



Background

Organization name: **Consortium for Educational Change (CEC)**
Organization address: 530 22nd Street, Lombard, IL 60148
Organization contact: David Osta, david.osta@cecweb.org, 708-267-9352
Organization mission: CEC partners for building collaborative cultures, and equitable, evidence-based practices that support adult and student learning.

Please identify the area(s) that your organization supports:

CEC supports all five of the identified school improvement areas

- Effective Leaders
- Ambitious Instruction
- Collaborative Teachers
- Supportive Environment
- Involved Families

Approach

CEC partners with districts and schools using a systemic, collaborative approach to reach their goals and thereby address their unique school improvement challenges. CEC's research-based, targeted supports are intentionally designed to meet the individual needs of districts and schools. CEC is not a program or product. Among its clients, CEC is known for its customization of supports to meet local needs. This takes more time, effort and expertise, but the results are clear. CEC's approach to customized assistance to schools, districts, and states helps to build the collaborative structures, processes, and cultures needed to implement evidence-based practices that are most likely to positively impact the local setting. To learn more about our approach and theory of action go to: <https://www.cecweb.org/about/our-approach/>



CEC approaches school improvement in a seven-phase needs assessment and planning process. We can help with one, a few or all of the phases to complete or update your Comprehensive Needs Assessment. CEC has experience working in urban, rural, and suburban settings.

Diagnostic Assessments

One way CEC differentiates its supports is through the use of formal and informal diagnostic tools. These tools allow CEC and the districts and schools together to determine a readiness baseline for improvement and to identify the critical next steps to start the improvement journey.

Each of the following tools can be applied individually or in combination with other diagnostic tools, depending upon need, timeframes, and resources: Boundary Audit; System Assessment, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Audit; Union Assessment; Special Education Audit; and Equity Audit. To learn more about these diagnostics visit <https://www.cecweb.org/category/improving-systems/>

Commitment to Collaboration

What separates CEC from other educational improvement entities is its commitment to improving student learning through collaborative capacity-building. CEC helps systems build the structures, processes, and relationships necessary for effective collaboration and, ultimately, student growth and achievement. This approach is supported by research across industries and in multiple sectors and nations, which has long established that, when employees are included in planning, problem solving, and decision-making with their managers, their performance and productivity increases (Freeman, R., & Rogers, J., 2006; Levine, D. and Tyson, L. D., 1990). Adam Urbanski observes “the growing recognition that better school systems can be built only in tandem with the building of better relationships. One without the other is like one hand clapping.” (Urbanski, A., 2011).

Because CEC takes on a customized approach, our ideal partner district and/or schools are willing to commit to and work through a process that focuses on capacity-building, prioritizes a few strategies, defines roles and responsibilities, and is action-oriented.

Impact

CEC has considerable experience and success working with schools identified as low performing or struggling. CEC has served as an approved Lead Partner as part of School Improvement Grant (SIG) transformation interventions in nine schools across six Illinois school districts. In the final Illinois SIG competition (Cohort 6), CEC was chosen as Lead Partner in three of the five awards. This Cohort, which began January 2016, has produced promising results:

- Matheny-Withrow Elementary in Springfield Public Schools demonstrated a 12% increase in math and a modest 2% increase in ELA on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness exam from 2016 to 2019. The school’s designation has moved from Lowest Performing to Commendable under the Illinois ESSA Accountability System.
- At Sandoval Senior High School, the building designation has moved from Lowest Performing to Commendable under the Illinois ESSA Accountability System.
- Students at Kennedy Middle School in Rockford Public Schools showed the highest reading gains in the district during the 2016-17 school year with 62% of 6th graders, 63% of 7th graders and 77% of 8th graders meeting or exceeding their growth targets for NWEA MAP. The growth demonstrated at Kennedy put the school in the 99th percentile of growth nationally. However, the building designation has not moved from Lowest Performing under the Illinois ESSA Accountability System.
- At Frances Willard Elementary, where CEC was Lead Partner (Cohort 5), achievement has moved from 1% of students meeting or exceeding standards in 2016 to 11% and 12% respectively in ELA and math in 2019. During the same time period, the school has also reduced the percentage of students not meeting the standard by 15% and 25% respectively in ELA and math.

Case studies of CEC’s work in other districts are available at <https://www.cecweb.org/impact/>.