Leveraging High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performance

10 Strategies/Policies That Make THE Difference

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Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

10 Strategies/Policies That Make THE Difference

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.

Now Available From ASCD

January 2012

As a leader...

How are you doing in supporting high poverty schools and districts?

Validate Challenge to Improve
Collaborate / Network!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Are You?</th>
<th>What Level?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Para Professionals/Classified</td>
<td>K-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>District Office/School Board</td>
<td>K-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Teachers
Principals
Instructional Coaches
Para Professionals/Classified
District Office/School Board
Parents

What Level? What Level? What Level? What Level?

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

Caine’s Arcade

Turn and Talk

TALK ABOUT CAINE

Who are our kids that qualify for free and reduced meals?

Who are our kids that are under-achieving?

... and how can we help these kids???
How High-Poverty Schools... Become High-Performing Schools

Part I: Learning Together
- Learning From Others: Stories of Inspiration and Hope
- Assessing What You Know About Poverty: The Importance of Accurate Information
- Constructing a Framework for Action

Part II: Leading Together
- Build Leadership Capacity—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- Focus on Learning—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment—What do we do? What do we stop doing?

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

Source: Education Trust analysis of data from National School-Level State Assessment Score Database: www.schooldata.org Data are from 2002.
Osmond A. Church School
PS / MS 124

- 1,201 students in grades PK-8
- 97% Low-Income
- 45% Asian
- 31% African American
- 21% Latino

Source: New York Department of Education, 2010

Port Chester Middle School
Port Chester, NY

- 864 students in grades 6-8
- 73% Latino
- 7% African-American
- 64% Low-Income

Source: New York Department of Education, 2010

Port Chester Middle School
Overall Test Scores Grades 6-8

Port Chester High School
Tekoa, WA
Tekoa High School

- 110 Students
- 51% Low-income
- 83% White
- 12% American Indian
- 5% Other


Tekoa High School

Reading and Writing Grade 10


And...At The District Level?

Caldwell School District
Caldwell, ID

- 6,500 Students Grades K-12
- 78% Low Income
- 56% Hispanic
- 43% White
- 1% African American / Asian

Closing The Achievement Gap Between White & Hispanic Students Reading

Source: Caldwell School District, 2010

Caldwell School District

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”
Ron Edmonds... 1979

Today...in 2012...
“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?”

Part I: Learning Together
- Learning From Others: Stories of Inspiration and Hope
- Assessing What You Know About Poverty: The Importance of Accurate Information
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What Do You Know and Believe About Poverty?

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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6% (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10% (31)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥11% (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2011)
Dramatic Increase in Childhood Poverty

The number of students receiving subsidized lunches has increased by 17%.

In the fiscal year of 2010, 1.3 million children became eligible for free or reduced lunch, the largest single-year increase in the U.S. since 1972. 

2007-2012

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

How Is Poverty Defined?

• Generational
• Situational
• Immigrant

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.

Five Suggestions You Can Begin Today!

Given what we know about poverty...
• Review your homework policies
• Analyze who is and who is not accessing higher-level curriculum and begin doing something about it.
• Keep stocks of supplies/basic necessities
• Continue to reach out to parents even when they are unresponsive
• Educate yourself and challenge your biases!

Part I: Learning Together

• Learning From Others: Stories of Inspiration and Hope
• Assessing What You Know About Poverty: The Importance of Accurate Information
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January 2012

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

12 Strategies/Policies That Make THE Difference
Part II: Leading Together

- Build Leadership Capacity—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- Focus on Learning—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment—What do we do? What do we stop doing?

It Takes Skill and Will

Swift, dramatic improvement requires an encounter with the “brutal facts”—those awkward, unpleasant truths that organizations prefer not to address—or even talk about.


Build Leadership Capacity

- Low Expectations
- Inequitable Funding

Build Leadership Capacity

- Are we working to eliminate mindsets, policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate underachievement?
- Are we managing material and human resources effectively?
- Are we optimizing time...EXTENDING it for underachieving students and REORGANIZING it to better support professional learning?
- Do we have a data system that works for classroom and school leaders?

