Twelve Secrets of Success:
Proven Interventions to Increase Student Achievement of Poor and Minority Students

A Synthesis of Research on What Works In
High-Performing/High-Poverty Schools

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Building Leadership Capacity

Eliminate Practices That Manufacture Low Achievement

- Low Expectations
- Inequitable Funding
- Inappropriate Teacher Assignments
- Ineffective Instruction
- Tracking / Retention Pullouts
- Miss-assignment to Special Education
- Blaming

Understanding Poverty

- Poor Health Care/Nutrition
- Few Books/Computers
- Limited Vocabulary
- High Mobility
- Externally Controlled
- Often Single Parent
- Unchallenging Summer Vacation

Eliminate Practices that Manufacture Low Achievement

My school or district's progress toward countering:	BEGINNING			EMBEDDING			SUSTAINING		
	No Action Has Been Taken	Efforts Are Limited	Initial Results Are Being Gained	Efforts and Results Are Spreading			Practices Are Widespread, Policies Are in Place, and Results Are Increasing		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Unequal funding									
Low expectations									
Ineffective teachers									
Retention, tracking, and overuse of pullouts									
Misassignment to special education									
Blaming students and families									
"Bell Curve" mentality									
Fees for extra-curricular activities									
Settling for anything less than teaching every child to read									

Barr and Parrett, The Kids Left Behind, 2007; Saving Our Students 2001.

Critical Policy Questions

- Are we working to eliminate policies and practices that manufacture low achievement?

- Have we reorganized time to better support professional learning?

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2 High Expectations

- Every Child / Every Day
- Challenging Curriculum
- Challenging Assignments
- Monitor Student Progress
- Safety Nets

"Students live up to... or down to our expectations. There is nothing as powerful as high expectations"

SEEDS OF HOPE

- PRIDE: I am a worthy person, I am proud of my family and my heritage.

- CONFIDENCE: I can learn.

- BELONGING: I can find my place of strength, support and acceptance.

- SELF RELIANCE: I can influence my future

3 Extend Learning

- Start early: Preschool / full-day Kindergarten
- Extend day, week, year, graduation
- Summer catch up / acceleration
- Homework clubs / tutoring

"If a student is behind, they will never catch up without additional quality instructional time."

4 Ensure Effective Basic Skills Instruction

- Provide common instructional framework
- Intensive emphasis on basic skills, especially reading
- Re-organize K-3
- Use research based programs / strategies
- Elementary→ loop teachers / use data
- Secondary → interventions / student advisories / use data
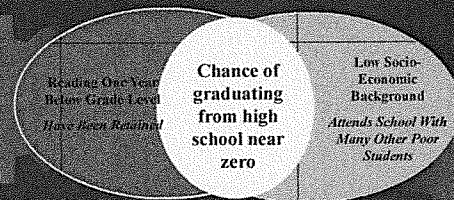- Targeted professional development for teachers

"Basic skills are the foundation of all learning, and nothing is as important as reading."

5 Teach Kids To Read

- Schools must stop "teaching reading" and teach students to read
- Students need to learn quickly and well
- Teachers must "name them" and "claim them"; they must monitor progress and do everything possible to elevate each student to the next level
- Employ literacy coaching

" It is not enough to double the amount of time that reading is taught"

Elementary Students At Risk

Chance of graduating from high school near zero

Reading One Year Below Grade Level Have Been Retained

Low Socio-Economic Background

Attends School With Many Other Poor Students

Increasing Achievement of At-Risk Students at Each Grade Level

US Dept. of Ed., 1989

Long Term Effects of Illiteracy and Learning Disabilities

- *Low levels of literacy are powerful predictors of welfare dependency and incarceration—and the high costs associated with these interventions.*
- *More than 1/2 the adult prison population has a literacy level below those required by the labor market.*
- *Nearly 40% of adjudicated juvenile delinquents have treatable learning disabilities that were overlooked and undiagnosed in school.*

Barr, R.D. & Parrett, W.H. *Hope Fulfilled for At-Risk and Violent Youth.* (2001)

Reading And Poverty

- 61% of low-income families have no books in their homes
- 43% of adults with the lowest level of literacy proficiency live in poverty
- 55% of children have an increased interest in reading when given books at an early age.
- Children with a greater variety of reading material in the home are more creative, imaginative and proficient in reading. They are also on a better path toward educational growth and development.
- There is only one age-appropriate book for every 300 children in low-income neighborhoods, compared to 13 book per child in middle-income neighborhoods.

Compiled by Matthew Emerzian and Kelly Bozz, McClatchy Newspaper, 2009

Effective Reading Programs for Middle and High Schools: A Best-Evidence Synthesis

Best Evidence Encyclopedia
www.bestevidence.org
www.bestevidence.org/words/mha_read_sep_16_2008_sum.pdf

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Instructional Focus
A Thought...

We will never teach **all** our students to read if we do not teach our students who have the **greatest difficulties to read**. Another way to say this is: Getting to 100% requires going through the bottom 20%."

