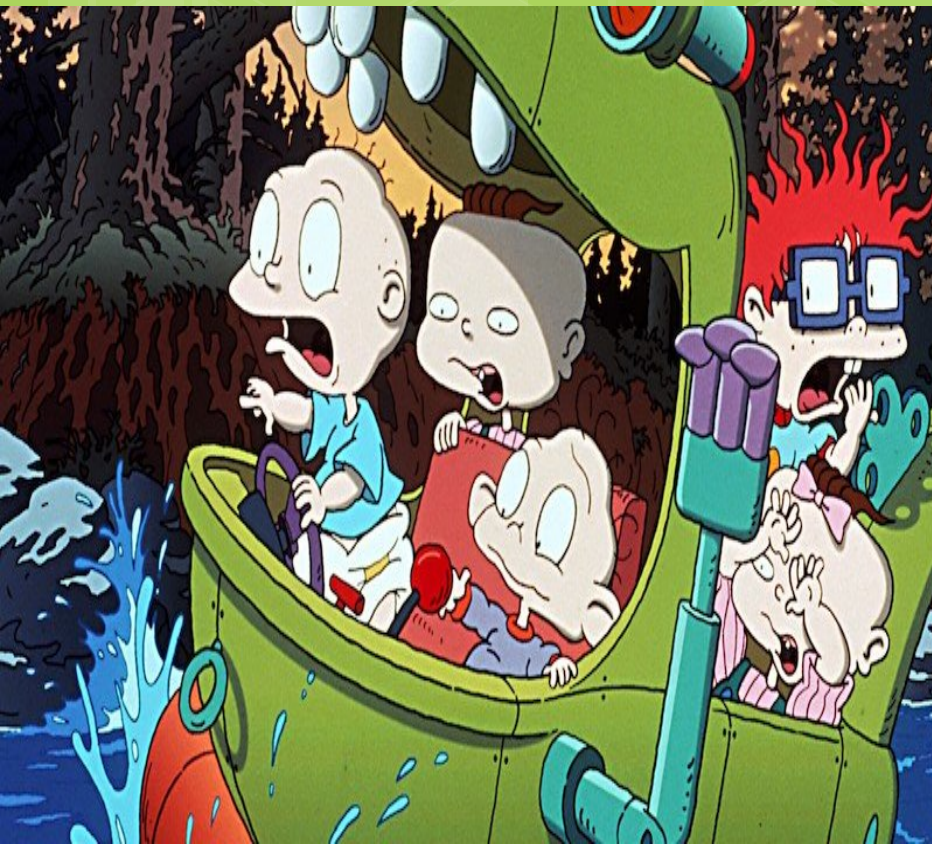


# Collaborating on School Reform:



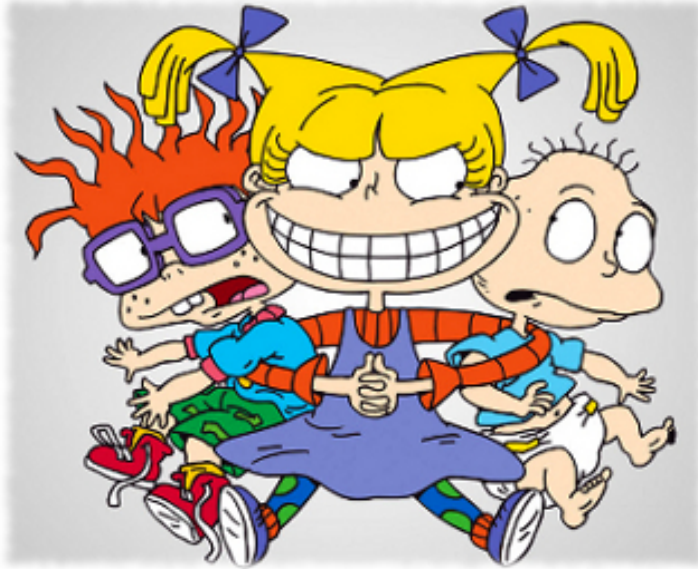
Creating Union-  
Management  
Partnerships to  
Improve Public  
School Systems

# Long-term Collaborative Partnerships: Common Themes and Patterns

- The following common themes and patterns emerged from a study of six school districts that have developed collaborative partnerships over the past two decades to improve students performance and the quality of teaching.

