Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

12 Strategies That Make The Difference

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12 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.

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/](http://csi.boisestate.edu/) and click on the “Presentations” link.

Now Available From ASCD

January 2012
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>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>District Office/Support</td>
<td>K-8</td>
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<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>K-12</td>
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<td>School Board Members</td>
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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?
Kids Are Smart!

What About Our Students?

Ohio 100

Need for Change

Of every 100 9th grade students in Ohio:

- 73 graduate from high school in 4 years
- 46 enroll in college in the Fall
- 33 are still enrolled in their sophomore year
- 22 earn a college degree

Achieve American Diploma Project


http://www.higheredinfo.org

Of Every 100 9th Grade Students in Ohio...

73 Graduate from High School in 4 Years
46 Enroll in College in the Fall

33 are Still Enrolled in the Sophomore Year

26 Earn a College Degree

Too Many Students Remain Off Track to Success: Of Every 100 9th Graders in Ohio...

Who are our kids that are under-achieving?

Turn and Talk

TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS WHO 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?

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.

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
- Tall Elementary, Boise, ID
- Tekoa High School, Tekoa, WA
- Taft Elementary, Boise, ID

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

2007: 73%
2010: 93%

2007: 55%
2010: 85%

Caldwell School District

Closing The Achievement Gap Between White & Hispanic Students

Math

2007: 65%
2010: 88%

2007: 47%
2010: 79%

“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?”


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?”
-PFEIFFER & SUTTON, 1999

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

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

Tools for Schools

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

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

**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)

### 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Maps</th>
<th>Action / Strategy</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expose Beliefs/Assumptions</td>
<td>• School attendance is important.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rules must be followed.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being late is not allowed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents are responsible for excusing their child.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactic Beliefs/Assumptions</td>
<td>• Parents don’t care about education.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents and student are lazy.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents probably aren’t home or are sleeping off a hangover.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set policy and require parents to sign in.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Try to call home.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Send letter home via U.S. mail.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Send letter home with students.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Warn about impending suspension.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give letter to student.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Send letter home with student.</td>
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</table>

**But BEHAVIOR...**

**CAME BEFORE BELIEFS**

Adapted from the work of Chris Argyris & David Schon

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**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?

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**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

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**Challenging our Mental Maps/Mindsets**

They challenged their own mind-sets...

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**Step 1:** Skim Chapters 7 & 8

**Step 2:** Discuss the problem-based scenario at your table.

**Step 3:** Decide what you would do and provide a rationale?

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO? WHY?**

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**Using the Study Guide: Problem Based Learning**

**Step 1:** Main Chapters 7 & 8

**Step 2:** Discuss the problem-based scenario at your table.

**Step 3:** Decide what you would do and provide a rationale?
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?

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?

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
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
- 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?

Video Viewing Guide

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

- What does Caine teach us about learning?
- What implications does it have for teaching?

Caine’s Arcade