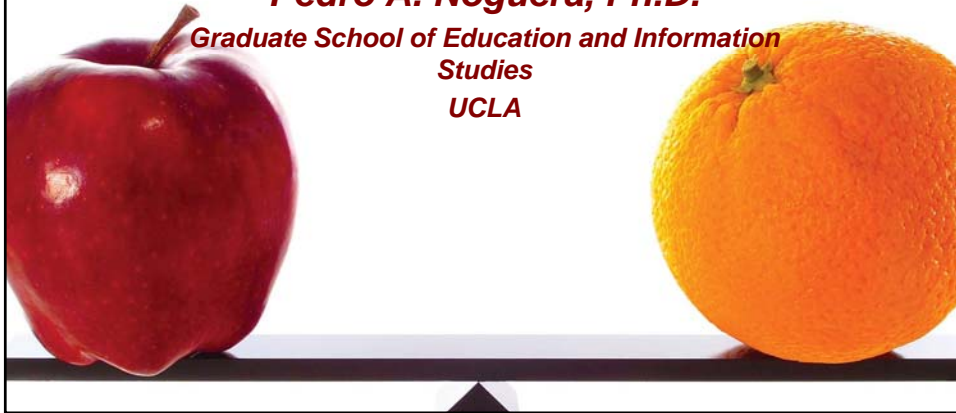


Excellence Through Equity

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I. Making equity central

- Equity is:
 - Giving students what they need to be successful
 - Academic and social
 - Recognizing that not all students are the same
 - They learn in different ways and at different paces
- Pervasive inequality makes pursuit of equity difficult but essential
- Staying focused on outcomes – academic and developmental

Equity is not:

- Lowering standards
- Treating all children the same
- Something only schools serving poor children of color should be concerned about
- Choosing which students to serve – disadvantaged or affluent

Obstacles to Pursuing Equity and excellence

- **Politics** – Lack of will to ensure that learning opportunities are available for *all* students
 - Access to good teachers, zero-sum perceptions
- **Tradition** – Practices that contribute to race/class disparities – tracking, special ed placements, discipline practices
- **Beliefs** – Low expectations, normalization of patterns, lack of internal accountability

Axiom #1

The primary responsibility of leaders is to ensure that conditions conducive to good teaching and learning are in place and that all children have the opportunity to learn.

What we know about the achievement gap

- It mirrors other disparities (health, income, employment)
- We have historically viewed genetics and culture as the cause of disparities
- External conditions affect academic performance (e.g. health, housing stability, poverty)
- Internal practices often increase disparities

Axiom #2

- The skills of the staff and resources available to the schools must match the needs of students

A framework for pursuing excellence through equity

- Child Development – A holistic approach to education and differentiated support
- Neuroscience – elasticity of brain makes it necessary to ensure that all students have access to deeper learning
- Context - Understanding and responding to the way students are affected by their environment
 - Family – Peers – Community - Society

Axiom #3

- We know we are succeeding in closing the gap when the backgrounds of students (race and class) cease to be predictors of achievement.

II. Case studies: Balancing technical and adaptive work

- Technical work - A focus on managing the operations of the system, insuring that procedures are working and that employees are in compliance with policy.
- Adaptive work - A focus on the dynamic and complex nature of the work, its substance, meaning and purpose. Work guided by a long term vision, with medium and short term goals. An awareness that we are trying to achieve our goals in a constantly changing environment
 - Ron Hieftz - Leadership on the Line

Five Principles of Courageous Leadership

- Courage to act
- Getting to your core
- Making organizational meaning
- Assuring constancy of purpose
- Building sustainable relationships

Key Adaptive Questions:

- What do we need to know to educate the children we serve?
 - What are their lives like outside of school?
 - How do they learn outside of school?
 - What motivates and interests them?
 - What challenges do they and their parents face?
 - What are their unmet needs that may impact learning?

Axiom #4

- The more you know about the children you serve the better you will be at meeting their needs and supporting their success.

Focus on the Five Essential Ingredients for School Improvement

- A coherent instructional guidance system
- Ongoing development of the professional capacity of staff
- Strong parent-community-school ties
- A student-centered learning climate
- Shared leadership to drive change

Brockton scholarship winners 2015



Key Elements of the Brockton Strategy

- Shared leadership
- Concerted effort to obtain buy-in around the strategy
- A coherent strategy focused on student needs
- Differentiated professional development
- Follow through, examining the evidence, sticking with it

Turn Around at Brockton High

- *“Brockton High School has every excuse for failure, serving a city plagued by crime, poverty, housing foreclosures, and homelessness... But Brockton High, by far the state’s largest public high school with 4,200 students, has found a success in recent years that has eluded many of the state’s urban schools: MCAS scores are soaring, earning the school state recognition as a symbol of urban hope.”*
- James Vaznis, Boston Globe Oct 9, 2009.

