

What Community Supplies: Building Partnerships and Systems of Support for Teachers and Students to Transform Schools

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I. Schools are influenced by their environment

- ✓ Safety, health, culture, political economy of local community have an impact on schools
- ✓ Broader demographic and economic trends also influence schools – immigration, globalization
- ✓ Schools must devise strategies to mitigate harmful effects of the environment and must draw upon community resources
- ✓ Educators must be resourceful to build the capacity of schools to meet student needs

Key Concepts



- ✓ Social Capital – students need access to influential people and networks
- ✓ Social closure – partnerships between school and home
- ✓ Cultural capital – students must learn to code switch and the “codes of power”
- ✓ Capacity Building – schools must develop the resources and expertise to meet student needs

II. 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

Key Adaptive Questions:



- ✓ What does it take to educate the children you serve?
 - ✓ What are their lives like outside of school?
 - ✓ How do they learn at home?
 - ✓ How do they use literacy and math? How do they solve problems?
 - ✓ What motivates and interests them?
 - ✓ What challenges do they and their parents face?
 - ✓ What are their unmet needs that may impact learning?

What skills and knowledge must the educators have to meet their needs?

III. What we know about youth development and student achievement

- ✓ Social and emotional needs affect academic performance
- ✓ Young people learn and develop through relationships with adults
- ✓ All children learn but not at same pace or in same ways
- ✓ Students who are bored and alienated generally do less well and are more likely to get into trouble
- ✓ Schools must engage students through culturally relevant practices

Vulnerable Populations:



- ✓ Black and Latino Boys
 - ✓ More likely to be referred for discipline
 - ✓ More likely to struggle academically
 - ✓ More likely to be influenced by adult relationships
 - ✓ Success contingent on support in learning environment

Vulnerable Populations: Immigrant Students



- ✓ Tend to be over-represented among successful and at-risk students
- ✓ Prior school attendance and fluency in native language is a significant predictor of school performance
- ✓ Class and educational backgrounds of parents is significant
- ✓ Acculturation process may produce conflict between students and their families
- ✓ Success contingent on social acceptance and skills of faculty

Students from households in distress



- ✓ Tend to receive less support at home and may act out due to unmet needs
- ✓ Respond well to structure and support in school
- ✓ Benefit from extended learning opportunities
- ✓ Behavior problems may overshadow academic problems
- ✓ Discipline must focus on character and cultivating self discipline
- ✓ Goal is to produce resilience – confidence + confidence

IV. Developing systems of support for students by developing the capacity of your school

- ✓ Step 1: Get to know your local community
 - ✓ Which major agencies involved in youth services?
 - ✓ Who are the most significant leaders (formal and informal)?
 - ✓ Where do your students go for recreation, healthcare, other services?
 - ✓ Which social institutions are most influential?
 - ✓ What are the greatest economic and social challenges confronting the community?

Actions You Can Take to Learn About the Community

- ✓ Ask local leaders to organize community tour for you and your staff
- ✓ Hold meetings with parents and community leaders at your school and in the community
- ✓ Obtain local data on community demographics, economic and social conditions
- ✓ Meet with local journalists

Step II: What are the needs of your students?

- ✓ Assess academic needs, health needs, safety concerns
- ✓ Use focus groups to learn about student interests and concerns
- ✓ Develop intake protocols for all new students to ascertain needs and interests

Actions You Can Take to Get to Know Your Students

- ✓ Make home visits
- ✓ Hold focus groups with students on a regular basis
- ✓ Ask teachers to solicit information about student interests
- ✓ Engage students in community mapping activities

Step III: Building School Capacity



- ✓ Conduct ongoing professional development for your staff on cultural competence
 - ✓ Classroom practice
 - ✓ Communication with parents
- ✓ Develop Community Partnerships for Children by Involving Key Stakeholders
 - ✓ Local government including courts, law enforcement, public health
 - ✓ Non-profits, churches, civic groups
 - ✓ Private Sector including small businesses
 - ✓ Parents

What teachers need to know:



- ✓ How to **motivate and engage** their students
- ✓ How to **build relationships** that support learning
- ✓ Subject content – teaching is **intellectual work**
- ✓ Pedagogical skills – how to **meet the learning needs** of students
- ✓ How to make curriculum **relevant and meaningful**
- ✓ How to **communicate with parents**
- ✓ How to **collaborate with colleagues** and seek help

Step IV. Transform schools by establishing clear goals and benchmarks

- ✓ Analyze existing academic data and social indicators with staff
 - ✓ Diagnostic data
 - ✓ Grades and test scores
 - ✓ Disaggregated by race, SES, teacher
 - ✓ Attendance and attrition
 - ✓ Discipline patterns
 - ✓ Health data
 - ✓ Community Asset Mapping and needs assessment

Implement the transformation plan



- ✓ Hold meetings with staff to achieve buy-in
- ✓ Set clear, measurable goals
- ✓ Identify resources you'll need to support your plan
- ✓ Establish a clear MOU with partner agencies
- ✓ Assess progress through ongoing evaluation
- ✓ Hold community meetings with parents, community partners and leaders

Key Principles



- ✓ Must aim for empowering students and their families
 - ✓ Linked to future goals – college and career
 - ✓ Problem posing curriculum focused on local, national and global concerns
- ✓ Must link poor communities to individuals and agencies with power and status
 - ✓ Bridging and Bonding Social Capital
- ✓ Must make it clear to staff that school will be accountable to the community you serve
- ✓ Must provide educational and social services based on high standards of quality

V. Empower Your Students by Demystifying Success

- ✓ Teach study skills
- ✓ Teach “codes of power”
- ✓ Provide samples of “good” work
- ✓ Provide students with opportunities to be involved in leadership and service activities
- ✓ Provide access to influential role models
- ✓ Discuss future plans early and expose students to options through internships and travel