Integrating SEL Schoolwide: Lessons Learned from High-performing, High-poverty Schools

Drawing from These Resources/Studies

Establishing the Conditions for SEL to Flourish

Poverty-disrupting Educators Establish the Conditions for SEL to Flourish

Our Proposition

Given the adverse impact poverty can have on the lives and learning of students, by necessity, educators in high-performing, high poverty (HP/HP) schools (HP/HP) attend to social and emotional learning together with academic learning to be effective.

Much can be learned from these successful schools about making SEL part of the ecosystem of the school.

The Importance of Networking

Who Are You?
- Classroom Teachers
- Coaches/Specialists
- PK-12 Administrators
- State Department Personnel
- Regional Service Center Personnel

What Level?
- Elementary
- Middle
- High School
- District Level

Poverty-disrupting Educators Establish the Conditions for SEL to Flourish

Working from CASEL’s Definition and competencies:

“The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.”

An ecological approach to SEL

“There is a pressing need for an approach to SEL that is more flexible and feasible to implement and adaptable to place-based needs, while still achieving meaningful outcomes for children” (Jones, Bailey, et al., 2017)

https://easel.gse.harvard.edu/
Twelve Nationally Recognized High-Poverty/High-Performing Schools

- Publicly available databases
- Greater than 60% low-income
- Better than state average for all students tested by state
- Initial sample of 51
- Narrowed to 12

Concourse Village Elementary School (3K-5)
E.I. McCulley Elementary School (PK-8)
Evergreen Elementary School (K-6)
Lillian Peterson Elementary School (K-5)
Parkway Elementary School (PK-5)
Pugliese West Elementary School (K-5)

East Garfield Elementary School (PK-4)
Murtaugh School (PK-12)
Stillman Middle School (4-8)
Henderson Collegiate Middle School (4-8)
Pass Christian High School (9-12)
The Preuss School UC San Diego (6-12)

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

Pass Christian High School
Pass Christian, Mississippi
9-12

Enrollment: 585

Ethnicity:
- White: 60%
- African-American: 30%
- Mixed/Other: 10%

Low-Income Students: 62%

Awards:
- Milken Educator Awards (Dr. Robyn Killebrew) 2018
- Ed Trust Dispelling the Myth 2013
- US Department of Education Lighthouse School Leader Award 2012
- US Department of Education National Blue Ribbon 2005

Stillman Middle School
Brownsville, TX

National Excellence in Education Award Winner 2017
* National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University
Stillman Middle School
Brownsville, Texas 6-8

Enrollment: 1,044

Ethnicity:
• Hispanic: 97.8%
• White: 1.5%
• African-American: 0.4%
• Mixed/Other: 0.3%

Low-Income Students: 86.6%

Awards:
National Center for Urban School Transformation
at San Diego State University - National Excellence in Education 2017 award

Concourse Village Elementary School
Bronx, NY

Enrollment: 309

Ethnicity:
• Hispanic: 65.4%
• African-American: 31.4%
• White: 2.0%
• Mixed/Other: 1.2%

Low-Income Students: 95.4%

Awards:
US Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Award Winner 2018
US Department of Education Exemplary High Performing school Award Winner 2018
ESEA National Recognized Title 1 Award Winner 2018
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 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

Focus on Adult SEL

Classroom Climates

Supportive School and Youth Voice and SEL Integration with Explicit SEL Instruction

CASEL’s Indicators of Schoolwide SEL

1. Explicit SEL Instruction
2. SEL Integration with Academic Instruction
3. Youth Voice and Empowerment
4. Supportive School and Classroom Climates
5. Focus on Adult SEL
CASEL’s Indicators of Schoolwide SEL

6. Supportive Discipline
7. A Continuum of Integrated Supports
8. Authentic Family Partnerships
9. Aligned Community Partnerships
10. Systems for Continuous Improvement

A Crosswalk: SEL and HPHP Schools

Integrating SEL Schoolwide:

Five Lessons Learned from Poverty-Disrupting Educators and Schools

Lesson 1
BEGIN WITH YOURSELF

Turn and Talk
3 minutes

What does it mean to you to be “comfortable in your own skin and come to work dressed for the work?”
Understanding Mental Maps/Mind-sets

- Images, assumptions, and stories carried in our minds that shape behavior and attitude
- Usually tacit until we examine them
- Can limit our ability to change
- Can be identified through inquiry/reflection

Stereotypes Can Get In Our Way

- People live in poverty because of individual deficiencies such as poor moral character or poor choices.
- People in poverty are lazy and have a weak work ethic.
- People who live in poverty are not as smart as those who do not live in poverty.
- Education as a way out of poverty is readily available to all.
- People in poverty do not value education.

“There is no neutral space in this work.”
(Milner, 2015, Racing to Class)

Taking Action

- Mentor
- Role Model
- “Intervener”
- Extended Family

The Gentleman’s Club...