# Contextual Motivation or Pivotal Events

- 1. **Crisis** that motivated the change in the union-management relationship.
- 2. Recognized that the adversarial relationships that led to Crisis



# Strategic Priorities

1. Emphasis on teacher quality.
2. Focus on student performance.
3. Substantive problem-solving, innovation, and willingness to experiment.

# Supportive System Infrastructure

1. An **organizational culture** that values and supports collaboration.
2. **Shared governance and management** of the district and **strategic alignment**.
3. **Collaborative structures at all levels** in the district.
4. Dense internal organizing of the **union as a network**.
5. **Joint learning opportunities** for union and management

# Sustaining Factors

1. **Long-term leadership** both union and management, and **recruitment from within.**
2. **Community** engagement.
3. Support from the **Board of Education.**
4. Support from the **National AFT.**
5. Importance of supportive and enabling **contract language.**



# CASE STUDIES OF SUSTAINED UNION-MANAGEMENT COLLABORATION

- Background:
  - ◆ Located approximately 25 miles south-east of Los Angeles.
  - ◆ employs 927 teachers and serves 20,801 ethnically and linguistically diverse students.
  - ◆ 7% above the state average on the California's Academic Performance Index (API) consistently.
  - ◆ approximately 85 percent of high school graduates move on to higher education.

# CASE STUDIES OF SUSTAINED UNION-MANAGEMENT COLLABORATION

- **Initiating Collaboration**

- ◆ The Partnership between labor and management in the ABCUSD emerged in the aftermath of a tumultuous eight-day strike in 1993



# Cause of the 1993 Strike

- Health care benefit
- Pay of employees
- And a increase in class size

# The Aftermath

- **Strategic Priorities**

- The Superintendent and Union President devolved a strategic plan know as the “Partnership”

# The Purpose

- Collaborative problem solving
- Solve problems related to student performance
- Recruiting teachers and administrators
- Compensating and Hiring high quality teachers
- Improve curriculum
- Instructional practices
- expand research-based professional development

# Support and Guidance

- To guide their collaborative efforts, the Union and District Administration developed six guiding principles

1. All students can succeed and we will not accept any excuse that prevents that from happening at ABC. We will work together to promote student success.
2. All needed support will be made available to schools to ensure every student succeeds. We will work together to ensure that happens.
3. The top 5% of teachers in our profession should teach our students. We will work together to hire, train and retain these professionals.
4. All employees contribute to student success.
5. All negotiations support conditions that sustain successful teaching and student learning.
6. We won't let each other fail.

# Infrastructure

- The Partnership is also supported by both formal and informal structures.
- Other leaders from the union and management also speak frequently to each other about their joint work.
- Leaders from both the administrative cabinet and the union executive board meet on a monthly bases.
- They assess progress, build their team, and plan the next steps in their Partnership.
- This full day session, called “Partnership with Administration and Labor (P.A.L.),” has occurred every year since 1999, and the union and district split the cost.

# Infrastructure

- At the school level principle ad union building representatives meet weekly.
- They discuss issues solve problems and site-based decision making.
- Including textbook adoption.
- School schedules
- The hiring process for each school
- And Budgets



# Conclusion

- The Partnership has also been strengthened by an extraordinary investment in joint learning opportunities for administrators, union leaders and teachers.
- This has included training by AFT's Center for School Improvement (CSI) in meeting skills, problem solving and decision making.
- Joint training has not only improved the technical, problem-solving and decision-making skills of both teachers and principals, it has also strengthened their relationships as colleagues.
- Furthermore, the Partnership has proven to be successful.





**MY CHILDHOOD WAS  
BETTER THAN YOURS**