Enhancing Instruction to Improve Outcomes for Underachieving Students Living in Poverty

12 Strategies That Make A Difference

For the PDF version of the handout: “Enhancing Instruction to Improve Outcomes for Underachieving Students Living in Poverty: 12 Strategies That Make The Difference” please visit http://csi.boisestate.edu/ and click on the “Presentations” link.

Learner Outcomes

• Emerge with a substantially enhanced knowledge of what works for underachieving students living in poverty.
• Understand how high-poverty schools become high-performing.
• Be compelled to take informed action to better meet the needs of underachieving students living in poverty.

Join ASCD for its 3rd Annual Whole Child Virtual Conference May 3–9, 2013

Moving From Implementation to Sustainability to Culture

Educational Leadership for Tough Questions for Tough Times

http://csi.boisestate.edu/
How Are We Doing?

Validate Challenge to Improve

Collaborate / Network!

Who Are You? What Level?

- Teachers
- Instructional Coaches
- Principals
- District Office/Support
- Superintendents
- School Board Members

- Elementary Schools
- Middle Schools
- High Schools
- K-8
- K-12

Bright Spots

Successful Efforts Worth Emulating That Illuminate The Road Map For Action and Spark The Hope That Change Is Possible.

Bright Spot Philosophy

What’s working right now and how can we do more of it?
Kids Are Smart!

What About Our Students?

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (2000)

Of Every 100 9th Grade Students in the Nation

67 Graduate from High School in 4 Years
38 Directly Enter College in the Fall

26 are Still Enrolled in the Sophomore Year

18 Earn a College Degree within 6 Years

How High-Poverty Schools...

Become High-Performing Schools

Source: Education Trust analysis of data from National School-Level State Assessment Score Database: www.schooldata.org
Data are from 2002.
High-Poverty / High-Performing Schools

Nationally Recognized High-Poverty / High Performing Schools
- Dayton’s Bluff Elementary, St. Paul, MN
- Lapwai Elementary, Lapwai, ID
- Molalla High School, Molalla, OR
- Osmond A. Church PS/MS, 124 K-8 School, Queens, NY
- Port Chester Middle School, Port Chester, NY
- Taft Elementary, Boise, ID
- Tekoa High School, Tekoa, WA

Start With An Honest Review of Data / Set Improvement Goals

Caldwell School District
Caldwell, ID

- 6,500 Students Grades K-12
- 80% Low Income
- 56% Hispanic
- 43% White
- 1% African American / Asian

From Sanctions to Success
Moving from the most severe level of state and federal sanctions to making AYP in 8 of its 10 schools in four years.

Caldwell I-SAT Data

Caldwell School District

Closing The Achievement Gap Between White & Hispanic Students
Reading

Source: Caldwell School District, 2010

Source: Idaho State Department of Education, 2010
Caldwell School District
Closing The Achievement Gap Between White & Hispanic Students Math

Source: Caldwell School District, 2010

“How many effective schools would you have to see...
...to be persuaded of the educability of poor children? If your answer is more than one, then I submit that you have reasons of your own for preferring to believe that basic pupil performance derives from family background instead of school response to family background...

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us.” 1979

Ron Edmonds...

Today...in 2013...
“WE KNOW WHAT WORKS IN EDUCATION. THE RESEARCH IS PROLIFIC”

“Amazingly, then, the question today is not about what works, but about why we do not implement what we know works in all schools for all kids?”


Today...in 2013...

Tree

THE KNOWING-DOING GAP

- Talk substitutes for action
- Fear prevents risk-taking and innovation
- Measurement focuses on the wrong things

“It is not the inertia of indifference or ignorance, but knowing too much and doing to little?” -PEFFER & SUTTON, 1999
Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

- Are we working to eliminate mindsets, policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate under-achievement?
- Have we ensured safety?
- Have we developed an accurate understanding of the influence of poverty on student learning?
- Have we fostered caring relationships and strengthened the bond between students and schools?
- Have we made an authentic effort to engage parents, families, and our community?
**Tools for Schools**

Are we Perpetuating Underachievement: What have we eliminated?

**Fostering a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment**

**Strategy 1**

Establish a Physically and Emotionally Safe Environment

“We had to establish law and order…”

“These kids aren’t going to begin school in a place where you can smell the bathrooms when you come in the front door.”

**Have We Ensured Safety?**

**The Facts About Poverty**

- What is the percentage of children living in poverty in the US?
- What is the percentage of children living in “low-income” families (just above the poverty line)?
- Childhood poverty has increased by what percentage in the past decade (2000-09)?
- What has happened to the income level of lowest 1/5 of the population and to the highest 1/5 in past 25 years?
- What do we “define” as poverty in schools?

**Dramatic Increase in Childhood Poverty**

Rates of Increase in 4th Grade Subsidized Lunches

Since 2007, the proportion of fourth graders eligible for free or reduced-price lunches through the federal government’s school meals program has increased nationwide to 52%, from 46%.

