

Where are the Teachers?

Navigating Shallow Seas During Turbulent Times

PRESENTED BY

Ethan S. Ake-Little, Ph.D., SHRM-CP
Director of Human Resources
Wallingford-Swarthmore School District
Wallingford, Pennsylvania | Monday, August 1, 2022



Council on
**Education
Innovation**
SUMMIT 2022

Introduction



Ethan S. Ake-Little, Ph.D., SHRM-CP
Director of Human Resources

Email: eakelittle@wssd.org (Work)/
ethanake@temple.edu (Academic)

Phone: 610-213-4899 (Non-Personal Mobile)

Website: <https://www.wssd.org/> (Work)
<https://ethanakelittle.academia.edu/> (Academic)

Social: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ethanake/> (LinkedIn)



Council on
Education
Innovation
SUMMIT 2022

#CEISUMMIT

Overview of Our District



Student Demographics

Enrollment: 3,755 students (*Suburban/ 5 Schools*)

Racial Breakdown: 81% WH/ 9% ASN/ 6% AFAM/ 3% HISP/ 1% MIX/OTHER

Economic Profile: \$122,985 (*Median Household Income*)/ 12.3% (*Low-Income*)



Academic Profile

State Assessment (Adv/Prof): 85% (*Reading*) / 68% (*Mathematics*)

Graduation & College Attendance: 94% (*Graduation Rate*) / 84% (*Four-Year*)

College Readiness: 1290 (*Average SAT*) / 77% (*Score 3+*)



Human Resources & Finances

Employees: 500 (ADMIN: 35/ PRO: 318/ PARA: 111/ TRANS: 46)

Collective Bargaining: Professional (WSEA), Paraprofessional (WSESPA), Transportation (Teamsters)

District Budget: \$92 million (*Per Student Spending: \$24,500*)



Council on
**Education
Innovation**
SUMMIT 2022

#CEISUMMIT

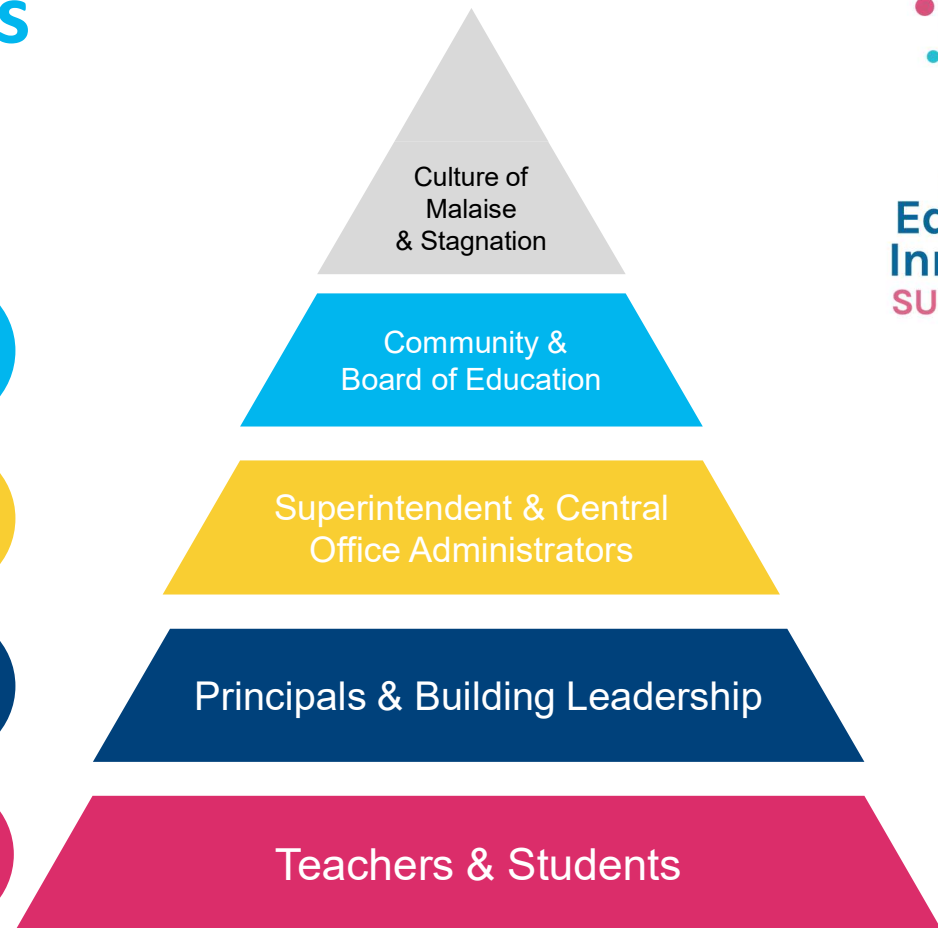
Overview of Our Issues

Lack of well articulated policies and procedures as they relate to hiring and retention

Lack of vision and strategic planning which connects HR to core mission

Lack of building level supports for new and/or struggling educator

Conflicting or ad hoc practices that result in wasted instructional time



Council on
**Education
Innovation**
SUMMIT 2022

#CEISUMMIT

Taking the Easy Road: Checking off the Boxes



STEP 1: Recruitment

“I just need a body in the classroom!”

