GNDE Newsletter November 2023

We are pleased to publish this first GNDE Newsletter which provides information on the activities of the Global Network of Deans of Education (GNDE) and various UN and global initiatives. We welcome any suggestions of topics or format for upcoming editions.

1. Webinar and Joint Statement from Educator Organizations on Rebuilding, Renewing & Transforming School and Other Systems

The organizations representing school principals (ICP), school system administrators (AASA & CASSA), senior school leaders (ASCD), teachers (EI) education support personnel (PSI), counselors (IAC), psychologists (IASP), nurses (ISNA) and education deans (GNDE) have developed a joint statement on rebuilding after Covid, renewing commitments to inclusion & equity (SDG 4) and transforming school & other systems for the future. These educator organizations are inviting organizations and individuals to endorse the statement and participate in a round table discussion on 21 November at 0900 (Washington DC time). Please see the attached statement and news release.

GNDE is pleased to serve as the convenor of this group of educator organizations. The statement was originally developed in response to the 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit (TES) and will serve as a launching point for collective responses to several TES followup and other global school reform initiatives described in the attached report. These include:

- country statements and commitments and initial analysis following the UN Summit
- a Guidance Note was prepared by the UN High Level Steering Committee to provide strategic, process and content advice on school reform
- the OECD Declaration on Building Equitable Societies Through Education, related series of webinars and ongoing discussion of education 2030 reforms
- the SDG Summit held in New York on 18-19 September 2023 included a political declaration" (8 June 2023) noting that "The achievement of the SDGs is in peril."
- the post-TES initiative (Rewiring Education) led by the Education Commission/Education Development Center and Dubai Cares calls for intersectoral coordination to transform education
- the revised UNESCO framework/Recommendation on school system quality to be adopted in November 2023 will be used to monitor and guide national policies
- the UNESCO 2024/25 Global Education Monitoring Report on Educational Leadership offers a chance to promote workforce planning and investments in teacher education

ISHN is pleased to note the educators' support for promoting student health & well-being in the statement and planned follow up activities. The principles include support for whole child education, the school as a hub for services, health & well-being as a core curriculum and focus for student competencies and long-term workforce development for educators working within and with schools. Educators advise countries to develop coherent, shared visions and whole of government (WoG) approaches with their stakeholders, using proven system change strategies based on incremental, continuous improvements led by empowered and accountable education and other professionals. Practical, evidence-based steps for consideration include actions to address the three major challenges:

- developing multi-intervention programs to prevent infectious diseases and prepare for the next pandemic should go beyond academic learning losses and mental health services to include strengthened policies and health & life skills education to reduce vaccine ignorance, retrofitting schools with ventilation systems, after school & in school investments in student social & emotional development/attachment to schools and more.
- renewed commitments to inclusion & equity (SDG 4) stop the backsliding to a narrow view of the purposes and monitoring of education to ensure that every child is offered a broad range of learning opportunities and core subjects, alternative pathways to graduation and a variety of supports
- visionary statements about transforming school systems need to include other ministries and agencies who can contribute staffing and funding to school-based and school-linked programs such as school nursing, school safety, environmental sustainability and other social goals. Rather than seeking more funding from finance ministries and donors, school systems can argue for resources to other ministries so that they can be true partners

Here is the session description for the open web meeting/discussion on 21 November. Please attend and consider endorsing or commenting on the statement even if you cannot be with us on 21 November.

Tuesday 21 November 2023

0900 (Washington DC time)/ 15:00 (Paris time)

Rebuilding, Renewing & Transforming School Systems: Opportunities, Challenges & Relevance to UN/Global Initiatives

This session will provide an overview of the joint statement (prepared for the first time by several educator organizations)defining key principles and processes/challenges in rebuilding after the Covid pandemic, renewing commitments to inclusion and equity as per Sustainable Development Goal 4 & transforming school and other systems for the future. The statement was prepared for the UN Transforming Education Summit but is very relevant to local school system reform efforts as well as several UN/global initiatives such as the UNESCO Recommendation/education policy framework for member states, the OECD Declaration on equity and recent UN meetings/initiatives on the renewing the SDGs, pandemic preparedness, and UN guidance to countries on followup to the UN Summit. The statement will be a backdrop to participants discussing policy, practical and political challenges from the perspective of practicing educators. Participants will share insights and information on school system transformation. Speakers and discussants will include comments from several educator organizations supporting the statement including:

- Irma Eloff Chair, Global Network of Deans of Education (Introduction)
- Amy Neloms, ASCD, (Putting the Whole Child at the Center)
- Kevin Kaardal, President, Canadian Association of School System Administrators (Working with and within Cultures & Context)
- Peter Kent, President, International Confederation of Principals (Resilience & Realities)
- Ann Levett, Director, Leadership Network Programs, American School Superintendents Association - AASA (Systems Change)

To access this webinar, just click on this Participants Link a few minutes before the start of the session. This is a Zoom meeting:
Meeting ID: 861 9633 6456
Passcode: 091233

Recommended Reading & Resources

- Joint Statement on Rebuilding, Renewing and Transforming School and Other Systems
- Review of Key Documents and Initiatives from TES and other Agencies

2. Background Paper & Dialogue: Identifying & Aligning the Elements of School & Other Systems to Implement & Sustain Change

