

ICSEI 2016 Symposium Proposal

FROM “BEST” PRACTICE TO “NEXT” PRACTICE: SCHOOL LEADERS ENACT POLICIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Symposium, Strand 2: Leadership development and practice to build sustained improvement

Paper: How school leaders practice leadership for learning in excellent schools distinguished with the German School Award

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The authors offer the opportunity to gain insights into the German School Award, a system-wide school improvement program launched by the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Heidehof Foundation in 2006 to highlight inspiring models of schooling. More than 1.200 schools of all types from all over Germany have so far participated, with more than 50 award winners fuelling a nation-wide movement for “more successful schools!”

The German School Award has become a strong and respected voice in the education landscape of Germany. Its main goal is to support school improvement and a culture of learning based on six quality criteria: academic achievement, dealing with plurality, quality of teaching, responsibility, school culture, and school as a learning institution (Schratz et al. 2014). They have been recognized as high-impact, professional standards of learning and teaching – across all German states and various school types. To ensure sustainability and knowledge transfer into the wider system, in addition to the award an Academy was founded and sets out to become the most significant independent agency for school improvement in Germany.

Effective and lasting educational reform remains a challenge that is often answered best locally, at each individual school and by the leaders that spearhead change. Success stories of student learning and high quality teaching are sometimes found in unlikely places, and it takes some effort to draw attention to the innovative answers which are to be found where teaching and learning takes place. Findings from the work of successful principals will be presented which can help to understand what turns a “good” school into an “excellent” one.

References

Schratz, M., Pant, H. A., & Wischer, B. (Eds.) (2014). *Was für Schulen! Leistung sichtbar machen – Beispiele guter Praxis*. Seelze: Kallmeyer.