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Promoting Resilience and Community in a High-Poverty Urban School

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PROMOTING RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY:
A PURPOSE DRIVEN SCHOOL
AGENDA

- A Purpose-driven School: The Gift of Empowerment, Engagement, and Equity (Dr. Kimberly Mack)
- Research Foundations of John P. Parker School (Dr. Martha Hendricks)
- Global Environmental Literacy in Practice (Dr. Mack and JPP Teachers)
- Engaging our Parents and Community (Pamela Knox)
- Testimonial – Community Connectors (Deborah Elkins-Brown)
PURPOSE-DRIVEN SCHOOL: THE QUESTION???

How do we engage elementary students to promote resiliency, citizenship, and critical thinking skills, while raising student achievement?
A NEW PARADIGM

- Make research-based, systematic shifts.
- Operate daily with focus and intention.
- Address the needs of the Whole Child.
  - Head (Intellect)
  - Heart (Socio-emotional Strength)
  - Hand (Citizenship/Service)
  - Health (Health and Wellness)
  - Home (Family and Community Engagement)
WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN IN POVERTY?

- Learners from High Poverty Environments
  - Authoritarian Parenting Style
  - Disadvantaged before birth
  - Less verbal exposure
  - Poor sense of agency
  - Low executive function
    - (Birdsong, 2016)
WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN IN POVERTY?

- By comparison of children at age 3, there are differences between children from homes of disadvantaged populations and their counterparts. (Lareau, 2003)
  - Words and IQ
    - Disadvantaged youth – 525 words and IQ 79
    - Other – 1,100 words and IQ 117
WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN IN POVERTY?

- Encouragements and Discouragements
  - Disadvantaged
    - 178/hour
    - 75,000 encouragements
    - 200,000 discouragements
  - Professional
    - 487/hour
    - 500,000 encouragements
    - 80,000 discouragements
A NEW PARADIGM IS NEEDED.

- Developmental Assets
- Growth Mindset & Grit
- Positive School Culture & Strengths
- Academic Engagement – New Program
DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

• Developmental Assets
• Search Institute identify **40 positive assets** that kids need to be success.
• Grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention, it identifies:
  • Relationships and opportunities they need in their families, schools, and communities (**external assets**)  
  • Social-emotional strengths, values, and commitments that are nurtured within young people (**internal assets**)
DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS (CONT.)

- **External Assets**
  - Support
  - Empowerment
  - Boundaries
  - Constructive Use of Time

- **Internal Assets**
  - Commitment to Learning
  - Positive Values
  - Social Competence
  - Positive Identify

**Belief:** Resilient children have developmental assets in place.
GROWTH MINDSET & GRIT

• Growth Mindset & Grit
  • Fixed mindset
    • Belief that your abilities such as intelligence or talent are fixed traits that cannot be changed.
  • Growth mindset
    • Belief that most basic abilities can be developed through dedication, diligence, hard work, and grit.

Belief: Our learners can develop their abilities with hard work and grit.
VIA CHARACTER STRENGTHS

- Values in Action organization identified 24 character strengths that are common in successful people
  - Take character strength survey (viacharacter.org)
  - Identify personal strengths
  - Celebrate strengths.
- Promote through lessons and Advisory training.
POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

• Based on the research of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports focused, we focus on teaching learners how to engage in a positive culture.
  • 3 rules
    • Be respectful.
    • Be responsible.
    • Be safe.
  • School-wide Orientation (first 3 days of school)
    • Teach expectations in all areas of our school.
    • Exhibit posters that show expectations for school areas.
POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE (CONT.)

- Monday Morning Meetings (20 minutes)
  - **Purpose**: Celebrate learning and each other.
  - Agenda includes:
    - Dancing (Cha-cha Slide and The “Nae-Nae”)
    - Presentations about classroom learning.
    - Showcase character strengths with class presentations about the 24 character strength (Values in Action)
    - Lion Leader Awards to one learner per class
    - Reminders about Positive School Culture and Anti-bullying

- Teacher Treasure Box & Roar Store
  - Reward appropriate behavior
  - Remind learners about expectations
ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Cincinnati Public Schools implemented an equity and access policy, which resulted in the Vision 2020 Focus for Neighborhood Schools.

- Offer specialized programming in neighborhood schools similar to magnet programs.
- Level the playing field between magnet and neighborhood schools.
- Increase interest in neighborhood schools.
WHY JOHN P. PARKER SCHOOL?

• Deficit thinking was pervasive throughout the school community.
• Behaviors were inappropriate.
• Low test scores
• Little community support for the school
  • Community strategized to change the school’s population.
    • Invited a charter school to move into the community to deplete enrollment.
    • Lobbied for the school to become a magnet program to attract affluent families.
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY (GEL)

• Five (5) Components
  • Global Citizenship
  • Environmental Literacy
  • Digital Citizenship
  • Health and Wellness
  • Service Learning
GEL: A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH

• Offers hands-on, authentic opportunities for learning all content areas.
• Enhances 21st century skills (collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication).
• Develops global citizens and stewards of our world.
• Prepares students for the jobs that have not yet been created.
• Ensures students know that they have a responsibility to make a difference in the world.
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY (GEL)

- VISION 2020: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xx8YRjjvJPU
GEL IN PRACTICE: PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Environmental Literacy

Pre-Kindergarten classes participated in a variety of learning through play activities that were GEL inspired:

• Toured the campus
• Explored garden beds
• Observed the construction of our new landscape
GEL SUPPORTS PRE-K ACADEMIC PRIORITIES

**Environmental Literacy**

Nature helps students increase **vocabulary acquisition** and **make connections** with specific concepts, including inquiry-based observations, measurement and data, as well as patterning.

