



Student-Centered Design for Excellence, Equity, and Belonging

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About Me

- Classroom teacher in Spokane Washington
- Math staff developer K-8
- Principal
- Principal Supervisor (Area Superintendent)
- Chief Academic Officer
- National Consultant with The University of Washington CEL (Central Office Transformation)
- Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
- Superintendent, Federal Way Public Schools
- Selected as One of the 25 Most Influential Leaders in the Seattle Area
- National Consultant, CEO The Scholar First, Lead Superintendent at AASA



Leadership Targets

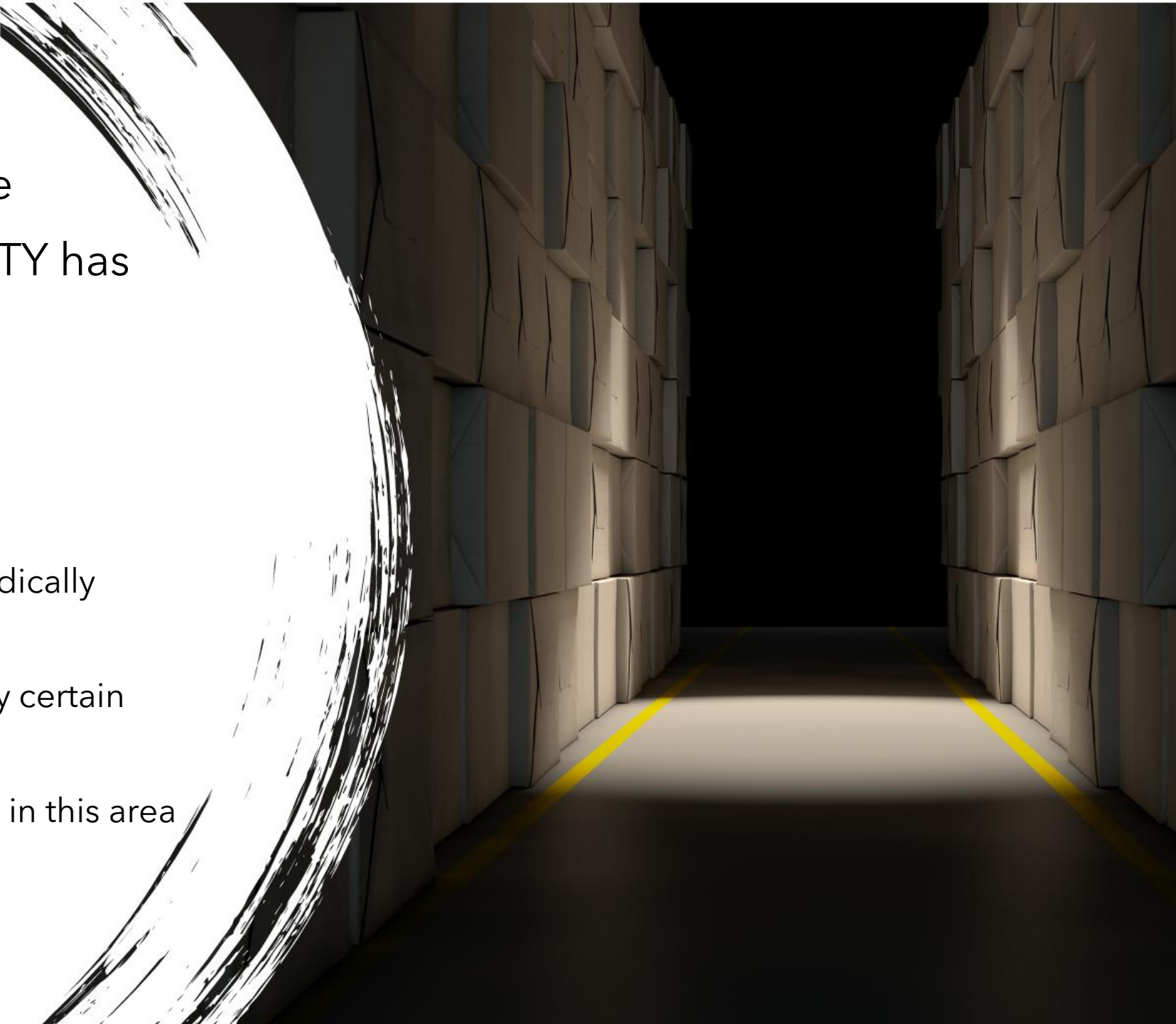
- Continue to disrupt traditional thinking about what equity is and how we lead for it as Superintendents
- Provide research to inform our strategy approach to this work
- Identify SEVEN indicators that your district is integrating equity and creating a gap closing culture



Boxed In

The very way in which we have described, and led for EQUITY has placed the work in jeopardy.

