Practical Strategies for School Climate Leadership and Action

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Center for School Climate and Learning

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Thank you for all you are doing

1. Thanks to Greg and his team for bringing us together today and for this opportunity to share some of our work with you

2. Thanks to each of you and the students, staff, parents who have participated in this California S3 initiative

3. Thanks to each of the other presenters you will be working with in the next few days for sharing their knowledge and expertise

It's all about the kids and this work

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"When we go out in the schools, meet the kids, the teachers and principals who are so committed to improving school climate, safety, and respect...it reminds me of why I got into this profession in the first place!"

Larry Taylor, New England College

Goals for this Session:

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1. Discuss how your schools can incorporate a three-tiered-approach into school climate leadership plans

2. Discuss "action strategies" that schools can use to address the needs of youth, sustain school climate leadership and drive improvement efforts beyond the S3 grant

3. Celebrate and share successful California S3 programs and strategies that showcase your work and highlight opportunities for statewide collaboration in the future.

Let's focus on the subtitle.

A Tiered Approach

- Tier 1: Individual/Interpersonal Level

- Tier 2 : Classroom/Instructional Level

- Tier 3: Systemic/ School-Wide Leadership Level

Tier 1: Individual/Interpersonal Level

"It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

When 'School Climate' Showed up on Our Radar: Student Interviews

We began this work in Maine in 1997 two years before Columbine- our interviews with MS and HS students showed:

- Many students had powerful grievances against other students (and adults) whom they felt were humiliating, threatening, bullying or harassing them.

- Many students would not approach adults about these problems for fear that they would only make things worse.

- Many students were socially isolated and marginalized... members of 'out-groups'---unpopular, non-athletic, gay or lesbian or racial minority students

- Several students told us that they got so mad at times at both adults and their peers that they had contemplated killing their tormentors, the adults who failed to help them, and themselves because they had lost hope that things would get better.

- Many students had powerful, practical ideas for improving their schools.

" To prevent another Columbine... look around the cafeteria for a student who always sits by himself " and go sit with him.

Advice to schools given by a girl whose brother was killed at Columbine.

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Strategy #1: Be The Change You Want to See

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Principals try to change teachers....

Adults try all the time to change bullies or unmotivated students...

The only person you can change is yourself!

Motivating the Unmotivatable

1. Teachers were invited to take a course called Motivating the Unmotivatable

2. They were told that "the only person you can motivate is yourself"… most stayed with it

3. The problem/challenge—develop a relationship with a "personally challenging" student.

4. Say "hi", look for strengths and interests, point out small successes, learn about his or her family, show the student and yourself that you care

5. Provide opportunities for "helping roles", empower the student with small tasks and then larger ones, offer feedback

6. Build a relationship so he/she might become comfortable coming to talk with you

7. Keep a log, journal, or do action research—reflect on the power you have to shape yourself

A Local Example- Todd Irving, Santa Ana

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Headline from yesterday's Sacramento Bee:

How a principal tamed a school out of control
He Focused on the Toughest Kids

- I think a more accurate headline would have been:

Principal change lives
Offers students with problems
dignity, high expectations, and hope.

School climate happens one teacher, one student at a time.

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We don't need fancy programs...we each have the power to make a difference in our students' learning and lives, even to save lives.

Tier 2: Classroom/ Instructional Level

The name of our center is the Center for School Climate and Learning because we see great teaching as one of the most powerful ways to improve school safety, climate, and respect.

Strategy #2: Use 21st Century Technology

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Like it or not...technology is one of the best ways to communicate with the (DIGITAL) natives!

Let's Try to Use the Technology

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Please take out your cell phone

Open Up a Text Message to 37607

Now text this poll number 9446 and your answer to 37607

Please share the 3 Most Powerful and Effective Strategies or Programs that your school has used to improve school climate.

EXAMPLE: *9446 listening to kids...lunch dances...Link Crew*

Use www.polleverywhere.com to seek your students' point of view!

How was classroom climate affected?

Strategy #3: Align School Climate Work with Efforts to Improve Student Learning

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How many of your colleagues would like to work on improving school climate if they didn't have to join any new committees ?

No new committees!

- A major practical advantage of linking School Climate Improvement with Improvement in Teaching is that you can work on both things at once!

- You can't separate school climate from learning. This is simply the work we all do as educators everyday.

School Climate and Learning: California is Leading the Way!

Your state leaders have confirmed the connection!

"multiple dimensions of school climate were found to be significantly associated with student academic, behavioral, and socioemotional well-being …. the association between climate and achievement has been confirmed in data from California public middle and high schools (Hanson, Austin, & Zheng, 2011)."

