The Hummingbird Effect
or How One Local Moved from the Menu to the Table

Presenters
Antoinette, DeShaunta, Lisa, and Bryan
Competency: ORGANIZING

• **Competency progression level(s).**
  - Level 1 Foundational
  - Level 2 Mobilizing and Power-Building

• **Themes**
  - Utilizes Organizing Best Practices
  - Builds Meaningful Community Partnerships
  - Makes Strategic Plans that Rely on Data and Analysis
  - Engages in Collective Action to Identify and Address Pivotal Issues
  - Creates Conditions for Continuous Association Growth and Strength
BACK STORY
Port Arthur, Texas

- Janis Joplin
- Ike and Rita
- Valero
- LNG
- 1980’s Oil Bust
- Lamar University
- Major Employers “Bring-In” Skilled Employees
Port Arthur ISD

- $4.6 B Property Value
- $578,834 per pupil
- $1.04 Tax Rate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port Arthur ISD</th>
<th>Texas Public Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$578,834  Per Pupil</td>
<td>$394,341  Per Pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.9%  African American</td>
<td>12.7%  African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.0%  Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>60.2%  Economically Disadvantaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.6%  At-Risk</td>
<td>49.9%  At-Risk</td>
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Port Arthur ISD

• Within the last four years, languages spoken by ELL students have more than doubled

• Most-widely spoken is Spanish

• Fastest growing are Asian languages (Vietnamese, Tagalog, Mandarin, Laotian)
Port Arthur Teachers Association

• Service Model

• Grieve, Grieve, Grieve

• Resistant to Change

• Stagnant Membership

• “Right-to-Work”
A Cast of Characters
Pivotal Players

DeShaunta Kearns
Bryan Weatherford

Antoinette Motley
LaKisha Phillips-Brown

Mark Porterie
Kathy McEwen

Lisa Guzman
Diana Richie (KDS)
Motivation
Beginning the Change

• Contract Year from 187 Days to Ten Months (2012)

• Competing Organizations (2013)
Contract Language Change

• District proposal to change contract year from 187 days to ten months (potentially 300 days)

• No additional compensation

• Professional Development

• “Same old, Same old”
Contract Language Change

• Developed strategic relationships

• Implemented member engagement issues prior to the issue
Contract Language Change

• Established Credibility on the Issue

• Communicated with Board Members

• Presentation to the School Board

• Solutions to the Professional Development Issue
Outcome

School Board voted to keep 187-day contract language
Competing Organizations

• Three Competing Organizations

• Attempted to make in-roads

• PATA relationship with Superintendent prevented “hostile” takeover

• Needed to keep them out
Conflict
ESPs are Educators, Too!

• PATA had actively recruited ESPs

• ESPs very much aware of what PATA was accomplishing for teachers

• Wanted support and successes as well
Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System
T-TESS

• One of 65 districts piloting the instrument

• 2014-15

• Collaborative Model(?)
Battles Revisited

• “Old Guard” viewed everything as a “sell out” to management

• New Superintendent believes in a “quid pro quo”

• Dissatisfaction with TSTA and NEA
Point of No Return
First Two Points

• Engagement of NEA Academy

• PATA President Tells Old Guard “Enough is Enough!”
• Engagement with TSTA
• Knowledge of T-TESS
• Creating T-TESS Mentors
• Alignment No Longer “One and Done”
• The Stall
• Funding
Where can the NEA Academy be the most effective in Texas?

Is there a UniServ willing to work with the NEA Academy?

Is there a local that needs the NEA Academy?
T-TESS

- Port Arthur ISD adopted to participate in the pilot of T-TESS
- Created a need for training
- Professional development aligned with T-TESS framework
- Funding to assist member and potential members with professional development
• Providing training of the T-TESS to members only

• Providing additional training to all staff

• Assigning PATA members to assist all staff with T-TESS
PATA wanted to work with PAISD on professional development

Previous professional development typically had been “one and done” and “drive-by”

PATA wanted to assist all members with professional development
working with Port Arthur Teachers Association brought in KDS Knowledge Delivery Systems
Stall By PAISD

• Dr. Porterie, Superintendent, wanted buy-in

• NEA did not have the reputation for follow-through

• Dr. Porterie needed a deadline, consistency, and continuity from all parties to move forward

• Knowledge Delivery systems (KDS) presented to PAISD leadership Cabinet for its recommendation
Funding

• Title II funding was a conversation starter in the district

• NEA Great Public Schools (GPS) grant was the conversation closer.
Resolution
Buy-In

• Knowledge Delivery Systems (KDS) expertise

• PATA Mentors

• Learning Management Systems
Where We Are

- $37,000 GPS Grant
- $250,000 NCLB Commitment from PAISD
- Synchronous and Asynchronous Professional Development
  - Teachers
  - ESPs
  - Administrators
Where We Are

- Almost 90% of PAISD teachers and 84% of leaders have started their coursework.

- Majority of teachers are on track, according to the planned pacing of course materials.

- Average progress across all courses is 41% for teachers and leaders.

- There is high engagement around key reflection activities.
Where We Are

• PATA had a 15% membership growth during this period

• PATA continues to grow and retain their members

• Teacher Turnover has decreased by from 24% to under 19%
Where We Are

PATA is off the menu and at the table!
Sequel
Here’s a question for you.

What part of the sky did your students touch today?
How do we even get kids to look up to the sky when they’re bent over technology or bowed down from the weight of poverty and oppression?

I’ll tell you how.
We open their hands, their arms, their eyes, their hearts, and their minds and we point them to the sky.

We lift them up.
You see, we’re the giants on whose shoulders they stand.
We’re the ones who help them feel the sunlight on their faces and let its brightness fill their minds with the imaginations that spark the ideas that will inspire the innovations of a thousand tomorrows.
We lift them up so they can be the giants on whose shoulders future generations stand.
If we increase teacher retention in PAISD, it will help establish a stable and sustainable teaching force that will improve and enhance teacher performance and student achievement!
We know this because we are

and we stand on the shoulders of these giants
Off the Menu and at the Table

or How Professional Issue Organizing is Transforming the Port Arthur Teachers Association into a Viable, Collaborative Partner with the Port Arthur Independent School District
Session Outcomes

The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

– Organizer: Look for building blocks and stepping stones
– Leader: OWN the two C’s - Courage and Conflict
– Educator: Engagement in the local association IS engagement in your profession!
Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!