Disrupting Poverty: Where to Start, What to Stop

Turn and Talk
What significance does the information have for you/your school?
What questions does it raise for you?

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.
- Prepare to take informed action to better meet the needs of underachieving students living in poverty.

Ask Yourself... How Are We Doing?

Percent of low-income students in U.S. public schools 2013

National Average 51%
*Percent of students who qualified for free and reduced-price lunches.
The Crisis We Face

No longer can we consider the problems and needs of low income students simply a matter of fairness.

Their success or failure in the public schools will determine the entire body of human capital and educational potential that the nation will possess in the future.

Without improving the educational support that the nation provides its lowest income students—students with the largest needs and usually the least support—the trends of the last decade will be prologue for a nation not at risk, but a nation in decline...

Southern Education Foundation
Research Bulletin: A New Majority

Nationally Recognized High-Poverty High-Performing Public Schools

North Godwin Elementary
Enrollment: 390
Ethnicity:
- Hispanic: 46.67%
- Caucasian: 23.85%
- African-American: 15.64%
- Asian: 2.56%
- American Indian/Alaska Native: .51%
- Multi-racial: 10.77%
Low-Income Students: 92%
North Godwin Elementary

4th Grade Students Proficient in Math on MEAP

And ... at the District Level?

Pass Christian Middle School
Pass Christian, MS

Blue Ribbon Award Winner 2012
Exemplary Inclusion Award, MDE Champions of Change 2015

Enrollment: 480

Ethnicity:
- Caucasian: 63.13%
- African-American: 27.92%
- Asian: <5%
- Native American: <5%
- Hispanic: <5%
- Pacific Islander: <5%
- Multi Racial: <5%

Low-Income Students: 69.4%

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Pass Christian Middle School

Students Grades 6-8 Proficient in Algebra I on PARCC Exam

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Pass Christian High School
Pass Christian, MS

Dispelling the Myth Award Winner 2013
Blue Ribbon Award Winner 2005
U. S. News and World Report Best High Schools; #1 Ranking in MS

Enrollment: 528
Ethnicity:
• Caucasian: 61.8%
• Asian-American: 3.6%
• African-American: 29.6%
• Multi-racial: 3.2%
• Other: 1.8
Low-Income Students: 61.9%

Students Grades 9-12 Proficient in Algebra I on PARCC Exam

Students Grades 9-12 Proficient in English II on PARCC Exam

“How many effective schools would you have to see... to be persuaded of the educability of children (that live in poverty)?”

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... We Know What Works

If one school can indeed overcome the pervasive effects of poverty on student achievement, shouldn’t any school be able to do the same?

What’s getting in our way? Whose interests are we choosing to serve?
How Well Do You Know Your Students?

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.

M. Schmoker,
A Chance for Change American School Board Journal April 2007
Sixteen Strategies

Foster Healthy, Safe, and Supportive Learning Environment
1. Eliminate Blame
2. Establish a Safe Environment
3. Develop an Accurate Understanding of Poverty
4. Level the Playing Field
5. Use Structures/Processes that Promote Relationships
6. Engage Parents/Families as Partners
7. Focus on Learning
8. Challenge the Pedagogy of Poverty: Develop a Common Instructional Framework
9. Teach Every Student to Read Proficiently
10. Confront & Eliminate Tracking/Ability Grouping
11. Provide Additional Quality Instructional Time
12. Promote Engagement and Ownership
13. Offer Job-embedded Professional Learning
14. Build Leadership Capacity
15. Consider Your Budget a Moral Document

Build Leadership Capacity
1. Go Back… Find the Time
2. Use Effective Hiring/Retention Practices
3. Confront & Eliminate Low Expectations
4. Consider Your Budget a Moral Document

Conclusions
Every school can overcome the debilitating effects of poverty...

...demographics do not equal destiny!

“...we can, whenever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of importance to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact we haven’t so far.”

Ran Edmonds, 1979

We must combat hopelessness and instill in EVERY child the self-confidence that they can achieve and succeed in school and in life.

What Do We Choose To Do?

Our students are waiting