



Educational Reform and Change in the Asia Pacific Region

Educational Reform American Style: The Role of School Administrative Practice

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This paper Over several decades local, state, and federal policymakers have pressed for substantial change in the technical core of schooling, classroom teaching, specifying what teachers should teach and acceptable levels of student achievement. Standards and test-based accountability have become staples in the environment of America's schools. Extra-system agencies focusing on teaching have also multiplied. The evidence suggests that these environmental pressures increasingly make it beyond the schoolhouse door and into classrooms. Research suggests, among other things, that these educational reform pressures influence what teachers teach, marginalize low stakes subjects, divert resources to students based on their likelihood of passing the test, and increase the time devoted to teaching test taking skills as distinct from the content being tested. At the same time there is evidence that high-stakes testing has increased student achievement, though there is tremendous variation among states and weak evidence with respect to narrowing the achievement gap. This paper explores the role of school administrative practice in the implementation of these educational reforms. We examine how external reforms become instantiated in local school administrative practice exploring school leaders' noticing, framing, and negotiating of these reforms with teachers. Opening up the black box of policy implementation by looking at school administrative practice we uncover how school leaders work to get teacher cooperation with external reform initiatives and their accompanying high stakes accountability and student assessments.

