCHOOL

EDU 5743

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Research Problem

- Examining and overcoming the resistance to change experienced in a private school, that arose due to a need to reverse a decline in enrollment over a period of years

Introduction

- As the population changes on Long Island, maintaining or increasing enrollment in a private school becomes problematic

- To combat the stagnant enrollment a new team was established to evaluate the changes necessary

- The team examined the school culture at *School A* in order to determine what changes needed to be made

Problems with Academics

- Many students were not receiving an Advanced Regents Diploma
- Poor PSAT and SAT Scores
- Study Halls were unstructured and meaningless to students
- Ineffectiveness of the extracurricular activities program

The current climate did not allow students to achieve their personal best academically

School Issues

- Building cleanliness was poor
- Classrooms were undecorated
- Student work was absent from the halls and the classrooms
- The Guidance Department did not give students proper social or academic support
- Communication between administration and faculty was minimal

Research Questions

- How does understanding the culture of a school community help one to analyze changes necessary?

- How can better understanding the process of change guide planned change?

- How can the resistance to change be overcome?

Significance

- To understand the importance of assessing a school's culture in creating successful planned school change

- To understand the process whereby change is implemented and accepted to help overcome the resistance to that change

- To apply the research to *School A* in planning for positive school change and staff acceptance to the changes

Review of Literature

- Understanding the Culture of a School Community
- Process of Change
- Resistance to Change
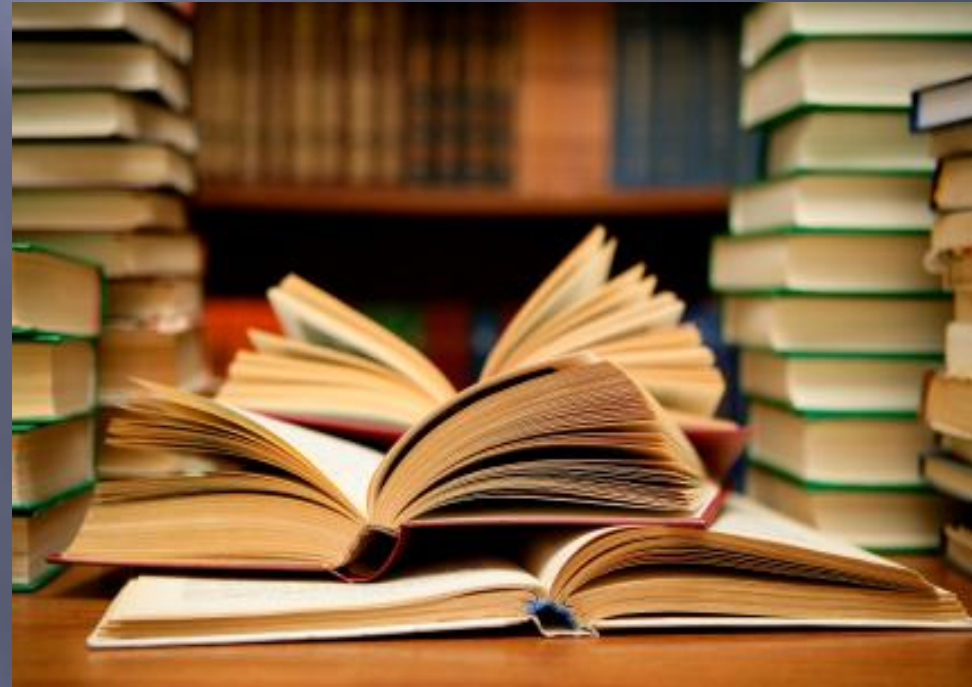
Understanding the Culture of a School Community

- Culture is an important part of any institution. When change is introduced to a system the "Death and Mourning" stage takes place for the former rituals and ceremonies that used to exist

  (Smith, 1992)

- Change can proceed from the top down or the bottom up:
  - By removing members of the former organization and replacing them with new members that will believe in the change
  - By preserving the original members of the organization and having them change their beliefs to meet the recommended change   (Dunlop, 2010, Class Notes)