A Climate for Academic Success (2013) Adam Voight, Gregory Austin, Thomas Hanson

Strategy #4: Pick More (and different) Students

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How many of you have seen the same 5-6 students collect all the awards at graduation?

Invite students who need these opportunities to participate!

"Picking Kids"…. changes (and saves) students' lives

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- My student Lexi validated this strategy for me last week!
- She personally witnessed her 4th grade brother's life change when he "got picked" to be a student leader on his school's Civil Rights Team
- "picking students" to play meaningful, powerful roles is so simple, yet can often be life changing for students
- See Jerome Freiberg's work on classroom roles in urban HS's

Strategy #5: Use the power of ROLES

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Remember Zimbardo's Infamous Stanford Prison Simulation Study, August, 1971? Jane Elliot's Blue Eyes Brown Eyes Study? Mardi Gras!

How can using "roles" change everything?

Compare student and teacher ROLES in these classrooms

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Classroom #1

- Motivation is considered to be extrinsic, students are routinely given rewards and punishments to elicit motivation and compliance

- Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued

- Curricular activities rely primarily on textbooks and workbooks

- Students are viewed as "blank slates" onto which information is etched by the teacher

- Students primarily work alone

Classroom #2

- Motivation is considered to be intrinsic, adults recognize each students' intrinsic curiosity and motivation to learn material that is relevant and rigorous

- Pursuit of student questions and interests is highly valued

- Curricular activities rely heavily on posing problems, primary or web-based resources and manipulative materials

- Students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world

- Students primarily work in groups

Strategy #6: Focus on Respectful Teaching

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Too often schools focus primarily on stopping or punishing disrespect or compliance