PS 28 obtains highest gains in literacy and math in Brooklyn -2012



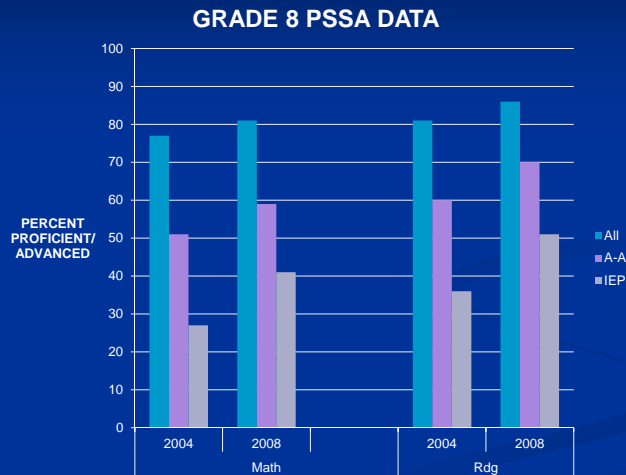
Key Elements of PS 28 Strategy

- Instructional leadership
- Parental support
- Community partnerships
- Ongoing focus on building the capacity of teachers
- Individualized support for students

Closing the Gap in Abington, PA

- Elements of the strategy
 - Access to and support in advanced courses
 - Data-based decision making – what’s working, what’s not?
 - Focus on getting interventions right
 - Continuous professional development
 - Engaging students through extra curricular activities and electives

Incremental Progress



III. Focus on evidence of learning

- Make expectations clear and standards explicit by modeling and exposing students to high quality work
- Utilize diagnostic tools to check for understanding
- Learn about their students interests in order to make their lessons culturally relevant
- Focus on motivation and engagement by soliciting feedback and questions from students
- Analyze student work with a focus on evidence of competence and mastery

Focus on Engagement

- Behavioral Engagement
 - Preparation
 - Persistence
 - Instrumental Help-seeking
- Cognitive Engagement
 - Deep Processing
 - Meta-cognition
- Affective Engagement
 - Interest
 - Value

Students in control of learning at Hollenbeck Middle School, LA

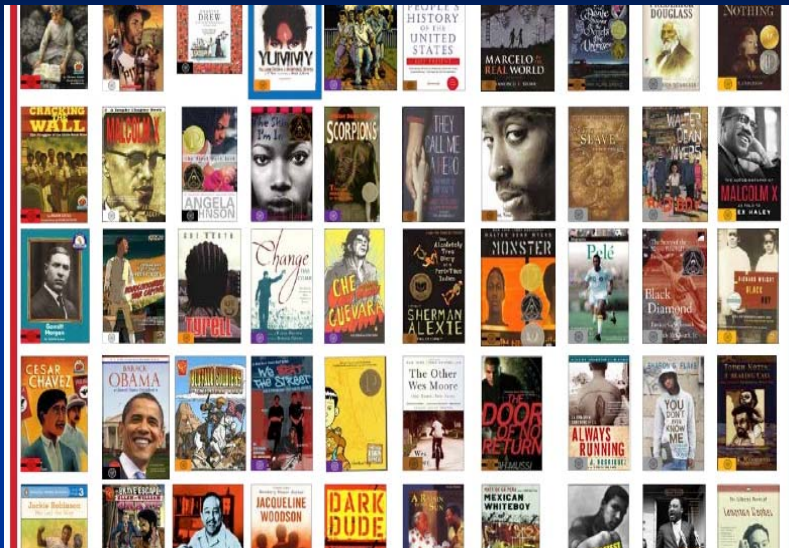


Keys to Success

- Teachers understand the external pressures students face and take that into account when working with students
 - Homework, family responsibilities
 - Draw upon funds of knowledge: View the community and parents as a resource
- Treat every assignment as a first draft
 - Real learning is in the revision
 - Real teaching is in the feedback
 - Homework is an equity issue
- Clear focus on life beyond school

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Reflection:

- What is your school doing to motivate and engage students?
- What is your school doing to support excellence in teaching?
- How do you address teaching across social boundaries?
- What are you doing to counter stereotypes?

IV. Need for a Paradigm Shift

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Old Paradigm<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Intelligence is innate■ Job of schools is to measure intelligence and sort accordingly■ Inequity in resource allocation: give the best resources to highest achievers■ Discipline used to weed out the “bad” kids | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ New Paradigm<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Intelligence and ability are influenced by opportunity■ It is the job of school to cultivate talent and ability among students■ Resources allocated based on student need■ Discipline used to reinforce school values and norms |
|--|--|

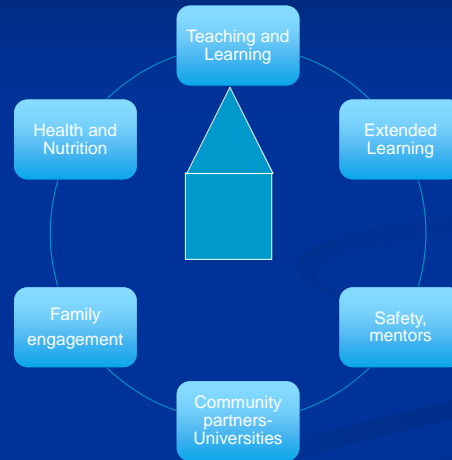
Bringing the work back

- What are the primary equity challenges in your school?
- What factors explain achievement patterns?
- Which “sub groups” are experiencing the greatest difficulties?
- Which of the key ingredients to school success should your school be focused on?
- What type of support will the central office provide so that greater progress is made?
- How will be priorities be established? How will benchmarks be used to monitor progress?

Focus on the Right Questions:

- Instead of focusing on how to raise achievement we should ask: How can we get our students excited about learning?
- Instead of focusing on how to prepare our students for state exams we should ask: how do we prepare our students to be independent learners? What will they need to know to be successful in this community/country?
- Instead of asking how to cover the curriculum we should ask: How will I make what I teach relevant and meaningful to students?

Embrace a vision for pursuing excellence through equity



Axiom #5

- There must be a sense of urgency about addressing disparities in achievement

for More Information:

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**Attend an Excellence Through Equity
Summit:**

ETESummit.org

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