Geo Tracks
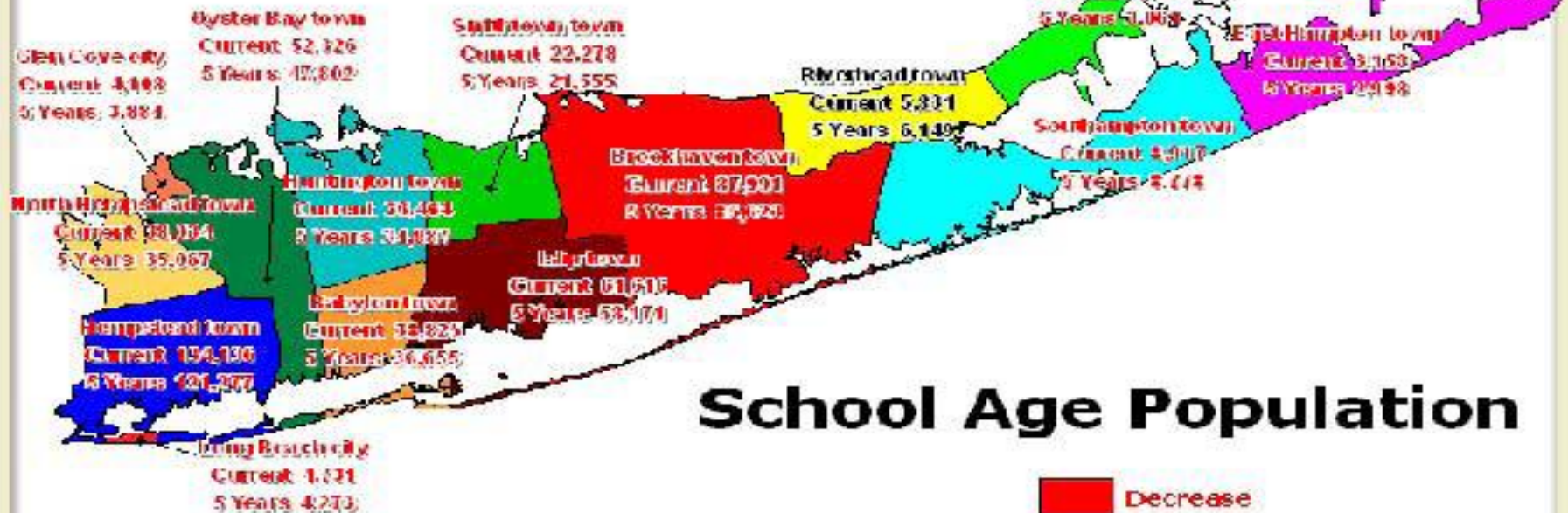
Hispanic Population
Current: 362,644
5 Years: 410,413

Hispanic Population

Decrease
Increase

Process of Change

- **In order to understand the school culture three questions must be answered:**
    - **What does it mean to know?**
    - **What does it mean to work?**
    - **What is the nature of authority?**

(Popkewitz, et al., 1984)

- The process of change is not always a straight path
- Obstacles will be encountered
- Setbacks will befall it

(Smith, 1993)

Resistance to Change

- Sustainable leadership respects the past and builds upon its successes

- Senior members of a school are nostalgic and resistant to change

- As leaders begin to implement change within a building, they must value what has worked and redefine what has not worked

- Eric Abrahamson describes two views of change;
  - *Creative Destruction* occurs when leaders obliterate the past leading to increased negativity.
  - *Creative Recombination* reuses the successes of the past. Staff members are valued and sustainable change can occur

(Hargreaves, 2006)

Relationship between Selected Incidents and School Culture
Popkewitz, Tabachnick and Wehlage Model

Incidents	Significance	Culture	Criteria
Building Deteriorations due to neglect in maintenance	Ineffective facilities manager; poor administrative priorities	Technical	Address immediate concerns; Create maintenance plan
Ineffective staff	Low student achievement; low staff professionalism; staff resistance to criticism	Illusory	Initiate mentoring program; create professional development plan; revise teacher evaluation process; encourage peer observations
Hallway disturbances	Staff focused only on own classrooms	Illusory	Require staff to supervise halls; keep doors open
Lack of staff turnout at non-mandated student events	Poor teacher volunteerism; students unsupported by teachers	Illusory	Staff/Student Dinner; Student/Faculty Basketball game; School Spirit Friday
Undecorated classrooms and hallways	Students unmotivated; little connection to school	Technical	Display student work and achievements resulting in motivation and school pride

Incidents	Significance	Culture	Criteria
Low student participation in extra-curricular activities	Students uninvolved in school life; feelings of disconnect	Technical	Change meeting times from mornings to afternoons to increase participation
Limited availability of Guidance Counselors; low application rate to colleges	Little student support from the Guidance Department	Technical	Increase support services; increase senior college application rate; increase counselor availability
No 9th grade orientation	No new student support	Technical	Initiate new student orientation
Rules in faculty handbook ignored	Poor communication between faculty and administration; administration unhappy with teacher performance	Illusory	Conduct monthly department meetings to increase communication; utilize faculty meetings to address issues and offer professional development

Findings

- Ineffective facilities manager; poor administrative priorities

- Low student achievement; low staff professionalism; staff resistance to criticism

- Staff focused only on own classrooms

- Poor teacher volunteerism; students unsupported by teachers

- Students unmotivated; little connection to school

- Students uninvolved in school life; feelings of disconnect

- Little student support from the Guidance Department

- No new student support

- Poor communication between faculty and administration; administration unhappy with teacher performance

Conclusions

- Address immediate concerns; Create maintenance plan

- Initiate mentoring program; create professional development plan; revise teacher evaluation process; encourage peer observations

- Require staff to supervise halls; keep doors open

- Introduce Staff/Student Dinner; Student/Faculty Basketball game; School Spirit Friday

- Display student work and achievements resulting in motivation and school pride

Conclusion

- Change meeting times from mornings to afternoons to increase participation

- Increase support services; increase senior college application rate; increase counselor availability

- Initiate new student orientation

- Conduct monthly department meetings to increase communication; utilize faculty meetings to address issues and offer professional development

- To successfully introduce change into an organization, you can:

    1) Remove resisting members

    2) Preserve the original members because their values and beliefs match the recommended change