Pro: Fills an immediate need which is critical to continuity of operations

Con: Quantity overtakes quality which “dilutes” the process and can result in subpar hires

STEP 2: Classroom Performance

“Don’t worry, the kids will be alright.”

Pro: If the new hire is placed on a relatively strong/ stable team, the team may be able to compensate.

Con: The team may already be stressed and now has an additional “burden” to assume



STEP 3: Retention

“Ok, how much money to make you stay?”

Pro: Immediate relief since it keeps the body in the classroom

Con: Delaying the inevitable since it fails to address the underlying issue



Council on
**Education
Innovation**
SUMMIT 2022

#CEISUMMIT

Taking the Road Less Travelled: Thinking Long-Term

STEP 1: Recruitment

“Let’s think this through.”

Be deliberate and honest about your hiring needs and limitations.

STEP 2: Supports

“How can we help you in the classroom?”
Taking ownership of your hire.

STEP 3: Growth

“You’re an asset so how can we support your professional growth?”
Develop your hire so they can be more productive.

STEP 4: Retention

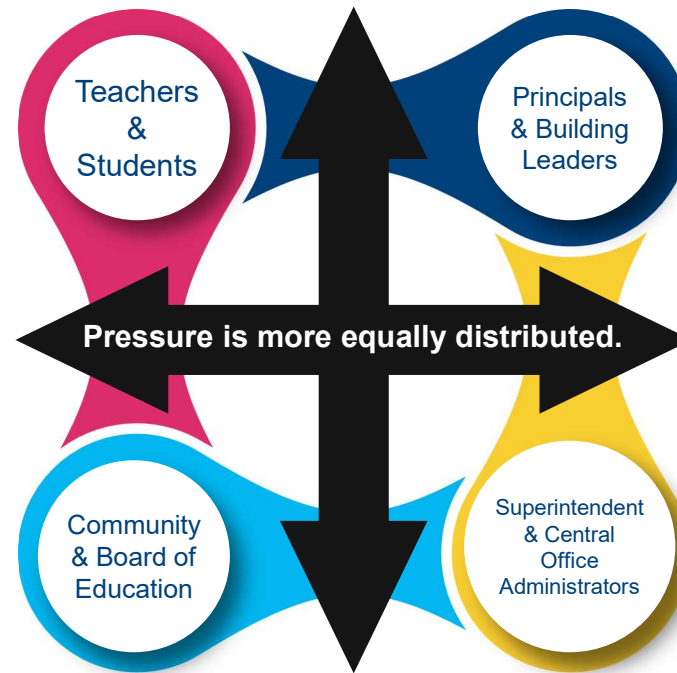
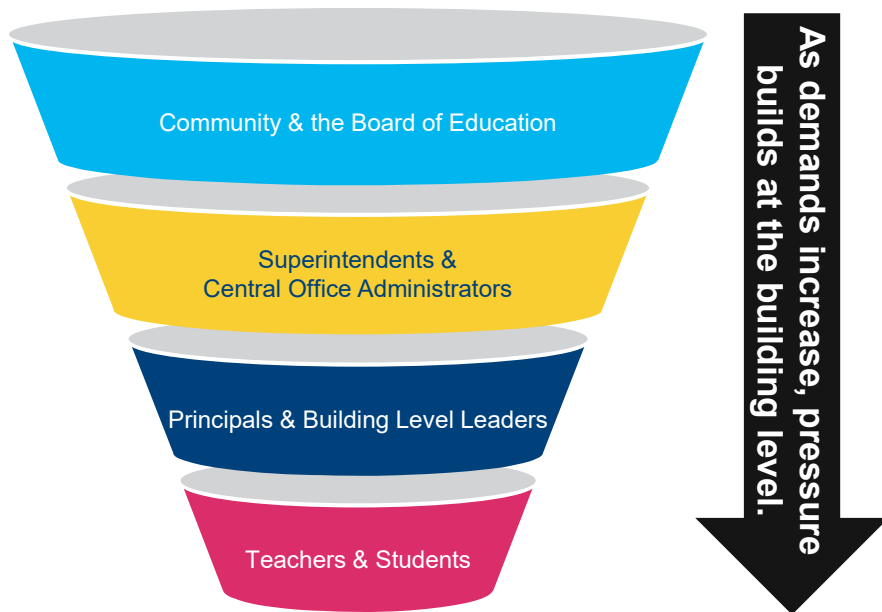
“What opportunities might be of interest to you?”
Give your hire some stake in the institution.



