Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

12 Strategies/Policies That Make The Difference

Region One Education Service Center
McAllen, Texas

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Turning High-Poverty Schools Into High-Performing Schools

12 Strategies That Make The Difference

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

January 2012

How Are We Doing?

Validate Challenge to Improve
Collaborate / Network!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Who Are You?</th>
<th>What Level?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</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?

Texas Education Code
Title 2. Public Education
Subtitle A. General Provisions
Chapter 4. Public Education Mission, Objectives, and Goals

Sec.A4.001.AA PUBLIC EDUCATION MISSION AND OBJECTIVES. (a) The mission of the public education system of this state is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation...

http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.4.htm

Texas 100

SOURCE: ACHIEVE AMERICA DIPLOMA PROJECT

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

65 Graduate from High School in 4 Years

37 Enroll in College in the Fall
Too Many Students Remain Off Track to Success:
Of Every 100 9th Graders in Texas...

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

Nationally Recognized High-Poverty / High Performing Schools

• Dayton's Bluff Elementary, St. Paul, MN
• Fort Chester Middle School, Chester, NY
• Lapwai Elementary, Lapwai, ID
• Taft Elementary, Boise, ID
• Molalla High School, Molalla, OR
• Tekoa High School, Tekoa, WA
• Osmond A. Church PS/MS, 144 E-S School, Queens, NY

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.
William H. Taft Elementary

- 330 Students
- Grades k-6
- 72% Low Income
- 18% ELL/Refugee
- 9% Hispanic

William H. Taft Elementary
Reading Scores, 3rd Grade

Port Chester Middle School

Making Refugee Students Welcome

Kathleen Budge and William Parrett
When 58 refugee students speaking little English were transferred to this urban elementary school, the principal set up a team-building summer camp.

Port Chester Middle School
Port Chester, NY

2006 Dispelling the Myth Award Winner

Port Chester Middle School

Overall Test Scores Grades 6-8

- 864 students in grades 6-8
- 73% Latino
- 7% African-American
- 64% Low-Income
Tekoa High School
Tekoa, WA

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


Tekoa High School

And...At The District Level?

Caldwell School District
Caldwell, ID

- 6,500 Students Grades K-12
- 80% Low Income
- 56% Hispanic
- 43% White
- 1% African American / Asian

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
“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?”

**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

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?
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?

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?

Scavenger Hunt

The Facts About Poverty

- What is the percentage of children living in poverty in the US?
- What is the percentage of children living in “low-income” families (just above the poverty line)?
- Childhood poverty has increased by what percentage in the past decade (2000-09)?
- What has happened to the income level of lowest 1/5 of the population and to the highest 1/5 in past 25 years?
- What do we “define” as poverty in schools?
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)

K-12 Free Or Reduced Meals In Texas

Texas Department of Agriculture. ©2011 The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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?

TURN AND TALK

00:03:11

Hours    Minutes    Seconds

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

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

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

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

Consequences
• Student still tardy and flunking class.

Adapted from the work of Chris Argyris & David Schön

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.

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

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

Uncommon Sense
- An alternative learning environment
- Not a “dumping ground” for discipline problems
- Class sizes are limited to 15
- Students wear uniforms
- No homework
- Only alternative high school is to offer extracurricular sports.
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?

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

The Critical Role of the Principal In Fostering the Needed Environment

The Principal...
- Relentlessly ensures safety
- Models positive, caring relationships
- Addresses barriers as they arise
- Organizes collaborative efforts
- Establishes effective, frequent communication

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:
**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?

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**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?

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**Focus on Learning**

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

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**Caine’s Arcade**

**TURN AND TALK**

**TALK ABOUT CAINE**
Walk and Talk

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.

Her “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. Lily works hard; just doesn’t seem to progress.

Tools for Schools

Do we have structures and process for focusing on student, professional, and system-level learning?

Focus on Learning

Strategy 5

Develop a Common Understanding of Excellent Teaching and Powerful Learning

Do we have a common instructional framework to guide curriculum, teaching, assessment, and the learning climate?

Develop a Common Understanding of Excellent Teaching and Powerful Learning

- Comprehensive School Reform Models as a jump-start
- Home Grown Models
- Pedagogy of Poverty to Powerful Teaching and Learning
- Common Core Standards as Opportunity

Poverty, Our Mind-Sets, and Common Core Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Performance</th>
<th>Dynamic Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“…some people are just not as smart as other and there’s not much [we] can do about it.”</td>
<td>“…ability and intelligence [is] something that grows with learning and depends on the situation...”</td>
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Source: Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives by Peter H. Johnston
Common Core and Poverty

Instructional Shifts:
- Thinking skills/reasoning
- Deeper conceptual understanding in math
- Writing
- Real-world applications
- Knowledge building through increased non-fiction/informational text

30+ Years of Research
- HOTS
- AVID
- NSF Math Programs
- National Writing Project
- Place-based Education: Expeditionary Learning
- SIOP

Uncommon Sense

An Instructional Framework AND Room for the Nez Perce Culture and Language

- Incorporate elders as teachers of native language and traditions
- Travel the trail of Chief Joseph
- Learning from the Nez Perce Tribal leaders
- Connecting school learning to students “sense of place.”

