Turning High-Poverty Schools
Into High-Performing Schools

12 High Leverage Strategies

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.
- **Conduct a review of your transformation plan** in light of the information provided.
- **Be compelled to take informed action** to better meet the needs of underachieving students living in poverty.

Revisiting Four Areas of Transformation Plan

- (4) Job-embedded PD designed to ensure effective teaching and capacity to implement the school’s strategies
- (6) Use of data to select and implement a research-based instructional program
- (7) Use of individual student data to inform and differentiate instruction
- (9) Strategies for continuous engagement of families and communities

Ask Yourself...
How Are We Doing?

Validate
Challenge to Improve

Now Available From ASCD
Who Are You?

Teachers
Principals
Central Office
Specialists/ISD/RESA/SDE

What Level?

★ Elementary School
★ Middle School
★ High School

Collaborate / Network!

What are Bright Spots?

• Successful Efforts Worth Emulating
• Illuminate The Road Map For Action and
• Spark The Hope That Change Is Possible.

Bright Spot Philosophy

Identify what’s working right now and how can we do more of it?

Kids Are Smart!

How well do you know your students?
Michigan 100

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

71 Graduate from High School in 4 Years

42 Enroll in College in the Fall

28 are Still Enrolled in the Sophomore Year

18 Graduate w/in 6 Years
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?

STEP 1: READ FORWARD
STEP 2: JOT DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE QUESTIONS:
• What significance does Mike’s message have for you?
• What questions does it raise for you?

STEP 3: TABLE TALK

Connecting

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

STEP 1: 
STEP 2: 
STEP 3: 

High-Poverty / High-Performing Schools

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

Poverty vs. Achievement in Illinois Elementary 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

Lapwai Elementary
Lapwai, ID

2005 Dispelling the Myth Award Winner
Lapwai Elementary

- 312 Students K-6
- 79% Low-income
- 84% Native American
- Outperformed the state in 4th grade reading and math 2003 – 2006
- Native American students outperformed the state in 4th grade reading and math 2003 – 2006

“If it can happen at Lapwai...it can happen anywhere.”

Brenna Terry
Lapwai School Board Member
2006

Making Gains at Lapwai
Grade 4

Taft Elementary School
Boise, ID

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

William H. Taft Elementary
William H. Taft Elementary
Reading Scores, 3rd Grade

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.

Osmond A. Church School
PS / MS 124
Queens, New York
2007 Dispelling the Myth Award Winner

Osmond A. Church School
PS / MS 124
Port Chester, NY
2006 Dispelling the Myth Award Winner

Osmond A. Church School
PS / MS 124
English Language Arts Scores, 2012

Source: New York State Education Department, 2013

Port Chester Middle School
Port Chester, NY

Source: GreatSchools.org, 2013
**Port Chester Middle School**

- 864 students in grades 6-8
- 73% Latino
- 7% African-American
- 64% Low-Income

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**Tekoa High School**

Tekoa, WA

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

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**Port Chester Middle School**

**Overall Test Scores Grades 6-8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Port Chester</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>85%</td>
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**And...At The District Level?**

**Tekoa High School**

Reading and Writing Grade 10

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Tekoa</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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.

Closing The Achievement Gap
Between White & Hispanic Students
Reading

Math

“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 TO LITTLE?" - PFEFFER & SUTTON, 1999

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION:

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

Actions

School Culture

Spheres of Influence

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance

Leading High Poverty Schools to High Performance
Start With An Honest Review of the Issues and Data

“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”

Is Attendance Important?

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

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?
**Fostering a Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment**

**Strategy 2**
Establish an Accurate Understanding of Poverty

- Generational Poverty
- Working-Class Poverty
- Immigrant Poverty
- Situational Poverty

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**Tools for Schools**

**Step 1:**
Scan Chapter 3

**Step 2:**
Use pgs. 35-39 to answer the first 6 questions on the survey

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**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)

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**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?

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**TURN AND TALK**

00:02:41

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

Mental Maps → Action / Strategy → Consequences

Expose 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 3

Do EVERYTHING Possible to Level the Playing Field

Have we developed an accurate understanding of the influence of poverty on student learning?

Using the Study Guide: Problem-Based Learning

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.

You are a member of a leadership team in a high-poverty middle school. Your school has a homework policy that requires students to complete and submit daily homework. If students fail to turn in their homework on time they are allowed one more opportunity at half-credit. If they fail to turn in their homework three times in a grading period, they are assigned to in-school suspension for one day. After failing to turn in their homework six times, students fail the course. Based on data analysis, students in your school who live in poverty are two times as likely to not turn in homework as students in your school who do not live in poverty.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? WHY?