

Getting to Great For All  
Future of Education Conference (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.)  
Florence, Italy  
June 29, 2018

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Be Prepared to Change Lives



# Introduction

- Essay on:
  - Developmental Systems Thinking as applied to
  - Systematic School Improvement using
  - School Improvement Science and some
  - Challenges and Opportunities

# Context

Significant economic disruption, akin to the start of the industrial revolution:

- Heightens demand for a population that is:
  - Literate
  - Numerate
  - Socially Competent
- Heightens pressure to improve school outcomes for all

# We have the capacity; do we have the will?

- Characteristic of a great school:
  - One that is highly effective in improving all students' performance

# Edvestors Criteria for Highly Effective Schools

- Improvement is 50% greater than the average district improvement in one or both core subjects (English language arts or Math);
- Improvement is at or above the average district improvement in the second core subject area (ELA or Math);
- At least 25% of students are in the Advanced or Proficient category in both core subject areas;
- Fewer than 25% of students are in the Warning/Failing category in both core subject areas;
- At least 50% of students are classified as high needs; and
- For high schools, a four-year cohort graduation rate is at least 60%, or a five-year cohort graduation rate is at least 70%.

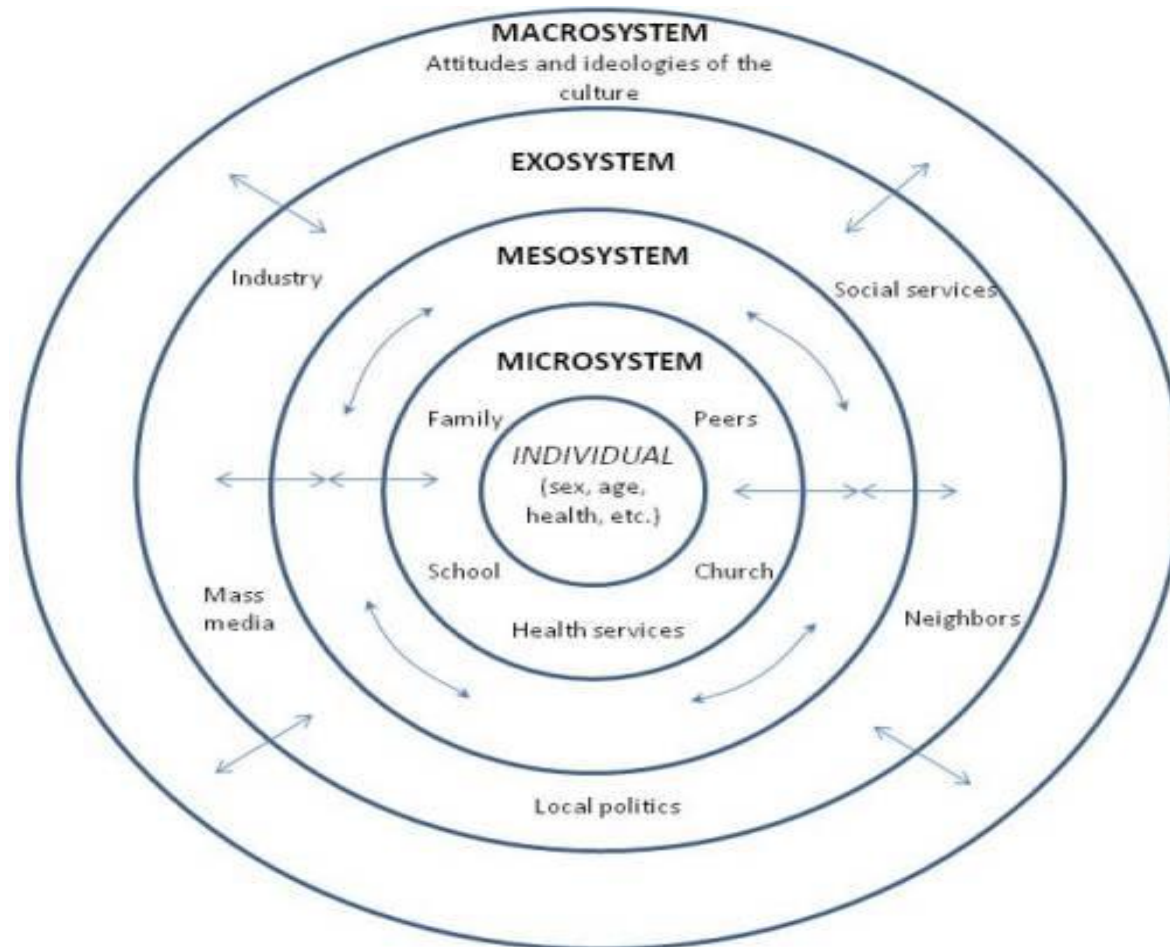
# Core Findings

- Strong leadership and shared ownership
- Meaningful teacher collaboration
- Effective use of data
- Academic rigor and student support
- Effective family and community partnerships

# To Create Great Schools for all

- We need:
  - Active adult collaboration
  - A focus on system change

# Bronfenbrenner (1979) Model for the Ecology of Human Development





# African-American Descended Males

- 400 years of subjugation
- Economic positions served the majority
- Macrosystemic beliefs
- Macrosystemic conditions
  - Destruction of family structure
  - De facto prohibition to acquire family wealth
  - De jure prohibition to engage in political process
  - No access to quality health care or education

# Systems Change

- Macrosystem
  - Beliefs and structure
- Exosystem
  - Policy and collaboration around common goals
- Microsystem
  - Context relevant interventions

# Improvement Science: Network Improvement Communities

- Focused on a well-specified common aim
- Guided by a deep understanding of the problem, the system that produces it, and a shared working theory to improve it
- Disciplined by the methods of improvement research to develop, test, and refine interventions
- Organized to accelerate interventions into the field and to effectively integrate them into varied educational contexts.

# Examples of NIC

- Over-aged and under-credited youth
- Say Yes to Education in Syracuse

# Challenges and Opportunities

We want change and stability; we are ambivalent

- Challenges

- Systems change demands collaboration and active learning
- Systems change leads to changes in authority

- Opportunities

- Systems change is sustainable and quality is self-replicating