- Siloed
- Made it 1 or 2 people's work
- Talked about it or led for it episodically
- Neglected ongoing learning
- Linked the work to interest of only certain groups of students
- Superintendents over-delegating in this area



Moving Beyond the Word to Action...

Begin to unpack the word equity with phrases like:

- ❑ Instead of saying dismantling systems of oppression, share :
 - ✓ Creating culturally affirming communities
 - ✓ Removing barriers
 - ✓ Dismantling systems that limit or remove access to opportunity

- ❑ Instead of saying doing equity, share;
 - ✓ Removing barriers
 - ✓ Creating a culture of belonging
 - ✓ Closing gaps

- ❑ Instead of saying, examine privilege, state:
 - ✓ Learning to remove our blind spots to eliminate barriers for scholars
 - ✓ Seeing what is invisible to us based on our experiences

Share How ALL Students Benefit?

- ✓ Students of color
- ✓ ALL students
- ✓ Gifted students
- ✓ White students
- ✓ LGBTQIA
- ✓ Students with disabilities
- ✓ Multilingual students

FOUR BENEFITS (4 B'S) OF EMBEDDING EQUITY FOR OUR SCHOLARS

- Create a Deep Sense of **BELONGING**
- Demonstrate a **BELIEF** in the Limitless Potential for EVERY Scholar
- Removal of **BARRIERS**
- **BROADCASTING** Scholar Voice



The Right Conditions:

What Does The Research Say?

GOOD TEACHERS ARE GAME CHANGERS!

A student who drops out of school and grows a year older will achieve an overall effect size of up to 0.15 (developmental effects).

The best teachers without using any special strategies achieve an effect size of 0.4 (teacher effects).

So anything less than 0.15 is doing harm to students. Anything higher than 0.4 is accomplishing more than the best teacher possibly could without using that strategy.

When looking for highly successful strategies, we expect an effect size greater than 0.4.



These effects are large

*Any Strategy District's Have to Improve
Student Outcomes MUST Leverage
Principal Leadership!*

- Principal effects are nearly as large as estimates of teacher effects summarized in other work (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010)
 - Replacing a below-average teacher with an above-average teacher increases the average student's achievement growth by about 4 months of learning.
- Importantly: these are **average student-level** effects
 - Average elementary teacher's effect is felt by **21 students**
 - Average elementary principal's effect is felt by **483 students**

Principals' effects are large in magnitude.

Principals' effects are large in scope.

Comparisons between principals and teachers not "either/or"—principals' effects on student achievement come largely through ensuring students have effective teachers

Research on Districts That Succeed-- University of Chicago Consortium on School Research...

1. School and district organization drives improvement, and individual initiatives are unlikely to work in isolation.
2. Puts a premium on organizational structures and systems that work together to improve student learning and overall success.
3. If **EVEN** 3 of these five essentials were **consistently** in place at a **high level, and one was effective leadership, then schools were 10 times more likely to succeed:**
 - ✓ **Effective leaders**
 - ✓ **Collaborative teachers**
 - ✓ **Involved families**
 - ✓ **Supportive environments**
 - ✓ **Ambitious instruction**

Battelle Research on High Performing Districts

SUGGESTED PRACTICES	
☑	Identify five or fewer initiatives for the district; three or fewer for a building
☑	Develop rigorous rubrics, assess performance against the rubrics, and communicate results continuously
☑	Develop an implementation timeline to communicate expectations of new initiatives or practices for staff to understand “what success looks like”
☑	Provide teachers the time and support they need to master new practices
☑	Meet at least once a year to determine if initiatives are producing intended outcomes and if they should evolve, continue, or end
☑	Facilitate conversations with staff about creating a “not-to-do list”
☑	Focus teacher conversations on evidence related to student learning and how the staff will respond when students do not master material

Research on Effective School Boards

- High expectations and clear goals
- Belief that ALL children can learn
- Focused on achievement and student success
- Collaborate and communicate
- Data savvy
- Goals and resources aligned
- Team leadership
- Team Learning

Danger signs of ineffective boards

- Vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives
- Focus on external pressures as reason for lack of student success
- Micromanage day-to-day operations
- Disregard the agenda process and the chain of supervision
- Are slow to define a vision
- Are left out of the communication flow
- Receive little professional development as a team