We can choose to use strategies that build respect

RESPECT

Empowerment

Choices

Engagement

Personalized Learning

Relationships

Compliance

Norms

Non-Compliance

Bullying

DISRESPECT

Hate Speech

Harassment

Threats
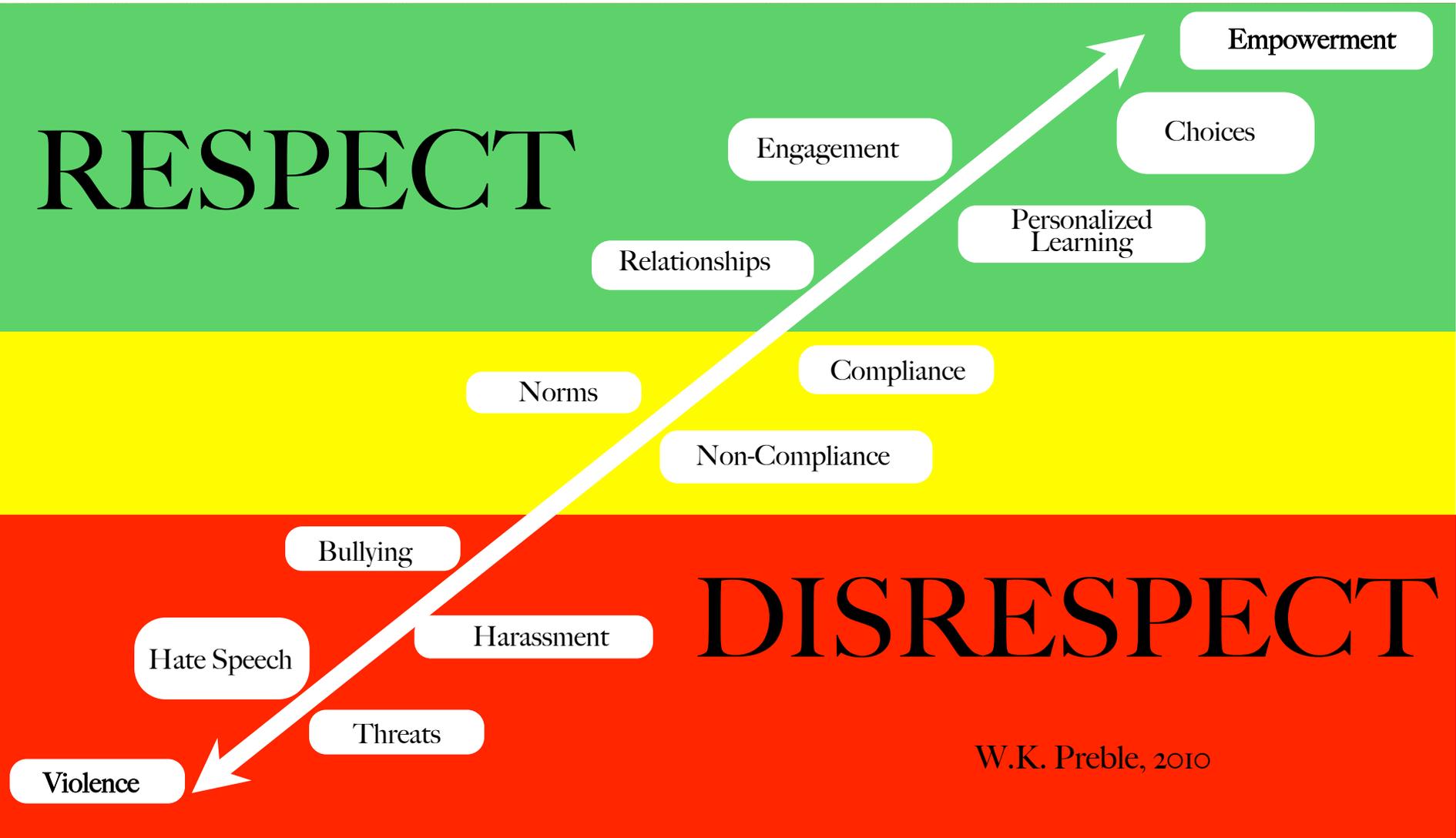
W.K. Preble, 2010

Violence

From Violen
A Res

The Respectful Teaching 'Three-fer'

"Respectful teaching" simultaneously results in:

1. Improved school climate
2. Deeper student engagement
3. Higher student achievement.

Strategy #7: Use Brain Research to Guide Practice

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Students' Brains Need:

- Relaxed Alertness
- Immersion in complex, challenging environments
- Personalized feedback and opportunities for reflection

Specific Strategies for Respectful, Effective Teaching

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- "Relaxed Alertness" – threat free, stress-free learning environments… setting up the optimal conditions for learning is all about changing school climate!

- Complex, engaging student and teacher roles.
  - from student as "sponge" to student as "worker"
  - from teacher as "teller" to teacher as coach or "coach"
  - From teaching as "transmitting information" to teacher as "expert guide" to new understandings

- Strategies to simultaneously address academic and school climate concerns
  Universal Design, Teaching for Understanding (UbD), problem-based learning, project-based learning, authentic learning and assessment, inquiry-based learning, service-learning, cooperative learning, more independent study, more flexible TIME for learning, increase choices of topics to study, choice of forms of assessment, and more on-line learning options.

Discussion

- What are some of the pros and cons of working on school climate and effective teaching at the same time?

- Would this work in your school? Why or why not?

Tier 3: Systemic, School-wide Leadership Level

Much of the work you have been doing so far with S3 seems to fall within this level

California S3 Strategies and Programs

I saw four main strategies that your schools have been using for S3:

1. Data Collection on School Climate

2. Professional Development of Adults

3. Youth Advisory Councils

4. Peer Leadership Programs

What programs or strategies have worked best for you?

a. How many of your schools have used your S3 grants to provide additional professional development?

b. How many of your schools have used your S3 grants to develop youth advisory councils?

c. How many of your schools have used your S3 grants to develop Peer Leadership programs like Safe Schools Ambassadors, or Link Crew.

d. What were the programs or strategies that you listed as most effective?

    (Let's try to see if our POLL worked!)

## Strategy #8: Use Data to Understand School Climate and Guide Action

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S3 began by gathering School Climate Data
- How has your school been using these data?
- Have you used your data for staff reflection, decision-making, empowerment, taking action?

Strategy #9: Shift Power Relations

This strategy works at all three levels!

If there is ONE strategy that you commit to using to change school climate and increase the chances of success it should be this!
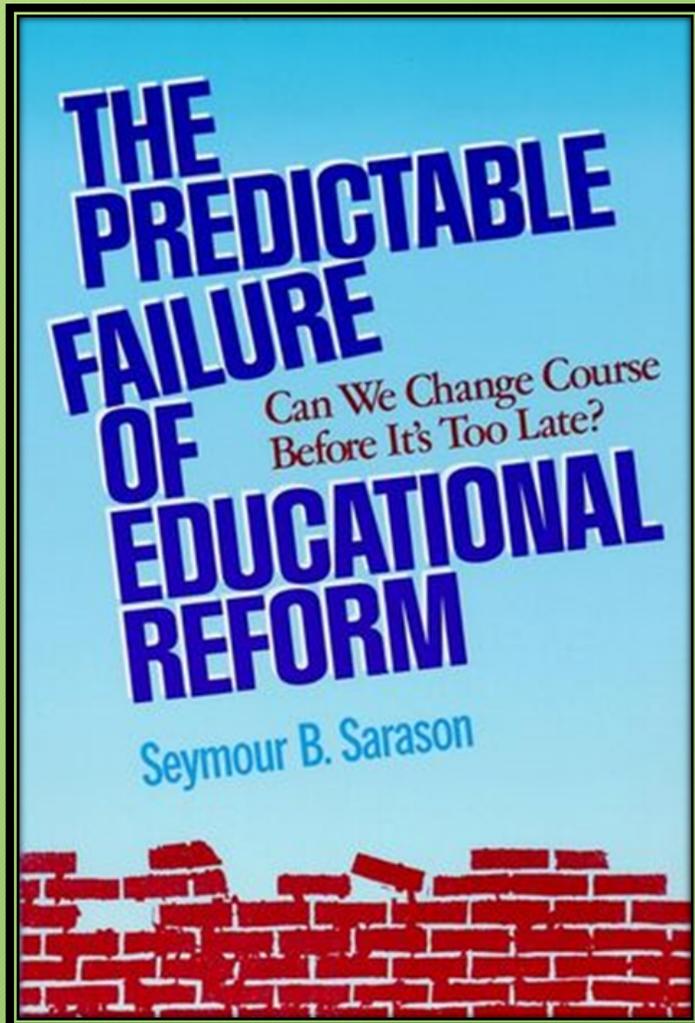
Powerful research on educational reform tells us ...

