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

Start With An Honest Review of Data / Set Improvement Goals

Is Attendance Important?

"An overwhelming majority of chronically absent kids are impoverished, dealing with such daily stresses as caring for siblings, high rates of disease, violence in the community, and frequent familial moves to find employment."

-Marc Cutillo

"Poverty’s Prominent Role in Absenteeism"
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?

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 40%.

Change in percent from 2007 - 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch</td>
<td>0% (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-6%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10%</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>11% and above</td>
<td>4</td>
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(Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2011)
K-12 Free or Reduced Meals in Texas

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

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.

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

Uncommon Sense

Engage and Empower Students in their community

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

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
Tools for Schools

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

RECAP and REFLECT

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

RECAP/REFLECT: Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Action</th>
<th>TOX YAY</th>
<th>YES YAY</th>
<th>AND NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build Leadership Capacity</td>
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A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

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

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

Are we Perpetuating Underachievement: What have we eliminated?

USING THE STUDY GUIDE: PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Step 1: Skim Chapters 9 & 10
Step 2: Discuss the problem-based scenario at your table.
Step 3: Decide what you would do and provide a rationale?

Mini Case: “Dee Dee” Northland Middle (44% Low Income)

Dee Dee has taught 9th grade technical reading and writing for “ever.” Few students like the class – many decide to pay a $120 fee to take the required course online from a statewide digital learning academy. Long tenured, Dee Dee does the minimum. She never volunteers for activities and doesn’t seem to have much passion, if any, for her teaching, the kids, her colleagues or the school.

She says she has 6 more years to retirement. Her kids earn A’s, B’s, and C’s as long as they go to class and turn in assignments. When they take the 10th grade State Reading and Writing test….30% of them every year don’t make proficiency.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? WHY?

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

A Common Understanding of Excellence in Teaching

Good teaching is a “core set of teacher acts” that tend to be more evident in what students are doing than in what the teacher is doing.

–Martin Haberman

How Youth Learn