Lay of the Land and Critical Issues
Background and Key Issues for the U.S.
Overview U.S. School System and School Experience

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Overview U.S. School System and School Experience

• The Role of School Districts: Structures and Leadership
• The relationship between districts and state policy: The Case of Tucson, Arizona
• Understanding Key Differences between U.S. and Finnish Schools
• Questions and Reactions
The Role of School Districts: Structures and Leadership

National

U.S. Department of Education

State

Maryland State Department of Education

Local Systems

Baltimore County Public Schools
The Role of School Districts: Structures and Leadership

Fig. 1. The structure of education in the United States (Snyder and Dillow 2015)
45 States + DC Adopted the Common Core State Standards (2013)

http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/development-process/
Leadership: Complex Systems

- **Classroom** – students, teachers, and mathematics
- **Teaching & Learning** – content, instruction, assessment, professional culture

- Public
- Private
- Charter
- Online/Virtual

- **21st Century Learning**
  - STEM
  - Coding Computer Science
  - Student Centered Learning
  - Personalized Learning

- Formative Assessment
- State Assessments
- PARCC
- Smarter Balance
- SAT & ACT
Leadership: Complex Systems

- **Teacher Development** – teacher preparation, novice, experienced
- **Knowledge** – mathematics, specialized content knowledge for teaching mathematics, pedagogical, curriculum, students

- 4 Year Universities and Colleges
- 2 Year Colleges
- Online Degrees
- State Certification
- Alternative Certification Programs
- Mathematics
- Mathematics Pedagogical Content Knowledge
- Pedagogical Content Knowledge
- Curriculum Knowledge
Leadership: Complex Systems

- **Supports** – time, resources, specialist, coaches, and leaders

- University
- Educational Centers
- Textbook Publishers
- Professional Development Providers
- Open Education Resources
- Creative Commons
- Entrepreneurialism
Leadership: Networks

**TODOS: Mathematics for ALL**
Excellence and Equity in Mathematics
The Relationship between Districts and State Policy

The Case of Tucson, Arizona

Chelsea McIntyre
6th / 7th grade math teacher
Tucson, AZ
School Control

- Race to the Top
- Title IX
- No Child Left Behind

U.S. Department of Education

State Department of Education

Local School District
Governing Board

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Fig. 1 US Dept of Ed seal commons.wikimedia.org; Fig. 2 [Skidmore] The Arizona Capitol Museum building in Phoenix commons.wikimedia.org;
Fig. 3 Business Meeting Clipart wordartsme.com
• A long-standing tradition of local control exists in the U.S.

• 56% of Americans surveyed by Gallup in 2014 report an opinion that local school boards should have the greatest influence on what is taught in schools; 28% think that power should lie with the state, and only 15% say the Federal Government should have the greatest influence. ¹

¹ 46th Annual PK/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools; May 29 – June 20, 2014
Various Stakeholders

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Community Members
- Local Government
- State Government
- Federal Government
- Policy Makers
- Business
- Unions
- Text & Test Publishers
Bilingual Education
• 63% of Arizonans voted for Proposition 203 in 2000, limiting access to bilingual education for English Language Learners ²

Ethnic Studies
• The Mexican American Studies program in Tucson Unified School District was dismantled following passage of House Bill 2281 in 2010 ³
• AZ State Superintendent of Schools Tom Horne authored the bill with the aim of shutting down the TUSD program, despite support from the program’s teachers, parents and school district ⁴
• Schools in California and Texas formed their own Ethnic Studies classes following the ban; some districts now require Ethnic Studies courses for graduation ⁴
Notes

• 1 - 46th Annual PK/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools; May 29 – June 20, 2014


Critical Differences Between US and Finnish Education

• Elizabeth Radday
Philosophical Differences

• Finland philosophy: No dead ends through the paths of education. University is for some (professional degrees and researchers).

Upper Secondary School

• In Finland about 50% of students go to vocational school and 50% go to general upper secondary school

• In the United States almost all students go to general upper secondary school (vocational school is rarely an option)
• In Finland courses are shorter (less than 10 weeks long) and are focused on a few specific skills. There are 5 or 6 short terms each year. Classes do not meet daily.

• In the US most courses are for the full academic year and meet daily.
Core Requirements

• Finnish students can complete either the “basic” math requirements (6 courses) or “advanced” requirements (10 courses plus specialization courses)

• US math requirements vary by state and are between 2 and 4 full year courses (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Precalculus)
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Questions and Reactions