

The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of a red pencil with a sharpened lead tip resting on a piece of white graph paper. A line graph is drawn on the paper, showing a series of connected points that form a curve. The graph starts at the bottom left and trends upwards towards the top right. The overall color palette is warm, with soft yellows and oranges in the background.

Miracle or Madness: Understanding & Managing the Dynamics of Evaluation in Texas' Public Education System

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Overview

- K-12 Evaluations in Political Context
 - Demands Placed on Practice
 - Compliance often determines what gets done
 - Political and practical necessities
 - Professional evaluation standards
 - Opportunities to Advance Practice
 - Find continuity in a dynamic environment
 - Identify issues missed at higher levels
 - Generate system supports

Madness: Demands on Practice

➤ Compliance Orientation

➤ “Keep it between the lines”

■ Doing too much can be bad for longevity

- Funds to support the evaluation may be exhausted prematurely
- Products may result that are perceived to be unnecessary
- Support can morph into co-option
- Nested questions can proliferate beyond capacity to respond

➤ “Render unto Ceasar what is Ceasar’s...”

- ...Even if he doesn’t know what he wants ahead of time

Madness: Demands on Practice

- Political and Practical Necessities
 - The Post-Lake Wobegon world of education:
100% will {be proficient, college-ready, graduate, etc.}
 - Premium on efficiency: ROI and TCO
 - The “Night at the Museum” principle in data management
 - Premium on accountability measures
 - “Fit” with performance management
- AND, Satisfy Professional Evaluation Standards

Miracle: Opportunity to Advance Practice

- Find Continuity in a Dynamic Environment to Mitigate Instability and Loss of Control
 - Mine available data to support problem-solving in face of “moving targets”
 - Conduct statistical investigations to help leaders understand how past standards align with future standards
 - Project performance under new standards or relative to district-identified goals
 - Identify interim “markers” to reach new standards: when can leaders expect returns on investment?
 - Analyze qualitative/process data to pinpoint where changes are, or are not, needed

Miracle: Opportunity to Advance Practice

- Find and Explain Issues “Missed” at Higher Levels
 - Supply information about intended and unintended consequences of policy decisions
 - Generate succinct problem statements
 - Have evidence available to back up problem statements
 - Communicate to the right players at the right time

Miracle: Opportunity to Advance Practice

- Expand concept of evaluation products to include identification/construction of system supports
 - Formal, print reports often aren't appreciated until years after the fact
 - Tools that support “business intelligence” will garner attention, *especially* for schools facing accountability sanctions and districts facing budget shortfalls
 - Simple to use, understand and maintain
 - Demonstrate scientific elegance
 - Support implementation of appropriate actions in response to accountability sanctions

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