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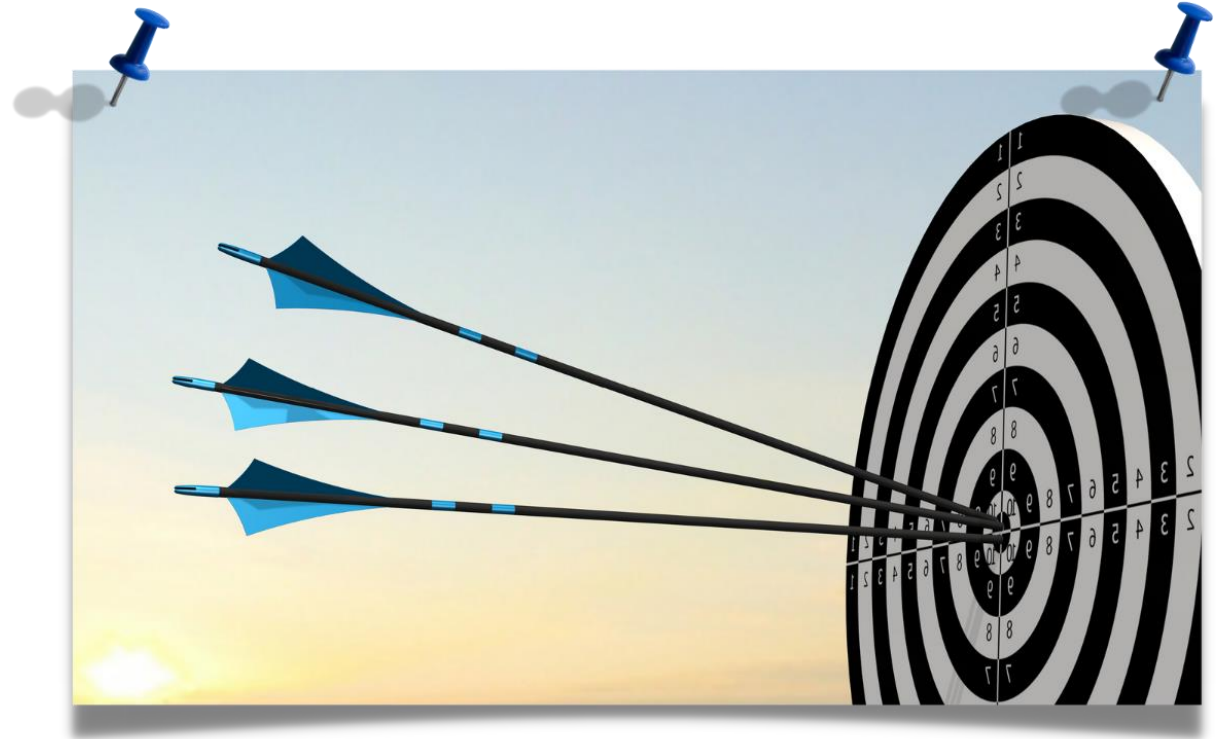
Misalignment

- Disparate and disconnected leaders acting upon their visions
- Calibration and collaboration are weakened



Alignment and Coherence

- Ready—Visioning with very specific student look-fors
- Aim---Theory of Action—What the systems must do to accomplish the vision and what we will count as evidence of success
- Execute--Strategic Plan/School Improvement Plan



7 INDICATORS



Not a recipe, but frames!

1. Student voice is viewed as an essential metric for improvement
2. An ongoing plan of learning for all staff focused on student belonging
3. Co-constructed vision of excellence with equity embedded
4. An articulated TOA that represents a backwards design of how to achieve the vision
5. A focus on systems and structures, not isolated events
6. Strategic Plan with student centered goals
7. Scheduled and designed cycle of progress monitoring and reflection for both school and district efforts



STUDENT VOICE IS VIEWED AS AN ESSENTIAL METRIC FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ✓ There is a system for listening to students at the school and classroom level
- ✓ Student voice participation is diverse
- ✓ Student insights are metrics of school and district improvement
- ✓ Leaders not only listen, they respond to student insights



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- ✓ Focus on blind-spots and barriers our children may face
- ✓ There are structures and a systemic and differentiated multi-year plan for multiple years
- ✓ Designated time for learning for Board, Cabinet and Principal Sessions
- ✓ Superintendent is strategically out front

**AN ONGOING PLAN
OF LEARNING FOR
ALL STAFF FOCUSED
ON STUDENT
BELONGING**



3

CO-CONSTRUCTED VISION OF EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Very specific description of an ideal daily experience of the student day
- ✓ 4-6 indicators
- ✓ Should encompass academic, social emotional and healthy identity development
- ✓ Should be co-constructed with your entire central office and principals, then socialized across schools and departments



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**AN ARTICULATED
TOA THAT
REPRESENTS A
BACKWARDS DESIGN
OF HOW TO ACHIEVE
THE VISION**

- ✓ If our teachers must backwards plan their lessons, then the central office must backwards plan school and district improvement.
- ✓ Built on the Vision of Excellence, equity is threaded throughout.
- ✓ Will inform the work of every department, principals and staff.
- ✓ Outline what the central office MUST Do!