Once the joint statement has been released, GNDE has agreed to prepare a supplementary paper and dialogue for the Joint Statement that will identify and discuss the elements of school and other systems that need to be addressed when transforming schools. If you or a member of your faculty are interested in helping to prepare brief descriptions of these elements (304 paragraphs) than please contact Doug McCall at coordinator@education-deans.org

The key elements of school system operations that should be modified and aligned coherently to ensure a student centered, whole child approach promoting inclusion and equity include:

- developing and maintaining a shared vision supported by all stakeholders and employees
- ensuring that the core missions of non-education ministries have defined and are funding school-based or school-linked programs tied to their core mandates
- identifying, agreeing upon & addressing the cultural, contextual and pedagogical foundations of school & other systems
- using a student-centred approach that includes student and teacher agency
- meeting the needs of the whole child, ensuring that they are fed, safe, healthy, secure, engaged & challenged
- defining systems excellence that prioritizes and monitors inclusion and equity so that every child can succeed and that equitable results for marginalized children are central
- maintaining a balance among the core purposes/functions of schooling (Learning to be, to do, to live together, to learn over the life course)
- providing a broad range of learning opportunities (including UN-neglected subjects such as health & life skills or the arts & music) in the core subjects identified in a national curriculum framework and outside classrooms in extended education activities, authorizing or acquiring textbooks, educational materials and technologies that support (not replace) classroom instruction and informal school-linked learning
- defining essential student cross-curricular competencies/attributes and modifying core curricula & pedagogy accordingly
- aligning the standards for student achievement and curriculum as well as describing required practices in student assessment, in system/program assessments
- creating student pathways to graduation with the goals and objectives listed in elements above. These pathways and structures include critical transitions such as preparing young children for primary school (early childhood education), support and policy for including students with special needs, supports for the transition between primary and secondary schooling and successfully making the shift to the world of work or further studies including adult education and/or vocational training.

- organizing grades and levels of schooling (e.g., establishing middle or junior secondary schools, creating early childhood education centres within K-12 systems) as well as limiting the "streaming" of students into academic or vocational programs, creating alternative schools for troubled, athletic or other types of students, supporting parents who wish to home school their students and individualized education programs
- sustaining intersectoral partnerships and cross-ministry structures/appointments using the school as the hub by selecting, scaling up, & coordinating selected Intersectoral Policy/Program Coordination Frameworks (IPPCFs) such as healthy schools, safe schools and many others to ensure that a coordinated set of student services is provided by ministries, agencies and professionals external to school systems as well as by specialized education personnel
- Using models such as Health in All Policies (HiAP) and intersectoral Ambition Loops can be used to support negotiated, reciprocal, sustainable on-going and targeted partnerships, formal agreements, and mechanisms to support coordination
- using joint sector plans and joint sector reviews are ways that such partnerships and frameworks can be implemented, monitored and sustained
- requiring that formal professional, school and local agency and ministry improvement planning is the end goal/product of monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MREI) systems and that these MREI systems are aligned with and informed by school administrative handbooks, data systems (EMIS), internally and externally supported surveys, and holistic status reports on child/youth development
- establishing long-term workforce development plans, ongoing professional development programs, and initial pre-service education for diverse categories of personnel in education, other public agencies, relief/development agencies, and voluntary/philanthropic sectors
- ensuring that the safety, security, health and environmental practices of the school system and its students, employees, transportation systems/routes, buildings and facilities are accessible, adequate, and sustainable
- providing basic financing sufficient to meet defined system goals and objectives, aligning categorical funding streams appropriately, requiring transparent, ethical financial and management practices, and ensuring that project/innovation funding is linked directly to established jurisdiction priorities or system capacity-building. Joint annual and long-term inter-ministry program budgeting beyond specific projects is essential
- enabling local education authorities to collect taxes or local schools to collect fees for education from their citizens in addition to those collected by national and sub-national governments is another aspect of financing that is often done in decentralized countries or those with a history of private, religious, or community-based schooling. Providing and regulating public funding to private, religious, or other alternative schools is another variation of this education financing policy
- granting or recognizing decentralized governance or degrees of autonomy to their respective local school systems for minority, indigenous and other specific communities

- empowering and supporting autonomous and accountable professionals at all levels across several systems is essential. Professional codes of conduct, school-based management and distributed leadership are other variations in decentralization or delegation of authority

3. Policy & Curriculum Document Analysis: Creating a Global Database of National/Sun-National Documents for Researchers & Policy-makers

In the longer term, GNDE will be asking for education faculties to help to prepare comprehensive lists of national and state/provincial policy, curriculum and other documents that will eventually be a source for national and global policy analysis. Many research studies and policy reviews are based on document analysis. We hope that by creating a comparable list of documents for all jurisdictions, GNDE will play a role in facilitating such studies and reports. We will be working from an existing project led by the International School Health Network, UNICEF, UNESCO and Simon Fraser University. Take a look at a sample document list (South Africa) and a prototype analysis (Manitoba showing the value of having such document lists readily available.

4. The First GNDE World Conference: September 3-4, 2024 (Save the Date)

Planning is proceeding for the GNDE conference on 3-4 September 2024 at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. Suzanne Kapelari will attend GNDE Steering Committee meetings as part of the preparation. Education deans and their associations are encouraged to send their ideas for topics and speakers to Doug McCall at coordinator@education-deans.org