

The Ball Foundation Education Initiatives (EI) – 2008
The Story of Who We Are and How We Became What We Are Today

| Timeframe | Summary of Key Developments |
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| <p>Pre-Charter Schools Early- and mid-1990s</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl leads the work of EI with intent to have a major impact on public education • In response to “A Nation at Risk”, C-1 attempts to translate a productivity perspective to schooling • Individual schools are the focus of the work and are seen as the unit of change • Goal of the work is to improve student literacy in measurable ways • Major Sustainable Reforms (MSR)s and School Design Collaborative (SDC) are made operational through school partnerships • MSR)s and SDC embody intent to empower and de-isolate teachers |
| <p>Charter Schools Era Mid-1990s to 2000</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl leads the work of EI • Development and branding of Ball Charter Schools in which MSR)s would be tested • Partnerships formed with schools willing to implement MSR)s • C-2 Report suggests that emphasis on individual schools may not be as powerful as focusing on school systems as the unit of change but reform efforts continue to focus on individual schools • Exploration of the feasibility of charter districts |
| <p>Focus on School Districts 2000 – 2003</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl’s direct involvement and leadership diminishes and leadership of EI’s work is in flux • Ball leaves the charter school business and staff committed to charter schools leave • School systems become the focus for the work while NCLB retains focus on schools as the unit of change • Partnerships formed with mid-sized urban school districts (Springfield (IL) expands, Chula Vista (CA), Kent County (MI)) • Connection of MSR)s, productivity framework and Focus on Results (FoR) • Formation of Partnership Learning Network (PLN) for partner districts and charter schools • Engagement of consultants as service providers (FoR and evaluation) |
| <p>2003 – 2006</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EI leadership stabilizes • Most current EI team members join the work • Focus on school systems as the unit of change continues • Nature of EI work evolves from <i>school reform</i> to <i>school system transformation</i> • Ball Approach takes form through emergence of four domains from MSR)s • Piloting Family Engagement in SPI, Communities of Practice in CV, and Data-driven Literacy Instruction in NV • EI assumes ownership of evaluation and reduces role of external consultants • Search for new partners commences to implement full Ball Approach |
| <p>2006 – Early - 2008</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable EI leadership continues • Literacy expert joins EI team • Full implementation of Ball Approach in Rowland Unified School District (CA) • Ongoing development and refinement of the Ball Approach • Melding of Cambridge Model for Strategic Planning with early phase of Ball Approach in RUSD • Engagement of external consultants as thought partners and advocates for EI work • Exploration of EI providing services on a fee basis • Focus on creating a bridge for EI’s work into the future • Getting the word out (Family Literacy Symposium, conference presentations) |
| <p>Late 2008 to present</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation board engages Stephanie Pace Marshall and Michael Fullan to provide feedback regarding the current work of EI and possibilities for the its future work • Ball Approach modified with name change to <i>The Ball Design: Sustainable Literacy Improvement for Every Student Through Whole Systems Change</i> • Draft of <u>Field Guide</u> developed to codify <i>The Ball Design</i> • Partnership work in RUSD expands to include working with executive leadership, school instructional leadership teams, literacy instruction communities of practice, and the RUSD instructional cabinet • Exploratory projects (e.g. professional development for New Haven Unified School District with Targeted Leadership Consulting, convening a conversation about transforming education in California) • Publication of <i>Bringing Literacy Home</i> (KaiLonnie Dunsmore and Douglas Fisher, Editors), book that originated from the Family Literacy Symposium; other books about EI’s work are forthcoming |