From Our Vision to a Central Office TOA

Our Scholars



1. Are seen, heard, included and valued as assets and agents within the school and community
2. Are empowered to collaborate and share in decision making
3. Experience success that builds confidence in their future
4. Experience culturally responsive, real-world learning opportunities attentive to their learning styles
5. Are actively engaged and experience rigorous teaching and learning
6. Present their learning to peers, educators and relevant community members enabling their culture, interests and individuality to be affirmed and accentuated
7. Take an active role in using their authentic voice as architects of their own learning
8. Are challenged, supported and engaged in their learning socially, emotionally, and academically
9. Feel safe and loved with a sense of belonging



Scholar

- Then our scholars are seen, heard, included and valued in culturally responsive environments where they are challenged, supported and actively engaged with rigorous teaching and learning. Scholars are agents of their own learning and achieve at the highest level academically, socially, and emotionally so they are college and career ready graduates and future leaders.

⋮

Theory of Action

Excellence
through Equity

CENTRAL OFFICE SUPPORT

If the **central office team** leads the vision of excellence through equity across all schools and departments with a focus on enhancing systems of equity that focus on teaching and learning by:

Establishing a strategic focus on equity centered leadership and supporting culturally responsive schools

Using data, information and feedback to drive action and to lead the vision for excellence through equity

Creating ongoing professional learning opportunities to model district cultural norms

Hiring and retaining equity minded leaders and staff

Ensuring professional development for standards based cycles of inquiry across departments and schools

Establishing the space for innovation for excellence through equity

Providing for equitable distribution of resources and ensuring accountability

Authentically engaging staff, scholars, families and community

Creating a collaborative culture across departments and schools

PRINCIPAL

Then principals will:

Lead all staff in the development of an equitable, culturally responsive-sustainable environment emphasizing scholar voice as a focus

Use feedback and monitoring as a strategy, modeling expectations, designing systems and structures of collaboration and accountability

Select and retain equity minded staff

Create ongoing professional development

Use data to drive action and increase scholars' learning

Ensure the space for scholar voice to be practiced, strengthened, utilized and amplified

Actively support a positive learning culture to support all scholars and colleagues

EDUCATOR

Then all **teachers** and **support staff** will:

Seen, heard, included and valued in culturally responsive environments

Be empowered to collaborate and share in decision making

Create safe spaces and cultivate equitable, culturally responsive-sustainable environments

Employ research based, standards-based cycles of inquiry with systems of accountability for learning

Empower scholars to become agents of their own learning

SCHOLAR

Then our **scholars** are:

Seen, heard, included and valued in culturally responsive environments

Challenged, supported and actively engaged with rigorous teaching and learning

Agents of their own learning

Prepared to achieve at the highest level academically, socially and emotionally so they are college and career ready graduates and future leaders

5



**A FOCUS ON
SYSTEMS AND
STRUCTURES,
NOT ISOLATED
EVENTS**

- ✓ **Systems for adult learning**
- ✓ **Systems for school and district improvement**
- ✓ **Systems for human capital**
- ✓ **Systems for teaching and learning**
- ✓ **Systems for school resource allocation**
- ✓ **Systems for supporting the whole child**
- ✓ **Systems for communications**



CLARIFYING TERMS

Structures

- Organization charts
- Elementary, Middle, High
- Communication tree
- Report cards
- Interviews
- Behavior handbook (procedures)

Systems

- Hiring systems
- Grading systems
- TFL systems
- Professional learning systems
- Discipline systems

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STRATEGIC PLAN WITH STUDENT CENTERED GOALS

- ✓ Student centered goals instead of staff focused activities
- ✓ Tightly coupled with school improvement planning
- ✓ Equitable practices braided across every goal and strategy
- ✓ Multiple metrics for each goal, focused on academics, SEL, and healthy identity development

