

## Good Principles, Great Principals

Date: Wed, 18 Oct 2006 17:03:51 -1000  
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Subject: [Oabe-list] Good Principles, Great Principals

Below is a brief summary of the complete report that is attached.

Good Principles, Great Principals

<http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/109/next-school.html>  
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Jim Collins goes to school--and explains high performance there, too.

The phenomenon was a familiar, distressing one to educators: In 2000, Arizona's growing Latino population was dramatically lagging behind most other student groups in school performance. Policy makers and business leaders wondered why--and what could be done.

A startling answer came from management guru Jim Collins. In his book Good to Great (HarperBusiness, 2001), Collins had compared companies with superior performance over time with less-accomplished peers, and uncovered what set the great ones apart. What if the same methodology could be applied to schools?

With Collins's guidance, Lattie Coor, head of the Center for the Future of Arizona, and Mary Jo Waits, a senior fellow there, compiled eight years of third-grade reading and eighth-grade math scores. They found 12 schools whose Latino students had produced either consistently high or steadily rising test scores. Then they compared the successful schools with struggling ones.

The difference, they learned, had nothing to do with budget or curriculum. Rather, the factors were the same as those that distinguished winning businesses: disciplined thought, people, and action. **Successful schools had strong principals who recognized their teachers' abilities to collaborate and solve problems. They picked a good academic program--but more important, they stuck with it. And teachers evaluated student performance frequently.**

The message: Demography isn't destiny. "People for the first time felt that we can do something about this," Waits says. She and Coor are exploring starting an academy to train principals using the Arizona study's findings. As for Collins, he sees in the study a blueprint for... more studies. He's creating a guide to the methodology so groups in other disciplines can get to great. "Ask a simple and illuminating question: What's different?" he says. "When you're able to do that, all kinds of things that previously looked very mysterious and complicated become clear."

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End of OABE-list Digest, Vol 19, Issue 14