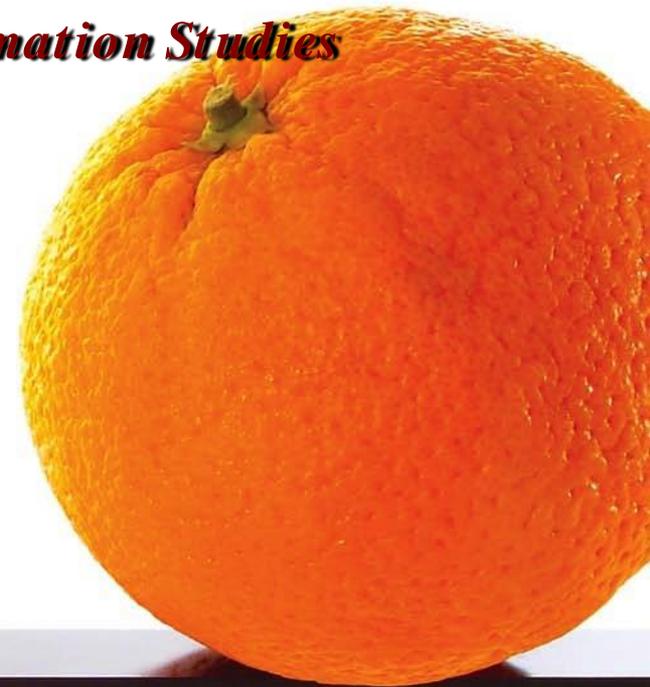


# **Excellence Through Equity**

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# I. Making equity central

- Equity is:
  - Giving students what they need to be successful
    - Academic and social
  - Recognizing that not all students are the same
    - They learn in different ways and at different paces
- Pervasive inequality makes pursuit of equity difficult but essential
- Staying focused on outcomes – academic and developmental

# Equity is not:

- Lowering standards
- Treating all children the same
- Something only schools serving poor children of color should be concerned about
- Choosing which students to serve – disadvantaged or affluent

# Obstacles to Pursuing Equity and excellence

- **Politics** – Lack of will to ensure that learning opportunities are available for *all* students
  - Access to good teachers, zero-sum perceptions
- **Tradition** – Practices that contribute to race/ class disparities – tracking, special ed placements, discipline practices
- **Beliefs** – Low expectations, normalization of patterns, lack of internal accountability

# **Axiom #1**

**The primary responsibility of leaders is to ensure that conditions conducive to good teaching and learning are in place and that all children have the opportunity to learn.**

# Essential Conditions for Teaching and Learning

- Safety and order – byproduct of relationships
- Respect, positive relationships – culture
- Clarity of purpose, shared mission
- High morale
- Student buy-in

# 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

# Axiom #2

- The skills of the staff and resources available to the schools must match the needs of students

# Brockton scholarship winners 2015



# Key Elements of the Brockton Strategy

- Shared leadership
- Concerted effort to obtain buy-in around the strategy
- A coherent strategy focused on student needs
- Differentiated professional development
- Follow through, examining the evidence, sticking with it

# Turn Around at Brockton High

- *“Brockton High School has every excuse for failure, serving a city plagued by crime, poverty, housing foreclosures, and homelessness... But Brockton High, by far the state’s largest public high school with 4,200 students, has found a success in recent years that has eluded many of the state’s urban schools: MCAS scores are soaring, earning the school state recognition as a symbol of urban hope.”*
- James Vaznis, Boston Globe Oct 9, 2009.

# Axiom #3

- We know we are succeeding in closing the gap when the backgrounds of students (race and class) cease to be predictors of achievement.

## 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 Hieftiz - Leadership on the Line

# Students in control of learning at Hollenbeck Middle School, LA



# Focus on Engagement

- Behavioral Engagement
  - Preparation
  - Persistence
  - Instrumental Help-seeking
- Cognitive Engagement
  - Deep Processing
  - Meta-cognition
- Affective Engagement
  - Interest
  - Value

# 50 Books for Boys

American Reading Company



# Axiom #4

- The more you know about the children you serve the better you will be at meeting their needs and supporting their success.