Strategic Planning with Student-Centered Goals

Goals	Metrics	Outcomes
Start Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WaKIDS• SRSS-IE• STAR• SBA• Unit Assessments• WIDA ACCESS	<p>Each student entering kindergarten will demonstrate social-emotional and academic readiness and meet or exceed grade-level standards in ELA and math by the end of third grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will demonstrate social-emotional and academic readiness when entering kindergarten• Students will meet or exceed grade-level standards in ELA and math by the end of third grade• Students will be proficient in English language development standards by the end of third grade
Culture of Safety and Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student surveys• Empathy interviews• SRSS-IE• Interest Inventory• Student data	<p>Each student feels culturally accepted, safe, seen, heard, and celebrated so they will contribute to a positive learning community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students feel physically & emotionally safe.• Students feel confident in social-emotional skills to collaborate with others• Students will feel culturally accepted, included, and celebrated
Rigorous and Relevant Learning Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student surveys• Digital Portfolios• HSAB Plan• Disaggregated Course enrollment	<p>Each student experiences rigorous learning that connects to the real world and their futures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students experience rigorous learning in all school spaces• Students are engaged in authentic learning experiences that connect with and contribute to their family, communities, and the world, and develop a vision for the future• Traditionally marginalized student groups are equitably represented in all programs, courses, and activities
Growth and Mastery of Priority Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Notebooks• STAR• Common Assessments• SBAC, WCAS, WIDA• Performance Tasks• Grades• HYS Hope Report	<p>Each student understands their strengths and needs to grow and achieve high levels of academic success to support their desired futures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can articulate and self-assess where they are in relation to priority standards• Every student meets or exceeds proficiency in grade/subject content areas• Students have hope and a vision to pursue their future
Pathways to Graduation and Beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HS GPA• Dual credit enrollment• HSBP Plan• CTE pathways• SBA/SAT/ACT• Algebra 1 and 2 achievement data• 9th grade on track• Student and parent survey data	<p>Each student successfully navigates pathways to graduate from high school prepared for their next step in education, career, and life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rigorous academic preparedness <i>**Students have the academic skills and can successfully complete rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum and experiences</i>• Opportunity knowledge <i>**Students research opportunities, set goals, make choices that support their long-term aspirations, and successfully navigate transitions to the next level</i>• Student agency <i>** Students believe in and activate their own potential, build relationships, persist through obstacles, and exercise their academic, social, emotional, and professional knowledge and skills</i>

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Operational Effectiveness is Separated.

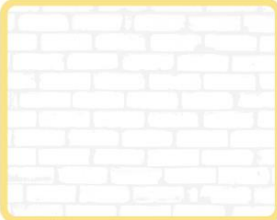
Foundations

Ongoing themes that support strategic goal areas



Family Partnership:

- Families are valued partners in their student's learning
- Families support their student's next steps in learning by understanding and advocating their strengths and needs
- Families are culturally accepted, safe, seen, heard, and celebrated



Communications:

- District staff are supported to share timely information safely, efficiently, and consistently
- Families and the Quincy community are informed, engaged, and take pride in our schools
- Students create and share school content with peers and the community

Teaching & Learning:

- Students experience engaging instruction and high levels of learning through evidence-based instructional practices in every classroom
- Students have equitable access to a guaranteed & viable curriculum that is culturally responsive and supports their growth and next steps
- District, school, and collaborative teams routinely use disaggregated, qualitative, and quantitative data to improve outcomes for each and every student



District Operations & Resource Stewardship (Under Construction):

- Fiscal/budgeting
- Facilities planning
- Safety
- Human Resources





Focus, Calendar and Monitor School District

- Scheduled time across the year to share disaggregated data on progress towards your goals
- Scheduled and structured protocol for principals to share progress on strategic plan goals
- Scheduled and structured time for central office leaders to share progress on TOA strategy work
- Celebrate small and big wins!

**SCHEDULED AND
DESIGNED CYCLE OF
PROGRESS MONITORING
AND REFLECTION FOR
BOTH SCHOOLS AND
DISTRICT EFFORTS**

These Approaches Support the Construction of a Student-Centered Culture of Excellence



- How we talk about the work, our students, our families...**words matter!**
- Our belief about our scholars
- Our actions across dimensions of diversity with scholars, families, and staff
- The urgency with which we act to support our students most distant from educational justice
- What we spend our time learning, leading, and measuring
- Our financial priorities
- Who do we center our decisions around
- Our outcomes shifting so that race, class and other exceptionalities are no longer predictive of student success

Finally...



If there were no students,
there would be no bus drivers,
office managers, para
educators, teachers,
principals, assistant principals,
counselors, behavior
specialist, executive directors,
superintendents, board
members...

Let's keep them at the center
of our WORK!