The majority of our reform efforts over the past 40 years have failed...not enough time, resources, or they use the WRONG PROCESS

Sarason's research can help us predict strategies that will work and those that won't ...

THE PREDICTABLE FAILURE OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Can We Change Course Before It's Too Late?

Seymour B. Sarason

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Effective programs had this in common…

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- Sarason's meta-analysis of 40 years of federally funded school reform initiates showed that while most initiatives failed to achieve positive effects, those initiatives that were successful and effective…

ALL CONTAINED SOME KIND OF SHIFT IN POWER RELATIONS IN THE DESIGN.

Clemson's research is so important.

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adults are more open to change when they work collaboratively with students

When we work collaboratively with young people on school reform it brings out the best in teachers... they remember why they became teachers to begin with.

Strategy #10: Professional Development is Designed for ADULT Learners

Bill Bryan's Research on Adult Needs

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S3 Common Strategy: Professional Development

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- The most common strategy that you have used in this improvement process is Professional Development

- 50 out of 58 S3 schools used resources from the grant to support Professional Development Workshops

Analyze PD in your school
Tenants of Adult Learning --Bill Bryan (2012)

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- Effective professional development meets these needs of Adult Learners
- Has the professional development provided through S3 met these needs?
- ADULT LEARNERS NEED:

- Learning is highly relevant, i.e., linked to personal and/or professional goals
- Opportunities to make choices in the selection of learning activities – self direction and pacing
- Knowledge and skills that are practical and immediately applicable
- Opportunities to share personal life experiences with others are part of the process
- A focus on hands-on, practice-related activities rather than theory
- Opportunities to work in teams and to converse with others

- Opportunity to be and feel more competent in handling real-life tasks or problems
- Freedom to question and challenge what is presented
- A process that is highly engaging, is inquiry, project, or discussion based
- Opportunities to receive timely and meaningful/constructive feedback
- A process that is positive and encouraging
- To be accorded a high level of respect
- Opportunities for being active – mentally and physically

Discussion:

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1. How close do the PD experiences you have had through this S3 process come to meeting the Needs of Adult Learners?

2. Would your students be more motivated, more engaged and more successful if your school applied these tenants of adult learning to your students?

This work *seems* simple but it takes time

- Andover's Long Range (5 year) Planning Process
- On-site Graduate Courses for teachers
- Using technology tools for teacher collaboration/ communication and learning
- Collaborative Action Research on themselves
- Developing positive, collaborative Adult Culture is a whole other topic we need to discuss openly
- This work goes far beyond bullying and compliance!

"If you are thinking a year ahead, sow seed.
If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree.
If you are thinking one hundred years ahead, educate the people."

adapted from "If you give a man a fish"...by Anonymous Chinese poet, 420 B.C.

The Key to Sustainability is Commitment

I would like to ask you each to think of ONE IMPORTANT THING that you will publically commit to doing to keep this work alive and growing in your school or community over the next few years.

Please share your commitment with someone else.

Can we hear a few of your commitments before we go?

IN CONCLUSION

- You are all doing great work...the trick will be to keep it going!

- You don't need lots of money to sustain your efforts...just your commitment

- You have the power to stay connected as a community, to support, train, and share your expertise with one another and with other schools

- The challenge of sustaining this work offers a great opportunity for leadership for each one of you and for your students and school

- Do Site Visit to each others' schools with your colleagues and students to celebrate one another's success stories and to see this work in action

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If you would like a copy of this powerpoint

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