Change in percent from 2007 - 2011

Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch

- 0% (1)
- 1-6% (14)
- 7-10% (31)
- ≥11% (4)

(Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2011)
Video Viewing Guide

AS YOU WATCH THE VIDEO, JOT DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE QUESTIONS:

What significance does the information have for you/your school?

What questions does it raise for you?

Understanding Mental Maps/Mind-sets

- Images, assumptions, and stories carried in our minds that shape behavior and attitude
- Usually tacit until we examine
- Limit our ability to change
- Leader's task is to “identify/expose” through reflection and inquiry

Confronting Common Myths

Fact or Fiction...

- People in poverty are unmotivated and have weak work ethics.
- Education, as a way out of poverty, is readily accessible to everyone.
- People living in poverty are uninvolved in their children’s education because they do not value education.
- People living in poverty tend to abuse drugs and alcohol more than people in other socioeconomic classes.

Sticks and Stones...

How do we talk about poverty in schools?

- The dangers of a deficit perspective
- Separating children’s developing sense of self from their living conditions
- The words/labels we use matter
Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

Strategy 2
Do EVERYTHING Possible to Level the Playing Field

Have we developed an accurate understanding of the influence of poverty on student learning?

Given what we know about poverty...

Five suggestions you can begin today!
- Review your homework policies
- Analyze who is and who is not accessing higher-level curriculum and address.
- Keep stocks of supplies/basic necessities
- Continue to reach out to parents even when they are unresponsive
- Learn more / challenge your biases!

Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

Strategy 3
Develop Meaningful Student Advisories

Have we fostered caring relationships and strengthened the bond between students and school?

Develop Meaningful Student Advisories
- Faculty / Student Ratio—20:1
- 30 Minutes / 4 days per wk
- Four-year Commitment
- Reading, Math, Portfolios, Homework, Careers
- Performance-based Graduation Requirements

Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

Strategy 4
Engage Parents as Authentic Partners

Have we made an authentic effort to engage parents, families, and our community?

What at-risk children want at school more than anything else...
...a caring relationship with an adult.

What at-risk children want at school more than anything else...
...a caring relationship with an adult.
**Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment**

**Build Relationships with Families**
- Engage Parents as Authentic Partners
- Hold Frequent Meetings with Food/Childcare
- Offer Parent Education
- Support Learning at Home
- Conduct Home Visits / Caring Outreach
- Join the National Network of Partnership Schools
  [www.csos.jhu.edu](http://www.csos.jhu.edu)

**RECAP and REFLECT**

#1 Establish A Safe Environment  
#2 Level The Playing Field  
#3 Develop Student Advisories  
#4 Engage Parents As Partners

---

**A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:**

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

---

**Focus on Learning**

- Tracking / Retention Pullouts
- Misassignment to Special Education
- Misassigned Teachers
- Teacher Isolation
- Ineffective Instruction

---

**Cased-Based Learning: “Keith”**

West Side High School (46% Low-income)  
Keith teaches Algebra; he has for 11 years at the 9th and 10th grade levels. Also, he teaches two sections of Algebra II. He knows math—has his approach down. He sets high standards, assigns daily homework, gives pop quizzes and end of chapter tests. He grades on a strict curve. Three out of four kids do well/pass. Twenty-five percent repeat. Keith explains this problem as the result of a lack of commitment. He says, “It’s just the way it is.” He coaches football.

---

**Strategy 5**

Develop a Common Understanding of Excellent Teaching and Powerful Learning

*Do we have a common instructional framework to guide curriculum, teaching, assessment, and the learning climate?*
Develop a Common Understanding of Excellent Teaching and Powerful Learning

• Comprehensive School Reform Models as a jump-start
• Home Grown Models
• Pedagogy of Poverty to Powerful Teaching and Learning
• Common Core Standards as Opportunity

Good teaching is going on when students are...

...Working on problems they care about, help them make sense of their world, and their place in it
...Focusing on big ideas rather than the pursuit of isolated facts
...Planning what they will learn
...Wrestling with ideals such as fairness, equity, and justice
...Learning from real-life experiences

Good teaching is going on when students are...

...Thinking creatively, questioning common notions and connecting ideas to prior learning or new problems
...Revising, polishing or perfecting work
...Using technology to solve problems
...Reflecting on themselves, their beliefs, and their feelings

Poverty, Our Mind-Sets, and Common Core Standards

Fixed Performance
“...some people are just not as smart as other and there’s not much [we] can do about it.”

Dynamic Learning
“...ability and intelligence [is] something that grows with learning and depends on the situation...”

Source: Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives by Peter H. Johnston

Common Core and Poverty

Instructional Shifts:
• Thinking skills/ reasoning
• Deeper conceptual understanding in math
• Writing
• Real-world applications
• Knowledge building through increased non-fiction/informational text

30+ Years of Research
• HOTS
• AVID
• NSF Math Programs
• National Writing Project
• Place-based Education: Expeditionary Learning
• SIOP

Teachers Make The Difference!

...They think ... we can learn this **** !!