Torgesen, Joseph K. A Principal's Guide to Intensive Reading Interventions for Struggling Readers in Reading First Schools. A Reading First Quality Brief (2005)

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All kids...
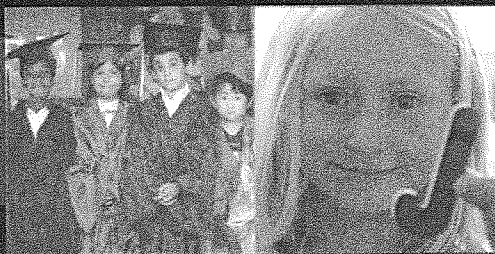
...want to learn how to read

Reading is when you know what sounds the letters make and then you say them fast. They come out words, and then you are reading.
R. J., age 5

You can read when you look at *car* and then you look at *can* and know you drive one and open the other one and there is only one eensy line different.
Shelby, age 6

It's when you read and nobody tells you the words. But you shouldn't do it in the bathroom. My daddy does and my mom yells at him.
Paulette, age 5

Words go in your eyes and come out your mouth...but it's not like puking or anything. You say the words and that means you're reading.
Loren, age 4

6 Remediation/Re-Teaching

- Create a time each day for enrichment, remediation, and re-teaching
- Create a time each week
- Accelerate!

"Every time we teach, some get it, some almost get it, and some do not get it at all and must be re-taught immediately."

Don't tell me you believe all kids can learn. Tell me how our district monitors student learning and responds to students who struggle.

Rick Dufour

Critical Policy Questions

- Do we have common instructional framework to guide curriculum, teaching, assessment, and the learning climate?
- Have we ensured that all students are proficient in reading?

7 Ensure A Personal Connection

- Ensure a personal adult connection for each student
- Develop a safe / welcoming atmosphere
- Student Advisories
- Create small learning communities
- Individually connect with each student...each day

"What at-risk children want at school more than anything else is a caring relationship with an adult"

What at-risk children want at school more than anything else...

...a caring relationship with an adult.

8 Engage Families/Parents/ Communities

- Two-way communication with families / home visits
- Hold family meetings regularly, provide food, childcare, recreation, computer use...whatever needed
- Teach families how to help their children learn
- Student led conferences

"Families living in poverty are often intimidated and/or uncomfortable in schools. Yet, when families and the community are involved, a significant spike in learning will occur."

9 Enrich Curriculum

"If a student is placed in a college prep curriculum and adequately supported; they will succeed."

- A rigorous college prep curriculum for all students
- Enrich secondary curriculum with career explorations/career themes / service learning
- Post High School Plans

" If we teach students algebra, they will learn it"

Critical Policy Questions

- Have we developed an accurate understanding of the influence of poverty on student learning?

- Have we fostered caring relationships and strengthened the bond between students and schools?

10 Employ A Proven Process of Improvement

- Effective grade / department level teams
- Intensive focus on data to identify problems / establish goals
- Plan interventions / monitor progress
- Meet regularly to review data / refine interventions
- Conduct audits

"If schools use data, establish goals, monitor progress, meet regularly to collaborate, and conduct audits immediate and dramatic gains can be expected."

Leading Improvement

Start With Data

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Set 3 to 5 Goals / Targets

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Meet Frequently / Monitor

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Mid-course Corrections

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Celebrate Progress

11 Teachers Make A Difference

- Teachers have an enormous impact
- Teachers must hold high expectations
- Teacher attitude makes ALL the difference; students will live up to or down to expectations.
- Support teachers with targeted professional development
- Organize for teacher collaboration

"I could not let that teacher down" "I had to get that teacher off my back"

12 Support Teachers

- Underachieving poor / minority students must have experienced, well-qualified teachers.
- Effective Instruction needs supervision / accountability
- Support lesson study
- Provide classroom coaches / support
- Foster teacher leadership

"The key to all students learning effectively is the classroom teacher. There is a massive gap between effective practice and actual practice."

12 Critical Policy Questions That Count

Build Leadership Capacity

• Do we have a data system that works for classroom and school leaders?

• Are we working to eliminate policies and practices that manufacture low achievement?

• Have we extended learning time for underachieving students?

• Have we reorganized time to better support professional learning?

Focus on Student and Professional Learning

• Do we have common instructional framework to guide curriculum, teaching, assessment, and the learning climate?

• Do we have common assessment and embrace assessment literacy?

• Have we ensured that all students are proficient in reading?

• Do we proved targeted intervention?

Foster A Safe, Supportive, and Healthy Learning Environment

• Have we ensured safety?

• Have we developed an accurate understanding of the influence of poverty on student learning?

• Have we fostered caring relationships and strengthened the bond between students and schools?

•Have we made an authentic effort to engage parents, families, and our community?

Compelling Conclusions

Eliminate Practices that Manufacture Low Achievement

What is my school's or district's progress toward eliminating:	BEGINNING			EMBEDDING			SUSTAINING		
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