“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...

“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”


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

Today...in 2013...
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 TOO LITTLE?" - PFEFFER & SUTTON, 1999

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

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Start With An Honest Review of Data / Set Improvement Goals

Is Attendance Important?

"An overwhelming majority of chronically absent kids are impoverished, dealing with such daily stresses as caring for siblings, high rates of disease, violence in the community, and frequent familial moves to find employment."

Marc Cutillo
"Poverty’s Prominent Role in Absenteeism"

Analyzing and Applying Data

Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

- Are we working to eliminate mindsets, policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate underachievement?
- 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?

Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

- School Is Unsafe
- Blaming Students / Families
- Mis-use of Suspension & Expulsion

Tools for Schools

Are we Perpetuating Underachievement: What have we eliminated?
Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

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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?

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?

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.

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
Challenging Our Mental Maps / Mindsets

Explicit Beliefs/Assumptions
- School attendance is important.
- Rules must be followed.
- Tardiness is not allowed.
- Parents are responsible for excusing their child.

Tacit Beliefs/Assumptions
- Parents don’t care about education.
- Parent and student are lazy.
- Parents aren’t home or are sleeping off a hangover.

Action/Strategy
- Set policy and require parents to sign in.
- Try to call home.
- Sent letter home via U.S. mail.
- Give letter to student.
- Warn about impending suspension.
- Sent letter home with students.

Student still tardy and flunking class

Challenging our Mental Maps/Mindsets

They challenged their own mind-sets...

But BEHAVIOR...

CAME BEFORE BELIEFS

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?

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

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!
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

Strategy 3  
Develop Meaningful Student Advisories

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

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?

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)

Tools for Schools

Do we have structures and process for fostering a healthy, safe, and supportive learning environment?

RECAP and REFLECT

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

• Are we working to eliminate mindsets, policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate underachievement?
• Do we have a common instructional framework to guide curriculum, teaching, assessment, and the learning climate?
• Do we provide job-embedded opportunity for professional learning?
• Do we have common assessments and embrace assessment literacy?
• Have we ensured that all students are proficient in reading?
• Do we provide targeted interventions?

Tools for Schools

Are we perpetuating underachievement: What have we eliminated?

Focus on Learning

Strategy 5
Develop a Common Understanding of Excellent Teaching and Powerful Learning

A Common Understanding of Excellence in Teaching

Good teaching is a “core set of teacher acts” that tend to be more evident in what students are doing than in what the teacher is doing.

--Martin Haberman