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy #1
Consider your Budget as a Moral Document
What's Best For Kids?
Start With An Honest Review of Data / Set Improvement Goals

Don’t Be Afraid of Data Driven Innovation
- Idaho’s Only School For Freshmen
- 90 students
- Focused Attention On Students Who Are On A Path Toward Failure
- Class Sizes Limited to 15 Students Per Teacher

Caldwell Freshman Academy

Implications for Leaders

Study Data...

Focus Budgets on the Needs of Students...

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy #2
Look for Bright Spots!

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?
Implement Student Led Conferences

- Getting clear on the philosophy and purpose
- Defining teacher, student, parent, administrator and support
- Selecting the most appropriate format
- Preparing students to lead
- Preparing parents and colleagues to participate
- Organizing the details
- Anticipating and handling unique situations
- Evaluating the conferences

Traditional Parent/Teacher Conferences

Do These Work?

Implications for Leaders

Identify Bright Spots

Build on them!

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy #3

Communicate... and Celebrate Good News

Communicating In The 21st Century: What Is Your District Doing?

Insist on a Proactive Communication Plan
Build Leadership Capacity

- Are we working to eliminate mindsets, policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate underachievement?
- Are we managing material and human resources effectively?
- Are we optimizing time—extending it for underachieving students and reorganizing it to better support professional learning?
- Do we have a data system that works for classroom and school leaders?

**We will never catch up under-achieving students who live in poverty...**

without additional quality instructional time for those students... and job-embedded time for the professional learning needs of their teachers.

Where’s the time for all of this?

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The Full Year Calendar

[Calendar image]

Ed Trust, 2003

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Less Summer Vacation

[Calendar image]

Ed Trust, 2003

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Less Weekends, Holidays, & Summer Vacation

[Calendar image]

Ed Trust, 2003

---
Less Professional Development Days & Early Dismissal/Parent Conferences

Less Class Picnic, Class Trip, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hannukkah, Awards, Assemblies, Athletics & Concerts

Bottom Line:
Roughly 13-15 8-hr Days of Instruction Per Subject Per Year

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy #4 Go Back...Find The Time

- Get creative...support professional learning that does not distract from instructional time
- Reduce scheduled / unscheduled interruptions
- Schedule testing wisely
- Extend learning...day / week / summer
- Minimize Pullouts
- Stop releasing students early
- Conduct parent / student led conferences outside school day

Implications for Leaders
Support Creative Approaches to Maximize Time
Part II: Leading Together

- **Build Leadership Capacity**—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- **Focus on Learning**—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- **Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment**—What do we do? What do we stop doing?

Focus on Learning

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

Cased-Based Learning: “Lily”

Promise Elementary (66% low-income)

Lily (tenured) loves kids. She has wanted to be a teacher all her life. Now in her fifth year as a second grade teacher she continues to struggle with low-performing students. The “high-end” kids do well and achieve expected gains. Students that enter her class behind in reading and math almost always exit at comparable levels. Lily’s organizational management skills improve modestly each year. Parents like her, as do her colleagues. She works hard; just doesn’t seem to progress.

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.
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?

Focus on Student, Professional, and System Learning

Strategy #5

Provide meaningful (based on data), job-embedded professional learning

Implications for Leaders

Insist on NEEDS Driven Professional Learning

Excitement Prior to Implementation is Fragile

Guess who has been at the recent workshop...

Joanne Quinn 2012
Focus on Learning

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Elementary Students At Risk

- Reading One Year Below Grade Level
- Have Been Retained
- Chance of graduating from high school near zero
- Low Socio-Economic Background
- Attends School With Many Other Poor Students

Increasing Achievement of At-Risk Students at Each Grade Level
US Dept. of Ed., 1989

Focus on Learning

Strategy #6
Teach Every Student to Read Proficiently... K-12

All kids...

