Pursuing Excellence *Through* Equity

Ten Principles and Practices to Promote Achievement for *All* Students

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Pervasive inequality makes the pursuit of equity difficult

- Equity is:
  - Addressing the needs of *all* students
    - Academic and social
  - Recognizing that not all students are the same
    - They learn in different ways and at different paces
- Staying focused on outcomes – academic and developmental

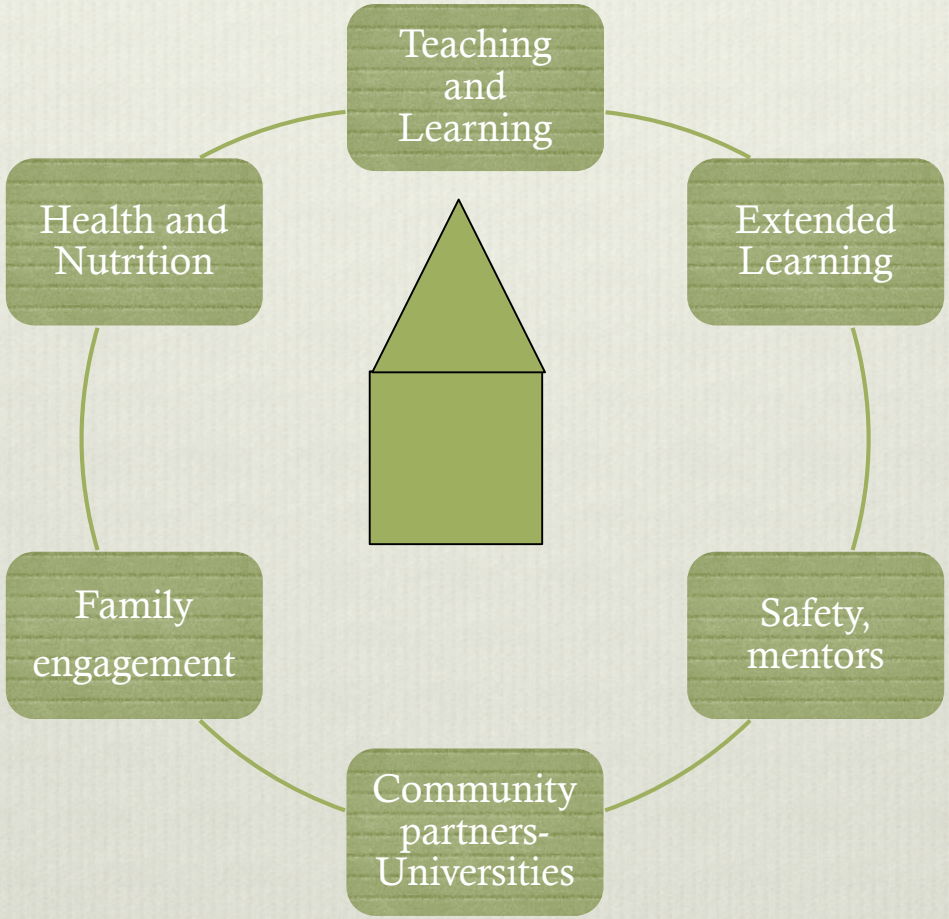
Pursuit of Equity Requires Focus on the Five Essential Ingredients for School Improvement

- 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

A framework for pursuing excellence through equity

- Child Development – requires a holistic approach to education and differentiation
- Neuroscience – elasticity of brain requires personalized approaches to learning
- Understanding and responding to the way students are affected by environmental context
  - Family – Peers – Community - Society

Build school capacity for excellence and equity



#1 - Challenge the normalization of failure. Race and class should not predict achievement.

- School/district vision must combine equity and excellence
- Challenge low expectations and complacency
- Mutual accountability among all stakeholders
- Data reveals if race, class, gender and language are predictors of achievement

#2 – Speak up for equity

- Educators must confront the ways in which some students are *denied learning opportunities*
  - Tracking
  - Teacher assignments
  - Special education
- We must implement strategies to support the most vulnerable students
  - – Black and Latino males, immigrants, special ed, homeless students, etc.

#3 – Embrace immigrant students and their culture

- The academic success of immigrant students is ofte contingent upon how they and their families are treated
  - Tend to be over-represented among successful and at-risk students
- Build on their language skills and knowledge acquired prior to arriving in the US
  - If they are literate in their native language they will perform better
  - Acculturation process may be stressful
- Work toward cultural/language competence among staff
  - Immigrant students must be integrated into school/community

Bronx Academy of Language and Technology

#4 – Provide students with clear guidance on what it takes to succeed

- Demystify school success: Teach study skills
- Show and explain what excellent work looks like
- Provide academic and postsecondary counseling
- Teach "code switching"
- Discuss future plans early
- Counter stereotypes by expanding horizons

#5 – Build partnerships with parents based on shared interests

- Key Ingredients
  - Train staff on how to communicate respectfully and effectively with parents across race/class differences
  - Organize a variety of events and activities for parental engagement and building trust
  - Provide clear guidance to parents on what they can do to support their children
  - Keep in mind: The most important form of parental involvement occurs at home

#6 – Align discipline practices to educational goals

- Get *buy-i*n from all staff on expectations, values and norms
- Address *underlying causes* of behavior problems
- Address social and emotional needs of students
  - Focus on ethics, *values and character development* and connect students to learning
- Employ adults with *moral author*ity
- Utilize consequences that are meaningful and *reconnect students to learning*
  - Restorative justice
  - Punitive vs. preventative practices

#7 - Re-think remediation, focus on acceleration

- Monitor learning progress and **intervene early**
- Provide extended **high quality** learning opportunities after school, summer school
- **Evaluate** remediation programs for quality and effectiveness
- Recognize that **homework is an equity** issue
- **Personalize interventions**
- Provide access to an enriched, rigorous curriculum with ample support
- Promote **mind set change** – hard work vs. innate ability

#8 – Implement evidence-based practices and evaluate for effectiveness

- Block scheduling to promote active learning and inquiry-based teaching
- Peer study groups (e.g. AVID) to reinforce achievement in student culture
- Literacy across content areas
- Promote involvement in extracurricular activities, advisories for personalization
- Proactive mentoring for students in need

Brockton scholarship winners 2014

#9 – Build partnerships with community to address student needs

- Universities – curriculum development, tutors, mentors, professional development for teachers
- Hospitals and Clinics: wellness, immunizations, nutrition, counseling
- Employers: internships, career academies, management support
- Community-based Organizations and Churches: outreach to parents, mentoring and tutoring
- Create opportunities for youth leadership and civic engagement

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

#10 Teach the way students learn rather than expecting them to learn the way we teach

Teachers must focus on evidence of student learning

- *Mastery* and *performance*

- Revise and resubmit work to improve results

- Active learning

- Reduce teacher isolation: Teachers must plan with their colleagues and reflect on their practice together
- Teachers must view the work produced by students as a *reflection* of their teaching
- Focus less on achievement and more on engagement

Students in control of learning at Hollenbeck Middle School in LA