
NATIONWIDE SCALING UP: Success for All/Roots & Wings

SUCCESS FOR ALL WAS PILOTED IN ONE BALTIMORE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN THE 1987-88 SCHOOL YEAR. IN 1988-89, IT WAS EXPANDED TO FIVE SCHOOLS IN BALTIMORE AND ONE IN PHILADELPHIA. BY 1996, IT WAS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN APPROXIMATELY 450 SCHOOLS IN 120 DISTRICTS IN 31 STATES. IN 1997-98, APPROXIMATELY 750 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE WILL BE SUCCESS FOR ALL SCHOOLS, USING SFA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES, AND CURRICULA. ABOUT 200 OF THESE SCHOOLS WILL ALSO BE MOVING TOWARD BECOMING FULL-FLEDGED ROOTS AND WINGS SCHOOLS, ADDING MATH, SCIENCE, AND SOCIAL STUDIES COMPONENTS TO THE BASIC SUCCESS FOR ALL READING AND WRITING COMPONENTS.

CRESPAR researchers are examining the factors involved in reaching this number of schools, maintaining strong implementations of the program in all of them, and continuing to expand to reach more schools. Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden have reviewed the dissemination strategies used with SFA — extensive awareness activities, school staff agreement on adoption of the program, clear information on funding requirements and sources, the establishment of a large cadre of Hopkins-based and regional-based trainers, extensive professional development, designation of a school SFA facilitator, the use of regional training sites, the formation of local and national networks of SFA schools, and work with state departments of education, regional laboratories, and district coordinators. Slavin and Madden highlight the following factors, among others, as effective elements of the scaling up of Success for All.

- A core of talented, dedicated trainers operating from the project's home and/or from regional training sites that maintain close coordination with the project's home.
- A local and national network of schools that are willing and able to provide technical and emotional support to schools entering the network. Madden and Slavin note that: "To maintain over a long period of time, schools implementing innovations must be part of a national network of like-minded schools."
- The employment of staff from outstanding SFA schools to be full- or part-time trainers.
- Constant attention to the quality of training, implementation, and outcomes.

Slavin and Madden report much less success in dissemination efforts that depend on other agencies — such as state departments, district offices, and regional laboratories — unless those agencies devote full-time staff to the effort and coordinate closely with the home project. "Turnkey training" doesn't work, at least for a program as complex as Success for All.

In another study, CRESPAR researchers Robert Cooper, Slavin, and Madden explore the complexities of the structures, strategies, practices, and relationships that are associated with school change, examining the implementation and scaling up of SFA on three dimensions proposed by Jeannie Oakes — the technical, the normative, and the political — along with a fourth dimension that the researchers call the socio-cultural dimension. The goal is to examine school reform in the context of the beliefs, values, relationships, and power allocations that can make school reform successful or prevent it from happening.

The researchers examine data from a stratified sample of more than 300 Success for All schools across the country. The data are drawn from surveys, one-on-one interviews, group interviews, focus groups, and school site observations.

The *technical dimension* involves school structures, strategies, and practices — the pragmatic components of SFA that address teaching and organization in the school. Cooper, Slavin, and Madden find that three SFA components — a schoolwide reading

curriculum, a restructured school schedule, and one-to-one tutoring for those students at greatest risk of school failure — provide the technical foundation for the program, with the quality of implementation and scaling up efforts leaning heavily on their replication.

The *normative dimension* involves the “values, ethos, and attitudes that drive policy and practice within urban schools.” The researchers find that SFA implementation helps to change at least two attitudes or beliefs that are now the norm in many high-poverty schools — that parents do not care about the education of their children, and that not all students can learn at high levels. The Family Support Team component of SFA increases family involvement in the school and shows teachers and administrators that parents in poor communities do care about their children’s learning and will participate in helping them learn. Schools using the total SFA program find that, given high standards, research-based instruction and curriculum, and help when it’s needed, all students can indeed learn at high levels.

The *political dimension* involves how, when, and which individuals participate in reform, dealing with the relationships among educators, administrators, parents, and the community. It addresses issues such as who is promoting the program, who is going along reluctantly, who is actively fighting the implementation, and what implementation and scaling up features can deal with these issues in ways that bring everyone together and support everyone’s efforts.

The researchers find two features that serve SFA schools well in the political dimension — a schoolwide buy-in requirement that gives teachers a voice in the reform process and, as found previously in the Slavin and Madden study, participation in a local support network that provides newly implementing SFA schools with technical and emotional support. In areas that have many Success for All schools, program facilitators and principals from different schools and even different districts meet monthly to share problems, solutions, ideas, and mutual support. The survey research findings especially show that the local support networks provide the schools with ongoing support, they create and maintain mutually beneficial relationships, and they strengthen the use of the program in the schools.

The *socio-cultural dimension* involves the social, cultural, and environmental factors that impact school reform. For SFA schools, one of the most salient of these dimensions is the high level of poverty in the communities in which most SFA schools are located, which produces many obstacles to reform. The researchers note that poverty-related issues such as high levels of drug use, crime, and violence “require school officials to respond to the physical, emotional, and psychological, as well as academic, needs of children.”

Again, the SFA Family Support Team component provides schools with a structure and organized approach to involve families and to provide assistance that families and children need to maintain children’s success in school.

Cooper, Slavin, and Madden, based on their examination of how SFA addresses the four dimensions of school change, conclude that implementation and scaling up must focus on schoolwide programs that are comprehensive and able to fundamentally change the organization and operation of schools. The SFA experience thus far shows that such programs can be broad enough in scope to address the interconnected complexities of teaching and learning, yet flexible enough to adapt to the local context in which the programs are being implemented. ■