Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

10 Strategies/Policies That Make THE Difference

National Title I Conference
Nashville, Tennessee

January 23, 2013

William H. Parrett
Director
Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies
Boise State University
E-mail: wparret@boisestate.edu

Kathleen Budge
Coordinator
Leadership Development Program
Boise State University
E-mail: kathleenbudge@boisestate.edu
Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

10 Strategies 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
How Are We Doing?

Validate Challenge to Improve

Exam Hall

Collaborate / Network!

Who Are You?  What Level?

Teachers  Elementary Schools
Instructional Coaches  Middle Schools
 Principals  High Schools
District Office/Support  K-8
Superintendents  K-12
School Board Members  

Of Every 100 9th Grade Students in the Nation

67 Graduate from High School in 4 Years

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (2000)
38 Directly Enter College in the Fall

26 are Still Enrolled in the Sophomore Year

18 Earn a College Degree within 6 Years
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

Poverty vs. Achievement in Illinois Elementary Schools

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

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
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

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.
“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 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?”


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

What Do You Know and Believe About Poverty?

(Parrett & Budge, January 2002)
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)

How Is Poverty Defined?

• Generational
• Situational
• Immigrant
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
- Constructing a Framework for Action

Now Available From ASCD

January 2012
A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

School Culture

Spheres of Influence

Actions

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance
Learning Together RECAP!

- Learn From High Poverty, High Performing Schools
- Learn About Poverty
- Construct A Framework For Action

Professional Accountability for Learning

"Do you really believe 100 percent of the students can make it?"

Believe in success for everyone

Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

10 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

- Eliminate Practices That Perpetuate Under-Achievement
  - Low Expectations
  - Inequitable Funding

- 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 Our Kids?

---

Start With An Honest Review of Data / Set Improvement Goals

---

Implications for Leaders and Educators

**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?

Heath & Heath, Switch, 2010
Turn and Talk

DESCRIBE A BRIGHT SPOT

Traditional Parent/Teacher Conferences

Do These Work?

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

(Bailey and Guskey, 2001)
Implications for Leaders and Educators

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?
Implications for Leaders and Educators

**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?

The Full Year Calendar

Less Summer Vacation
Less State and District Testing

Ed Trust, 2003

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 and Educators

Support Creative Approaches to Maximize Time

RECAP!

- Stop What Doesn’t Work
- Consider Your Budget A Moral Document
- Look For Bright Spots
- Insist On Proactive Communications
- Get Creative About 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
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?

Title I Students Can Succeed in Common Core Classrooms
Teachers Make The Difference!

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

Focus on Student, Professional, and System Learning

Strategy #5
Provide meaningful (based on data), job-embedded professional learning

Implications for Leaders and Educators

Insist on NEEDS Driven Professional Learning
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?

---

Elementary Students At Risk

![Diagram showing factors affecting elementary students at risk](image)

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%.”

*Torgesen, Joseph K. A Principal’s Guide to Intensive Reading Interventions for Struggling Readers in Reading First Schools. A Reading First Quality Brief (2005)*
Implications for Leaders and Educators

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

Strategy #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

Implications for Leaders and Educators

Provide Additional Quality Learning Time for Under-Achieving Students

Focus on Learning

Strategy #8

Connect Technology To Instruction
"No, you weren't downloaded. Your were born."

Protesting Against New Technology - The Early Days
It’s Our Student’s Digital World!

More than one billion people using Facebook actively each month

72 hours of video uploaded per minute

5 million images are uploaded to Instagram every day

Over 4 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube

750 tweets per second

http://www.edmodo.com/

Learn more about Edmodo

Engage All Kids
One Caution: The Digital Divide

- Access to devices
- Access to high speed internet
- Familiarity with tech skills
**Implications for Leaders and Educators**

**Connect Technology To Instruction**

**Focus on Learning RECAP!**

- Provide Job Embedded Professional Learning
- Teach Every Student To Read
- Target Interventions
- Connect Technology To Instruction

**A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:**

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance
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**

Do EVERYTHING Possible to Level the Playing Field

**Implications for and Leaders and Educators**

**Actively Work To Eliminate Inequalities**
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?

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
Foster Caring Relationships & Engage Students with Their Communities

The Gentleman’s Club...creating meaningful connections between “school learning” and 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
  - Initiate Student Led Conferences
  - Initiate Student Advisories
  - Join the National Network of Partnership Schools

www.csos.jhu.edu

Connect with Children, Families and Communities

[Image of a woman and child]

[Image of a chart or diagram]
Implications for Board Members and Leaders

Insist on Positive and Caring Adult / Student Relationships

Connect Every Family and Their Community With the School

Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment RECAP!

- Is Our School Safe?
- Provide Caring Relationships
- Engage Students With Community

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance
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 for every student... 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...
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 “Presentations” link.