Council on
**Education
Innovation**
SUMMIT 2022

#CEISUMMIT

Looking at the Big Picture: Towards a New Model of Leadership



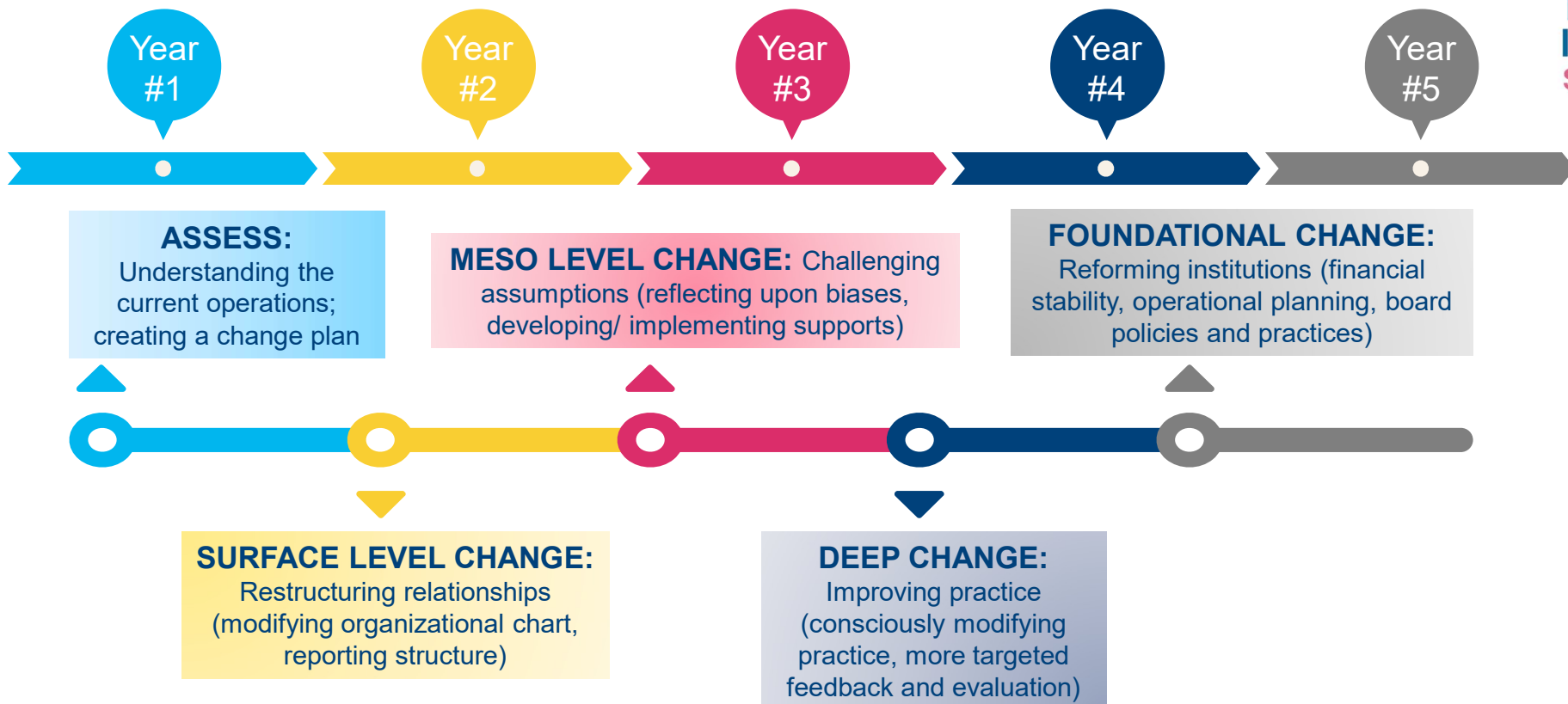
Council on
Education
Innovation
SUMMIT 2022

#CEISUMMIT

Where Do We Go From Here? A (Simplified) Timeline for Systems Thinkers



Council on
**Education
Innovation**
SUMMIT 2022



#CEISUMMIT



PowerSchool

**THANK
YOU!**

