



COLORADO  
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# I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST MONTH

Navigating the work of heightened monitoring and interventions for struggling schools

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DO NOW: PART I

WRITE DOWN THE NAME OF A SCHOOL THAT IS KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT OR HAS MADE YOU LOSE SLEEP RECENTLY.

## **Session Purposes:**

To identify critical considerations in when and how to intervene effectively in a struggling charter school.

To generate practical strategies for addressing current challenges.

## **Session Theme:**

*In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice, there is.*

Yogi Berra (1925-2015)

**DO NOW: PART II (15 min)**

**PAIR UP**

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**SHARE/LISTEN**

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE?**

**SWITCH**

# DISCUSSION: KEY CHALLENGES

- School did not take state assessments (legal compliance/educational results)
- Board/management dispute
- Monitoring vs. demands on school leader time
- Political influences on decisions (TX)
- School financial and capacity problems based on enrollment (SC)
- Governance/operations/academics/race (Audubon)
- Intervening without raising too many red flags (Minneapolis)
- Financial – possible embezzlement

# DISCUSSION: CHALLENGE TOPICS

- Establishing Expectations
  -
- Establishing/Implementing Process
  -
- Gathering Information/Evidence
  -
- Staff/board roles & responsibilities
  -
- School governance/leadership
  -
- Media/communications
  -

**Best interests of children & families**

# A CASE IN POINT: FIRST PLACE SCHOLARS

**New financial problem for state's first charter school. Seattle Times 10/15/15**

**State's first charter school given more time to fix its problems. 6/18/15**

**Charter-school panel learns lesson from troubles at First Place. 6/24/15**

**State's first charter school was overpaid \$200,000. 9/21/15**

**Last chance for state's first charter school as concerns deepen. 4/1/15**

**Second probe launched into state's first charter school. 2/11/15**

# DISCUSSION: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

With your partner, identify and discuss 1 or 2 things you can do to manage your current challenge more effectively.

- What is your objective?
- What next step(s) can you take when you get back to your office on Friday or next week?



# DISCUSSION PART II: NEXT STEPS



# FIRST PLACE REVISITED: SEEKING CLOSURE

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charter school. Seattle Times 10/15/15**

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# CLOSING GUIDANCE

- Establish monitoring and intervention processes (e.g., Ladder of Intervention)

----- Interlude -----

- Gather evidence to affirm/dispel concerns
- Document your concerns and evidence
- Use your process to communicate concerns and evidence
- Direct schools to independent assessment and/or support as appropriate
- Use your process to monitor progress
- Keep decision-makers informed
- Separate legal from non-legal communications
- **Be prepared to make a decision**

# CLOSING: THE THEORY IS THE PRACTICE

As much as we have an obligation to the 260 students currently enrolled in the Lynn Community Charter School, we also have an obligation to the many thousands of students yet to come, who deserve a higher quality public education system. For these students, whose names we do not know and whose faces we do not see, we must ensure that the promise of charter schools and education reform is fulfilled, through a system of high expectations and accountability for results. Excusing poor performance by accepting plans and promises, would be a disservice to future generations of students, in Lynn and throughout the Commonwealth.

Jim Peyser, Massachusetts Board of Education, 2/26/02

