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Setting the Stage for Success: Empowering At-Risk Students

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Setting the Stage for Success: Empowering At-Risk Students

This proposal relates to social and emotional skills by sharing effective practices of student empowerment, student leadership skills and goal setting skills that have contributed to the success of at-risk students in an inner city school.

Teachers and school leaders will gain an understanding of how students in an inner city, Title I elementary school have used goal setting, data tracking, and leadership habits to empower their learning and set the stage for student success. Participants will also learn how these practices have enabled students to participate in student led parent conferences.

The presentation will focus on the strategies that one inner city, Title I elementary school has used to empower students to set goals, track data and progress, and develop leadership habits. Specifically, participants will gain an understanding of they can use practical methods to set school level goals, grade level goals, classroom goals and individual student goals. Additionally, we will share data tracking methods that have proven effective for our students; we will provide real world examples of the data notebooks that we use in our school. We will also share how we use leadership habits to help students develop leadership skills. We will share with the participants how we have “leaderized” our environment, and how we have embedded leadership language and practices such as growth mindset into our everyday language and environment. Furthermore, we will share how we have worked to develop a community of learning to support student growth and achievement that expands beyond the school walls. The main objective is to offer participants real world examples of how these practices have shifted the focus of learning from a teacher centered perspective to a student owned perspective. We will describe how these practices have helped our school to earn various rewards for high growth in student achievement. Participants will be able to identify how they can use some of these practices in a personal or professional setting. Participants will be given an opportunity to ask questions, take a “virtual tour” of our school, and review artifacts of learning related to goal setting, tracking progress, and student led conferences.

Our school has been awarded the Gold Award for high growth in student achievement from the Governor’s Office of School Accountability. Additionally, our school is one of very few in the state of Georgia that have a CCRPI score above 70% with a student population of 100% free and reduced lunch and over 90% African American. We have been able to contribute much of this success to the fact that students have started taking ownership of their learning through setting goals, tracking progress and using data to inform their learning and practices. Not only do students know where they are but they also know where they need to go and how to develop a plan to help them get there. We use various habits of leadership to help them develop the skills to set goals and overcome obstacles. Furthermore, we embed the language of a growth mindset in all of our work; we encourage students to develop action steps to reach goals in order to further support the growth mindset theory. In addition, students use all of their data to lead parent conferences. Students are able to identify their strengths and areas for improvement as well as describe strategies for continued success. The theoretical underpinnings of the aforementioned practices are embedded in transformational teaching where students and teachers create a shared community of knowledge and meaning making to develop personal growth and learning.

Dr. Sarah Mayberry has been an educator for 15 years. For the past 13 years, she has been a school library media specialist. She is passionate about student learning and creating a culture of leadership for all students. Dr. Mayberry has an Educational Doctorate from Georgia Southern University, an Education Specialist from Georgia College and State University, a Masters of Instructional Technology from Georgia Southern University and Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Georgia Southern University.

Mrs. Jas'Min Coates has been an educator for 12 years. She has taught third and fourth grade and a variety of subject areas. Jas'Min enjoys finding innovative ways to incorporate technology in her classroom. Mrs. Coates has a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education from Wesleyan College, a Masters of Educational Technology from Grand Canyon University, and a Specialist in Education from Grand Canyon University.