...want to learn how to read!

Reading is when you know what sounds the letters make and then you say them fast. They come out words, and then you are reading.

R. J., age 5

You can read when you look at car and then you look at can and know you drive one and open the other one and there is only one eensy line different.

Shelby, age 6
It’s when you read and nobody tells you the words. But you shouldn’t do it in the bathroom. My daddy does and my mom yells at him.  
*Paulette, age 5*

Words go in your eyes and come out your mouth…but it’s not like puking or anything. You say the words and that means you’re reading.  
*Loren, age 4*

**We MUST... Focus On Reading... For Every Student**

We will never teach all our students to read if we do not teach our students who have the **greatest difficulties to read**. Another way to say this is: Getting to 100% requires going through the bottom 20%.”

**Effective Reading Programs for Middle and High Schools: A Best-Evidence Synthesis**

*Best Evidence Encyclopedia*  
www.bestevidence.org  
www.bestevidence.org/words/mha_read_sep_16_2008_sum.pdf  
*Reading Research Quarterly – 43(3) – pp. 290-322 – dx.doi.org/10.1598/RPQ.43.3.4 – 2008 International Reading Association*

**Implications for Leaders**

Expect EVERY Elementary and Secondary Student to Attain Reading Proficiency

**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?
Focus on Learning

Strategic #7
Target Interventions
- Pre-K / Full Day Kindergarten
- Tutoring
- Extended Day / Summer Programs
- Homework Clubs
- Home Visits
- Alternative Schools & Programs
- College / Career Readiness

Boise State University

Focus on Learning

Provide High Quality Summer School
- Every summer for underachievers
- Regular communication between parent / school
- Targeted needs based instruction
- Curriculum / aligned to school year needs
- Provide for daily nutritional needs
- Weekly field trips / recreational activities
- Minimum of 3 weeks – more is better
- Plan for transition / remaining weeks of summer

Source: Borman 2007; Barr & Parrett, 2001

Implications for Leaders

Provide Additional Quality Learning Time for Under-Achieving Students

“No, you weren’t downloaded. You were born.”

Focus on Learning

Strategy #8
Connect Technology To Instruction

Protesting Against New Technology – the Early Days
It’s a Digital World!

- 72 hours per minute uploaded
- 5 billion photos online
- 800 billion active profiles
- Over 3 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube

Engage All Kids

One Caution: The Digital Divide

- Access to devices
- Access to high speed internet
- Familiarity with tech skills
Part II: Leading Together

- Build Leadership Capacity—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- Focus on Learning—What do we do? What do we stop doing?
- Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment—What do we do? What do we stop doing?

Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment

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

Strategy #9
Level the Playing Field: School Uniforms

Implications for Leaders

Actively Work To Eliminate Inequalities

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 #10
Engage Students With Their Community

The Gentleman’s Club...creating meaningful connections between “school learning” and community.

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
- Initiate Student Led Conferences
- Initiate Student Advisories
- Join the National Network of Partnership Schools
  www.csos.jhu.edu

Connect with Children, Families and Community

Implications for Leaders

Insist on Positive and Caring Adult / Student Relationships

Connect Every Family and Their Community With the School

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:
A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:
Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

Compelling Conclusions

Six Key Points to Take Away
- Consider your budget as a moral document
- Create a culture of high expectations ... provide the needed support
- Make decisions based on data...select and prioritize strategies based on needs
- Eliminate practices that perpetuate underachievement...start today
- Take action...implement, monitor and evaluate "needs-based" strategies
- Foster positive relationships / collaborate!

Collaborate
Look what happens when we go at it alone...

Dilbert

Alien Song
Any school can overcome the debilitating effects of poverty...

...demographics do not equal destiny!

We must combat hopelessness... and instill in every child the self-confidence that they can achieve and succeed in school.

What do we choose to do?

...our students are waiting

For the PDF version of “Turning High Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools” handout, please visit http://csi.boisestate.edu/ and click on the “Resources” link.