Caring Relationships

The Preuss School
- Student Advisories
- Eight 90 min. classes weekly
- Same faculty for 6 years
- Additional time for literacy and math
- SEL-based curriculum

“Without question a key part of Preuss’s success with all our kids.”
Building Caring Relationships

Strengthening the Bond Between Students with School

Pass Christian High School

• 9th Grade Academy
• Strongest Teachers
• Caring Relationships and High Expectations
• Transition from 8th—9th grade

“It’s been a game changer.”

Ensuring Safety: Attending to Students’ SEL Needs

Lesson 3:
MAKE SCHOOL A SAFE PLACE FOR ALL

Make School Safe for All

• Restorative practices
• PBIS approaches
• Yoga
• Mindfulness
• Continuum of behavior support
• Trauma-informed practice

Make School Safe for All

Trauma-Informed Practices

Lillian Peterson Elementary

• Panther Den
• Oximeters/Heart Rates
• “Buddy Classes”
Work-life Balance

“I always preach to the folks about taking care of yourselves and your family first—and then we can take care of our children, the students here. I think there’s a real balance needed.”

Pete Selleck, Asst. Principal
Preuss School

Work-life Balance

“We stop communication on Friday night at 6 p.m. until Sunday at 6 p.m.

Warren Hoshizaki
Director of Education, District School Board of Niagara, Ontario CN

“Just stop. Leave everybody alone unless it’s an emergency. Help create a system of wellness.”

Marian Reimer Friessen
Director of Education, District School Board of Niagara, Ontario CN

Confront Your Brutal Facts

Swift, dramatic improvement requires an encounter with the “brutal facts”—those awkward, unpleasant truths that organizations prefer not to address—or even talk about.


Ensure Equity

Schools have become much more strategic in providing for students basic needs.

Leveling the Playing Field

- Food Pantry
- Backpacks
- Clothing Boutiques
- Community Schools
- Laundry Facilities
- Wrap-around Services
- Partnerships

Ensuring Equity

Trauma-Informed Practices

The Preuss School

“We have three counselors, two Ed-specialists, and family support specialist; none of that was here in our early years. I have always talked about the 4 Ds—Debt, Disease, Divorce, and Drugs and Alcohol—that affect every family. And now there’s a fifth D—Deportation and the fear associated with losing your parents, being alone, being constantly afraid.”
Ensuring Equity

A Classroom Equity Litmus Test—
• Homework
• Grading
• Classroom Assessments

A School-wide Equity Litmus Test—
• Teacher Quality
• Programming
• Outcomes

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Lesson 5:
EMPLOY A “PEDAGOGY OF POSSIBILITY”
FOCUSED ON THE WHOLE CHILD

Challenging the Pedagogy of Poverty

• Memorization
• Rote Drill and Practice
• Teacher Lecture
• One Chance to Learn
• Recall of Old Knowledge

Less

• Curiosity
• Engagement
• Choice
• Effort (try, try again!)
• Problem Solving
• Building New Knowledge

More

A “Pedagogy of Possibility”

A common understanding of good teaching is more common.

Concourse Village Elementary

• Classrooms physically structured the same way
• Agreed upon instructional strategies that all use
  – Collaborative Reading
  – Five-Step Problem Solving
  – Thinking Maps

“I vowed that if I ever had the courage to lead, I would create a place where children—no matter what teacher they end up with—would have a great year of learning, and they would feel safe, respected and loved.”
A “Pedagogy of Possibility”

“Goal Setting and Data Portfolios
• Set and track goals in LA, Math, and a SEL goal.
• Teachers conference w/ students once per month
• Principal meets with each 3-5 student annually

“To get better at ________, I could _______. One thing I am going to start doing is _______. I’ll start doing this on ______ and work on it until______. One way I’ll know I’m getting better is _______.”

Denton & Bechtal, 2013

A Pedagogy of Possibility

Pugliese West Elementary
• Project/Place-based Learning
• Steubenville Past, Present, and Predicted Future
• Work with business and community leaders to improve the community

“It empower the students. They feel like, ‘Oh, my gosh, these adults are listening to my ideas…they think I am important.”

Conclusions

1) Begin with yourself
2) Intentionally and explicitly develop relationships and community
3) Make school a safe place for all
4) Ensure equity
5) Employ a “Pedagogy of Possibility”

Five Lessons Learned

Integrating SEL Schoolwide

The Courage to Do What we Can

“It takes courage to face ourselves. It takes humility and a willingness to be vulnerable. It calls on us to have the courage to do what we can.

That may sound quite trite or inadequate, but when we pause to think about it, willfully doing what we can is incredibly powerful.”

p. 154

Act With a Sense of Urgency

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Believe in them. Tell them.