

#1 THEY TEACH THEIR STUDENTS.

- Educators think deeply about what their students need to learn and how to make sure they learn it --- not 'for the test' but 'to be productive members of society.
- Teachers don't stop teaching just because the state tests have been given.
- The verb 'to teach' is used properly --- if teachers say that they taught something, that means their students have learned it.

THEY EMBRACE ACCOUNTABILITY.

- "They know they have an obligation not only to their students but to their communities to demonstrate that they are doing the job entrusted to them – to educate future citizens."
- 'I'm a coach. That's what coaches do – they scout out other teams and find out what they're doing and steal any good ideas they find.'
- "Most are quite open about sharing the data with the students themselves, explicitly teaching students that poor performance on an assessment simply means that the students and teachers need to work harder and more effectively, not that the students are in some way deficient and incapable of learning."

THEY MAKE DECISIONS ON WHAT IS GOOD FOR KIDS, NOT WHAT IS GOOD FOR ADULTS.

"A school system is only as strong as the weakest school."

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

"We've created plans for each child... We are almost at a point where we have an IEP for every child."

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

"creating a culture of achievement ... '**to focus every decision on student achievement**' "

CENTENNIAL PLACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Atlanta, Georgia

"In addition to developing the data sets on each child and each classroom, the school substantially beefed up its support of teachers. **Each teacher has two individual conferences with the principal** a year, one in the beginning of the year and one in January. The teachers bring their data, student work, planned projects and lessons, and they explain how they will make sure each of their students meets state standards....

'They know that not meeting state standards is not acceptable.' "

CENTENNIAL PLACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Atlanta, Georgia

" 'You raise the bar for the adults, and then you raise the bar for the children.' "

Superintendent Hobbs

FRANKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Frankford, Delaware

“This kind of individual diagnosis, support, and thoughtful instruction is the strategy that had worked to get almost every student meeting state reading standards and Brittingham expected it to bring up the math as well.”

FRANKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Frankford, Delaware

“Keeping focused on improvement means there is always work to be done.”

M. HALL STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Philadelphia, PA

“To make sure students are learning what is expected, teachers administer regular assessments, including short ‘checkpoint’ tests every two weeks and district wide ‘benchmark’ tests every six weeks. Any child who is failing behind is identified and is the subject of a meeting with teachers, Adderley, and the parents. The team leader will videotape a few minutes of the child within the classroom so that all team members – including the parents – have a full picture of how the child is functioning. They then agree to particular teaching strategies or interventions...meet again in 30 days to evaluate whether those interventions are working or whether others are needed.”

M. HALL STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Philadelphia, PA

“ ‘It’s not in the things. Things help. But when the change occurs, it’s because of what the staff does.’”

WEST JASPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, West Jasper, Alabama

“...during the next walk through of the third-grade classrooms in a month, observers should be able to see teachers making sure more books were in the hands of the children and instruction that followed the plan laid out in the data meeting...”

WEST JASPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, West Jasper, Alabama

“...the teachers never said that the kids were the problem...the excuses that often permeate schools where most of the children are poor – excuses saying that poor children don’t bring as much background knowledge to school as middle-class children and that children of color often bring a ‘culture of low achievement’. The common thread of these teacher excuses is that ‘learning depends on the kids and not on them’. But she countered ‘God forbid a six-year-old’s learning depends on him.’”

WEST JASPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, West Jasper, Alabama

“...to get their teachers to understand that prestige should accrue to teachers not because they teach the ‘best’ kids but because they teach the children most in need of good teaching.”

WEST JASPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, West Jasper, Alabama

“...the idea that the role of teachers and schools is to make sure each child learns. As East Millsboro’s Brittingham said, ‘If you can predict who is going to have some difficulty, we in this business should figure out some way to help that child.’”

EAST MILLSBORO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, East Millsboro, Delaware

“Toward the end of the year Albano sits down with each teacher to discuss every child’s progress.”

LINCOLN ELEMENTARY, Mount Vernon, NY

“a culture of high expectation where every student is expected to behave well and perform well, and where every teacher is expected to teach well.”

ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

“Throughout the school, the emphasis is on instruction – instruction by teachers of students and by administrators of teachers.”

ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

“...discipline problems are not a constant plague..... ‘We don’t cut anyone. ...The child who is involved in music or sports is more successful. It is part and parcel of a full education.’ AP Mary Hannon “Other teachers refer to the full set of afterschool activities as Elmont’s ‘hidden curriculum’.”

ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

‘But I don’t want to be compared to minority schools, but all schools.’ ‘Our first goal is to improve academic achievement. Our second goal is to create an atmosphere of civility and respect. Our third goal is to get the word out. I’m tired of having people keep saying we can’t succeed.’ Capozzi

ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

“‘It’s not a matter of can we – it’s a matter of how we can.’ The fact that so many of the children live in poverty is not used as an excuse.” Principal Shirley

OAKLAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Russellville, Arkansas

“Although children who are behind know they need to catch up, Shirley said that they don’t feel discouraged or stigmatized because ‘everybody knows what direction they’re going in’. Lead teacher Liz Mullins said that the teachers tell the children, ‘It’s our job to get you all to the train station.’”

OAKLAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Russellville, Arkansas

“She <principal Shirley> said that it is important for a principal to ‘acknowledge that change is hard. Change is feeling uncomfortable. However, only by changing can we assure students are successful in the future.’”

OAKLAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Russellville, Arkansas

“the idea that high standards were not just for students but for teachers as well”

UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS SCHOOL, Worcester, Massachusetts

“But, Shanker said, the effect of an external exam, such as the national exams taken by students in many countries, is to produce a partnership between the teachers and the students, where **teachers are the resources students need in order to master a difficult objective**. In preparing for an external exam, students see teachers with high standards not as cruel and arbitrary taskmasters but as people who can really help them – **something like hard-driving coaches who help their players win a big game.**”
UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS SCHOOL, Worcester, Massachusetts

“ ‘Wherever you go in urban public education, you will hear excuses – ‘you do not know our kids’ or ‘we haven’t enough money or computers or facilities.’ Here we figure if you allow excuses, you take yourself out of the equation as a possible solution. So we have a no excuses policy.’” Teacher McDermott
UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS SCHOOL, Worcester, Massachusetts

“University Park, in other words, is demonstrating that schools have the power to help all kids learn to high levels, even students who enter already behind. English teacher McDermott is unsurprised. ‘We know what works in education. The research is prolific. Amazingly, then, the question today is not about what works, but about why we do not implement what we know works in all school for all kids.’”
UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS SCHOOL, Worcester, Massachusetts

“Said Stephanie Ryan of the teachers, ‘They respect you, and letting them down is like letting your parents down.’ Echoing that thought, junior Dan Sargent said, ‘It goes straight to your head and to your heart.’” “It is a culture of support and respect.”
UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS SCHOOL, Worcester, Massachusetts

“She <Atlanta’s Superintendent, Beverly Hall> expects constant improvement, and unlike the AYP is figured, she counts every student who is at Capitol View on the day of the test.”
CAPITOL VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Atlanta, Georgia

“...began with the NY state assessments and the clear recognition that the adults in the schools were not performing their jobs as well as they could.”
PORT CHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, Port Chester, NY

“ ‘The kids have to be the first priority,’ said Broems, ‘You have to be open enough to see that it’s not about the teacher but about the learning of the kids.’”
PORT CHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, Port Chester, NY