Main Takeaways:

1. **Dr. Hess began with the metaphor of the education community playing the role of Sisyphus, who in Greek mythology was tasked with eternally pushing a boulder up a hill. The reform community has been counseling schools and districts how to change their grip and the footing, but Dr. Hess advised rethinking the situation to blow up the mountain.**

2. **Dr. Hess broke education leadership into two halves: instructional and cage-busting.** He associated the instructional half with most education research. He stated that while this half of education leadership is critical, so is the half that entails breaking down barriers, and noted that these topics have been studied to a much lesser extent.

3. **Dr. Hess outlined four key ingredients to leverage change: talent, time, tools, and money.**
   - Talent: We must think of talent differently than we did 50 years ago because the human capital sources and demands have changed.
   - Tools: “The book” revolutionized learning millennia ago, but “the book” is only as useful as the quality of its use. The same is true with new technology and blended learning.
   - Time: Only about 65% of time in American school is used on instruction, so Dr. Hess advised leaders to ensure that they are using the time that they have well before demanding more. Dr. Hess pointed to Doug Lemov’s *Teach like a Champion* to give strategies for the more efficient use of time in schools
   - Money: Dr. Hess gave the example of rewarding teachers with a low number of absences to make efficient use of money in the system.

4. **Dr. Hess noted that, “a huge amount of time when people tell you that you can’t do something, they are incorrect.”** There are “big P” policies and “little p” policies. The “big Ps” are laws that are difficult to get around, but the “little p’s” are in code, not legislation, and can easily be revised. He advised people to specifically ask what is standing in the way of progress, look closely at policies to understand how large perceived obstacles actually are, and think creatively about how to get around these obstacles.

5. **Dr. Hess also stated that many district leaders state their problems and goals in vague terms.** Instead of outlining goals in terms of moving from a 30% pass rate to a 70% pass rate, many districts frame their problems as “expanding access” or “getting parents more involved.” Dr. Hess challenged leaders to think about problems in specific terms, rather than simply throwing around broad terms like “access,” “autonomy,” or “accountability.”
Summary:

In this session, Dr. Rick Hess outlined four ingredients for leveraging change: talent, tools, time, and money. He stated that many practitioners perceive obstacles in maximizing the efficient use of these ingredients, but that those obstacles are often not what they seem. Dr. Hess divided perceived barriers into “big P” and “little p” policies. The “big P” policies are laws that are difficult to change, but “little p” policies can be circumvented more easily and sometimes do not exist at all. Dr. Hess challenged those in the room to reassess their perceived obstacles and think creatively about ways to navigate around them.

Further Discussion Points/ Research:

- How can districts and the individuals within them best develop a culture over overcoming perceived barriers?
- How do you best hire individuals that are willing to question and creatively circumvent “little p” obstacles?
- How can districts best leverage time, talent, tools, and money?