Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

12 Strategies That Make The Difference

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For the PDF version of the handout: “Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools: 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.

Now Available From ASCD
How Are We Doing?

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>Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Office/Support</td>
<td>K-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>K-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Board Members</td>
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</tbody>
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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?

Exam Hall

Kids Are Smart!
What About Our Students?

**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

**Nation 100**

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (2000)
18 Earn a College Degree within 6 Years

How High-Poverty Schools...
Become High-Performing Schools

High-Poverty / High-Performing Schools

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 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.”

Ron Edmonds... 1979
"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?"
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?

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%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in percent from 2007-2011</th>
<th>Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥11% (4)</td>
<td>≥11% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10% (31)</td>
<td>7-10% (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6% (14)</td>
<td>1-6% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% (1)</td>
<td>0% (1)</td>
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</tbody>
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(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?

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.

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!

Strategy 3

Develop Meaningful Student Advisories

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

Implications for Board Members and Leaders

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

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Focus on Learning

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