Culture & Climate in High-Performing Urban Schools

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http://www.ncust.org
http://go.sdsu.edu/education
Variables that matter in typical schools and districts

- Race/Ethnicity
- Language background
- Family income
- Gender
- Zip Code
NCUST Celebrates and Studies schools that achieve excellence and equity

Non-selective elementary, middle, and high schools that evidence:

• High proficiency rates for all groups
• High graduation rates for all groups
• High rates of access to challenging programs for all groups
• Demonstrated success for English learners
• Low rates of suspension/expulsion for all groups
• Other indicators of student success/achievement
Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets.

Paul Batalden, Dartmouth University
In most American public schools, the “system” works perfectly to ensure the success of some students and works perfectly to achieve mediocre or poor results for other students.
Students for whom “the system” often works perfectly to ensure poor results

- Black, Latino, and Native American students
- Students in non-standard family units
- Students from families with low-incomes
- English learners
- Immigrant students
- Students with disabilities
- Students with behavioral challenges
- Students experiencing homelessness or frequent mobility
- Students perceived as different because of physical attributes, sexual orientation, or emotional needs
The schools we studied had systems that worked perfectly to ensure the success of every group of students they served*

* Based on multiple measures, to the extent disaggregated data were available
What do we see in the highest performing urban schools?

**FOUR PILLARS**

**Positive, powerful relationships** that create a culture and climate in which students want to learn and adults want to work.

**Challenging, rigorous curricula** that ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn the content taught in schools that serve affluent communities.

**Engaging, effective instruction** that is thoughtfully designed to maximize the likelihood that every student will master the curriculum.

**A culture of continuous improvement** that inspires everyone to examine their work and continuously seek opportunities to improve.
FOUR Pillars found in excellent and equitable schools

- Positive, Powerful Relationships
- Challenging, Rigorous Curricula
- Engaging, Effective Instruction
- A Culture of Continuous Improvement
Positive, powerful relationships

These schools:

1. Created systems in which students wanted to be at school and learn

2. Created systems in which adults wanted to be at school and contribute as part of a team that was making a difference in the lives of students
Creating a system in which students want to be at school & learn

Why is this essential?

Student success requires student engagement and effort.

When most of us were students, we wanted to engage in school and exert the required effort. Why?

Why is it that some students today are not likely to come to us predisposed to want to exert the required effort?
Creating a system in which students want to be at school & learn

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<td>• Help students feel empowered to nurture their own growth</td>
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Creating a system in which adults want to be at school & contribute

Why is this essential?

Student success requires the engagement and team effort of adults.

Why do you want to exert the required effort to work with your colleagues on behalf of students?

Why is that some educators today are not likely to be predisposed to want to exert the required effort?
## Goals

- Help adults feel known, cared about, appreciated, respected, and valued
- Help adults feel safe
- Help adults feel like they have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference
- Help adults know they belong
- Help adults feel intellectually challenged
- Help adults feel capable
- Help adults feel empowered to nurture their own growth

## Tools & Barriers

- Routines
- Policies
- Professional Development
- Collaboration Systems
- Feedback Systems
- Spaces
- Adaptations
Learn more at our 2016 Symposium

May 23, 24, 25

In San Diego, California

Register teams now at:
http://www.ncust.org