Lapwai School District

Focus on Learning

Strategy 6
Teach Every Student to Read K-12

Have we ensured that all students are proficient in reading?

Elementary Students At Risk

All kids...

...want to learn how to read!
**Uncommon Sense**

Teaching Reading Beyond Elementary School

“We teach students to read.”

- Enlisted the help of a willing teacher
- Developed her expertise in a particular program and in reading in general
- Reconfigured the schedule to provide reading
- Did not consider learning to read an option

Granger High School

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**Uncommon Sense**

Everyone an English/Language Arts Teacher

- All teachers English/Language Arts teachers
- Provided target professional development with collaborative support from the schools E/LA teachers
- Created a set of bundled E/LA skills to be taught in every course

Port Chester Middle School

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**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*

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**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%.”


Focus on Learning

**Strategy 7**

Provide Targeted Interventions

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

Do we provide targeted interventions?

Focus on Learning

**Strategy 8**

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

Do we have common assessments and embrace assessment literacy?

Focus on Learning

**Strategy 9**

Provide Meaningful, Needs-Driven, Job-embedded Professional Learning

Do we provide job-embedded opportunity for professional learning?
A Word About Technology

Focus on Learning
Our Student’s World is Digital

http://www.edmodo.com/

Engage All Kids

"No, you weren’t downloaded. You were born."
Focus on Learning

Connect Technology To Instruction

One Caution: The Digital Divide

- Access to devices
- Access to high speed internet
- Familiarity with tech skills

The Critical Role of the Principal To Focus on Learning

The Principal...
+ Facilitates ongoing conversations about what is possible
+ Is chief steward of the school’s vision.
+ Works with teachers to establish a common understanding of excellence in teaching
+ Promotes a culture of inquiry
+ Uses his/her formal authority to
  - align curriculum to state/district standards;
  - ensure instructional quality;
  - develop assessment literacy;
  - use assessments to guide decision making
+ Manages resources to ensure target interventions are provided.

RECAP and REFLECT

#5 Understand Quality Teaching & Learning
#6 Teach Every Student To Read
#7 Provide Targeted Interventions
#8 Implement Student-Led Conferences
#9 Needs-Driven Professional Learning
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?

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
- Failure To Retain Effective Leaders & Teachers

Tools for Schools

Are we perpetuating underachievement: What have we eliminated?
Tools for Schools

Do we have structures and process for building leadership capacity?

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy 10

Consider your Budget a Moral Document

Are we managing material and human resources effectively?

Where’s the time for all of this?

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.

The Full Year Calendar

Less Summer Vacation
Less Weekends, Holidays, & Summer Vacation

Less Professional Development Days & Early Dismissal/Parent Conferences

Less Class Picnic, Class Trip, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hannukah, Awards, Assembles, Athletics & Concerts

Less State and District Testing

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

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy 11
Go Back... Find the Time

Are we optimizing time...EXTENDING it for underachieving students and REORGANIZING it to better support professional learning?
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

Uncommon Sense

“We Can’t do it in 5 days”
Saturday Leadership Academies

- Reprioritize budget
- Voluntary participation
- Various topics to serve the needs of students families
- Operated largely by volunteers/partnered with local high schools and universities

Taft Elementary School

Build Leadership Capacity

Strategy 12

Use data to find the bright spots and change your school or district’s story

Do we have a data system that works for classroom and school leaders?

Build Leadership Capacity

Communicating
the bright spots
changes the story
others tell about
your school and
district.

The Critical Role of the Principal To Building Leadership Capacity

The Principal...

- Acknowledges that he / she cannot “go it alone,” recognizing the important opportunity others have to influence (lead) from various vantage points throughout the system.
- Shares decision-making authority and governance of schools
- Acts out of a commitment to equity
- Fosters interdependent relationships of reciprocal accountability with other stakeholders
RECAP and REFLECT

#10  Consider Your Budget: A Moral Document

#11  Go Back... Find The Time

#12  Use Bright Spots!

**A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:**

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

**Professional Accountability for Learning**

“Whatever it takes.”

Believe in success for everyone

**RECAP/REFLECT:** Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

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<th>WE.6.png</th>
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<td>Make Learning</td>
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<td>Make Leadership Happen</td>
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(Parrett & Budge, Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools, ASCD 2012, p. 78)
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

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William H. Parrett

William H. Parrett is the Director of the Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies and Professor of Education at Boise State University. He has received international recognition for his work in school improvement, high-poverty schools, alternative education, and for his efforts to help under-achieving students. His professional experiences include public school and university teaching, curriculum design, principalships, college leadership, media production, research and publication.

