

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Theory of Action for Change

Revised March 2012

For Improved Student Achievement: Managed Performance/Empowerment

In order to implement the Core Beliefs and Commitments and to achieve the Vision and Mission of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Board of Education commits to a Theory of Action for Change as its approach to a stable, long-term framework for improving student achievement. This theory will drive the Board's policies, budgets, and administrative strategies in order to transform the culture of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) into one of high performance in both academics and operations.

Managed Performance/Empowerment

Managed Performance/Empowerment is an approach to PreK-12 education that strikes a balance between centralized direction (Managed Instruction) and freedom for innovation in local implementation (Performance/Empowerment), with an emphasis on creating a culture of accountability throughout every level of the school district. It combines the effectiveness of a centrally managed academic program with the dynamics of a performance culture, while ensuring that freedom and flexibility (empowerment) is earned as a result of performance and improvement. District employees are responsible for effective operations and teaching that fosters learning for every student, while recognizing that learning is the responsibility of the student with support from parents and the community.

District and Board Responsibility

The Board of Education and Superintendent are responsible for establishing Board policies or management directives that will:

- Establish district-wide content and performance standards across a core curriculum;
- Foster a performance culture and unleash innovation in teaching, learning and school operations;
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive system of student assessment and intervention/support;
- Continue to administer and strengthen the district's accountability system to monitor overall trends and measure individual school performance;
- Emphasize and encourage highly effective staffing and relevant professional development; and
- Provide sufficient capacity in facilities, systems, and resources.

Decentralization

Decentralization remains a key element in the district's framework of support. Through that operating structure the Superintendent is responsible for ensuring the implementation of Board policies and management directives that will:

- Foster effective three-way communication among central management, individual schools, and the public at large; and
- Support innovation through the sharing of best practices and effective allocation of resources.

School Based Responsibility and Freedom and Flexibility

Individual school leaders are best equipped to understand the learning needs of their students. Therefore, schools will be given as much flexibility as practicable to implement effective teaching and operational methods within the standards established by the Board and Superintendent. However, increased freedom and flexibility comes with increased accountability. Therefore, freedom and flexibility will be awarded to principals and schools only after rigorous measurement and assessment of individual school performance, using the district's accountability system, in order to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Principals will be given as much latitude as possible to manage budgets, procurement, hiring and firing, the configuration of workforce, schedules, student affairs, extracurricular activities, and parent and community relations. Where additional training is necessary, it will be made a priority. Because principals are ultimately accountable, they must exercise executive power and have the authority to hold others responsible.

A Framework for Continuous Improvement

It is the intention of the Board of Education that all district systems will be aligned with Managed Performance/Empowerment in order to provide the framework for improving student achievement in CMS. Continuous redesign will be required and the Board will develop reform policies consistent with this approach.

The Superintendent will develop and execute strategic plans based on this Theory of Action for Change and will provide a Theory of Action for Change Implementation/Status Report to the Board semi-annually as part of the Superintendent's evaluation process.