# Key Adaptive Questions:

- What do we need to know to educate the children we serve?
  - What are their lives like outside of school?
  - How do they learn outside of school?
  - What motivates and interests them?
  - What challenges do they and their parents face?
  - What are their unmet needs that may impact learning?

■

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



# Reflection:

- What is your school doing to motivate and engage students?
- What is your school doing to support excellence in teaching?
- How do you address teaching across social boundaries?
- What are you doing to counter stereotypes?

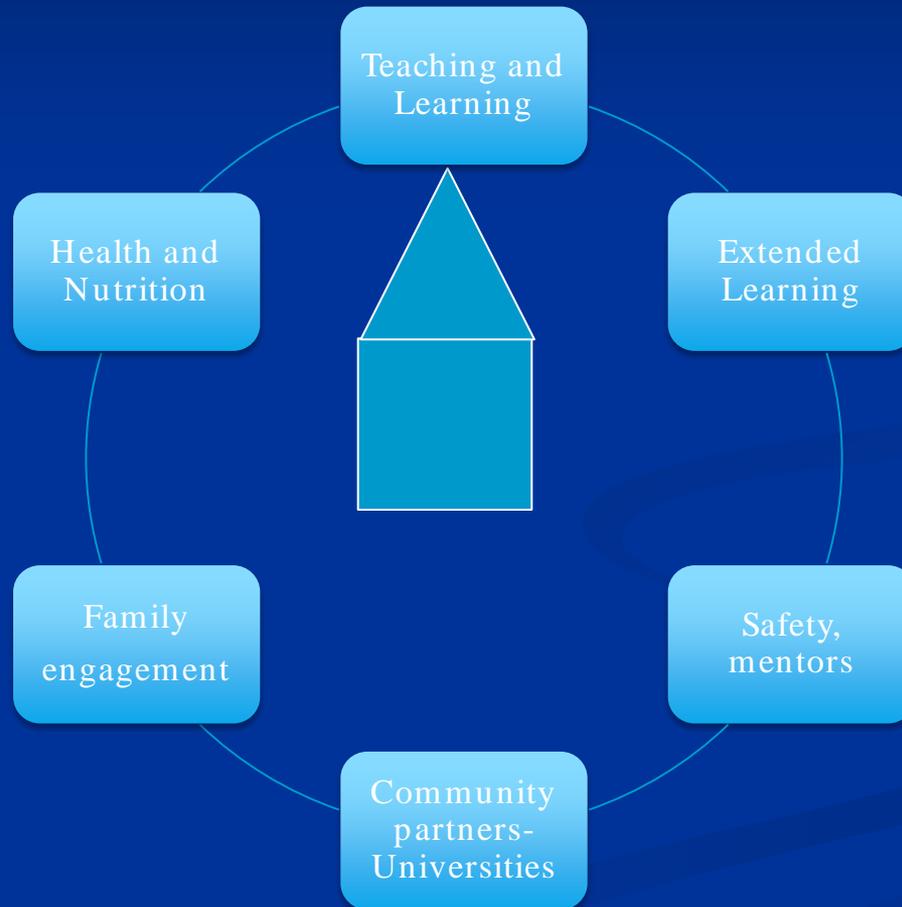
# Bringing the work back

- What are the primary equity challenges in your school/ district?
- What factors explain achievement patterns?
- Which “sub groups” are experiencing the greatest difficulties?
- Which of the key ingredients to school/ district success should your school be focused on?
- What type of support will the central office provide so that greater progress is made?
- How will be priorities be established? How will benchmarks be used to monitor progress?

# Focus on the Right Questions:

- Instead of focusing on how to raise achievement we should ask: How can we get our students excited about learning?
- Instead of focusing on how to prepare our students for state exams we should ask: how do we prepare our students to be independent learners? What will they need to know to be successful in this community/country?
- Instead of asking how to cover the curriculum we should ask: How will I make what I teach relevant and meaningful to students?

# Embrace a vision for pursuing excellence through equity



# Axiom #5

- There must be a sense of urgency about addressing disparities in achievement

# Five Principles of Courageous Leadership

- Courage to act
- Getting to your core
- Making organizational meaning
- Assuring constancy of purpose
- Building sustainable relationships

# for More Information:

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