Parrett holds a Ph.D. in Secondary Education from Indiana University and has served on the faculties of Indiana University, the University of Alaska and Boise State University. As Director of the Boise State University Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies (1996 to present), Parrett coordinates funded projects and school improvement initiatives which currently exceed $10 million dollars annually. His research on reducing achievement gaps, effective schooling practices for under-achieving students, and turning high-poverty schools into high-performing schools has gained widespread national recognition.


Parrett’s media production, *Heart of the Country* (1998), is a documentary of an extraordinary principal of a village elementary school in Hokkaido, Japan, and the collective passion of the community to educate the heart as well as the mind. Since its release, the production was nominated for the Pare Lorentz Award at the 1999 International Documentary Awards (Los Angeles, CA); has won the Award of Commendation from the American Anthropological Association, a Gold Apple Award for best of category at the National Education Media Network Festival (Oakland, CA), a National CINE Golden Eagle Award (Washington, D.C.), and a Judges’ Award at the 24th Northwest Film Festival (Portland, OR). In addition, *Heart of the Country* was an invited feature and screened at the Cinema du Reel festival in Paris (1998) and the Margaret Mead Film Festival (1998) in New York City. This work has received critical acclaim for its cinematography and insight into the universal correlates of effective teaching and learning and the power of community participation in public schools.

Parrett has also served as visiting faculty at Indiana University, the University of Manitoba, Oregon State University, Hokkaido University of Education (Japan), Nagoya Gakiun (Japan), Gifu University (Japan) and Heilongjiang University (People’s Republic of China). His consultancies include state departments, boards of education, state and regional service providers and school districts in 43 states and 10 nations.

Throughout his career, Parrett has worked to improve the educational achievement of ALL children and youth, particularly those less advantaged. Toward this goal, as director of the CSI&PS, he has overseen the acquisition of over thirty million dollars in external funding to create programs and interventions designed to help educators, schools, communities, and universities benefit from research and best practice. These efforts have positively impacted the lives of thousands of young people.
Kathleen Budge

Kathleen Budge is the coordinator of the Leadership Development Program at Boise State University. She has led the development of this innovative, non-traditional preparation program, the purpose of which is to develop leaders who have the commitment and capabilities to lead schools where all students succeed. She also serves as co-director of the Idaho Leads Project, the goal of which is to prepare all Idaho students for success in the 21st Century by strengthen leadership capacity in Idaho K-12 schools and districts and enhancing the advancement of educational improvement in Idaho’s communities.

Kathleen also serves as an associate professor in the Curriculum, Instruction, and Foundational Studies Department where her research and scholarly activity focuses on educational leadership, leadership development, rural education, school improvement, and poverty. She has conducted numerous presentations at national and state conferences as well as published articles on these topics in such well-respected journals as The Journal of Research in Rural Education, Education Policy Analysis Archive, American Journal of Education, and Educational Leadership. She is co-author of Turning High Poverty Schools Into High Performing Schools (ASCD, 2012).

Kathleen earned her doctorate from the University of Washington in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in 2005. She was selected to participate in Leadership for Learning, an innovative, cohort-based program that emphasized the link between leadership and learning, as well as the development of leaders willing and able to address and redress issues of equity and social justice.

Her consultancies include state departments, boards of education, state and regional service providers, as well as school districts throughout the US; and she has served as visiting faculty for the Principal Academy facilitated by Advance Innovative Education in partnership with Louisiana State University. Dedicated to improving educational outcomes for all children, particularly those less advantaged, she has been instrumental in the acquisition of nearly five million dollars in grants and contracts to advance this aim.

Prior to joining the faculty at Boise State, Kathleen served as the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning at Educational Service District 113 in Olympia, Washington. She provided leadership to forty-five, predominately rural, school districts serving approximately 77,000 students. She led the development of a highly successful regional job-embedded professional development model and facilitated data-based improvement planning with more than 150 schools. Her leadership was recognized through being awarded the Washington Association of School Administrator’s (WASA) Regional President’s Award, the WASA Award of Merit, and the Washington Association of Educational Service Districts President’s Award for significant contribution to the state’s educational service agencies.

Additionally, she served as a Washington State Distinguished Educator/School Improvement Specialist providing training and consultation to superintendents, central office administrators, building principals and teacher-leaders in schools spanning grades preschool-12, and varying in size, demographics, and geographical location. She was a member of the Statewide School Improvement Technical Assistance Council and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Curriculum Advisory and Review Committee, as well as a contributing author to the School System Improvement Guide and the Washington State School Improvement Planning Guide both published by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in Olympia, Washington.

During her twenty-six years in P-12 education, she also served as a district curriculum director, an elementary principal, and an elementary and special education teacher. She continues to maintain that her most important and significant work has been teaching first graders to read.