- Field trip to Greenacres allowed students identify and discover relationships between living things and their environments
  - Habitats
  - Food/Eating habits
  - Shelter
• **Global Citizenship/Service Learning:** Students toured and volunteered with an international humanitarian aid and disaster relief organization, where they learned about helping others in need.

• **Digital Literacy:** Classrooms are equipped with eBeams, iPads and/or tablets.
Health and Wellness: A program called Mission2Move gives students several opportunities for movement and meditation each week.

- Students practice proprioception exercises twice a week.
- Exercises:
  - The mummy
  - The washing machine
  - The Michael Jackson
We build on the awareness of self, others, and the environment. We begin to realize our responsibility and identify ways to make a difference.

- We expose children to variety of topics, identify a problem, determine ways to impact the problem, reflect.

Vermicomposting Project, 2017-2018
IS THERE A PROBLEM? WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

• Children need to own a problem in order to be motivated to take action.

• **Problem**: 12 school garden beds with soil containing clay
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

• Student project includes:
  • Research the properties of soil.
  • Learn about the benefits of increased soil quality.
  • Donate compost soil to school and community gardens.
GEL CONNECTIONS

• **Global Citizenship:** Support understanding of how waste affects our community.

• **Environmental Literacy:** Promote learning about soil and decomposers.

• **Health and Wellness:** Make connections to our school’s fruit and vegetable program.

• **Digital Literacy:** Monitor soil samples and create compost using technology.

• **Service Learning:** Donate composted soil to school and community gardens.
GEL IN PRACTICE: GRADE 1

How can we incorporate GEL components without sacrificing the instructional time needed to teach essential, foundational skills in literacy and math?

• Plan integrated, thematic units as a means for studying various components of the GEL curriculum.
START WITH THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

• The **BIG** questions
  • Not questions about factoids
  • Not easily answered easily
• Open-ended but delve deep into a subject, prompting students to develop their own questions about the content.
• Essential questions guide instructional choices.
START WITH THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

• Essential questions guide instructional choices.

Essential questions in Grade 1:

➢ How are people impacted by natural disasters?
➢ What makes reindeer interesting?
➢ How do humans impact the basic needs of penguins?
THEMATIC UNITS ACROSS CURRICULUM

Wild Weather and Service Learning

- **Reading**: Read aloud fiction and nonfiction texts about hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc. Build vocabulary.
- **Writing**: Respond to texts using graphic organizers for summarizing, main idea and details, and text features.
- **Math**: Graph local weather patterns. Use internet searches to graph patterns throughout the US.
- **Science**: Perform inquiries like “Tornado in a Jar”, “Lightning Rod”, and “Hurricane Town”.
- **Social Studies**: Map wild weather across the US. Learn about first responders and their rolls in the community.
- **Service Learning**: Visit Matthew 25 Ministries and volunteer with relief efforts.

Protecting Penguins

- **Reading**: Read fiction and nonfiction texts about penguins, including the Tacky books by Helen Lester.
- **Writing**: Write informative pieces about the basic needs of penguins and the human impact on these needs.
- **Math**: Compare heights and weights of penguins.
- **Science**: Perform inquiries about blubber and melting icebergs.
- **Music and Movement**: Recite rhythmic poems using penguin movements.
- **Community Outreach**: Acquire a grant to allow a penguin to visit from the local aquarium.
We integrate classroom gardens in our curriculum, using hydroponics.

- Hydroponic gardens support hands-on learning.

- Student learn through various phases of the growing process.
  - Planting
  - Maintenance
  - Harvesting
GEL IN PRACTICE: EARLY LEARNERS - MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

- Hydroponics build responsibility and confidence.
  - Explain verbally and graphically.
  - Display their work (produce).
  - Present their learning beyond the classroom.
• Hydroponics fill the gaps that may otherwise remain unknown.

• Sustainability
• Healthy living
• Food production
• **Global Citizenship:** Support understanding of how gardens grow using hydroponics vs. traditional methods of gardening.

• **Environmental Literacy:** Promote learning about hydroponics and understanding the different parts of a plant and how they function.

• **Health and Wellness:** Seed to table. Children enjoy eating vegetables they planted.

• **Digital Literacy:** Video lessons on plants and follow up interactive science activities on plant parts, life cycle, and all about plants game.

• **Service Learning:** The school community and parents are able to take fresh vegetables home to eat.
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY (VIDEO)

- ABC LOCAL NEWS – CHANNEL 9 NEWS REPORT
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7ScmX8fdRs&t=11
CLC PARTNERSHIPS & COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- CLC – Community Learning Center
- Develops co-located community partnerships with outside agencies to support the needs of the whole child
- Promotes community engagement strategies that accelerate student achievement
- Executes strategies to increase parental engagement
CLC PARTNERSHIPS & COLLECTIVE IMPACT

SCHOOLS
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Extracurricular Activities
- Food Services
- School Nurses
- Preschool Programs
- Art Education
- Parent Centers
- Student Services
- Federal and State Funding
- Summer Activities

COMMUNITY
- Civic Groups
- Businesses
- Recreation Facilities
- Health Services
- Recreation Programs
- Childcare Centers
- Professional Sports
- Art & Culture Opportunities
- Summer Camps
- Social Services
- Philanthropy Groups
- Churches
- After-school
- Professional Sports Teams
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

• John P. Parker PTO
  • Little engagement to full engagement
    • Increased participation in parent-teacher conferences
    • Created and implemented fundraising action plan
    • Attended community council meetings to support school initiatives
    • Wrote grants
    • Attending and speaking at Board of Education Meetings
  • Sharing testimonials at community fundraising event
• Developed parental leadership opportunities
  • Donuts for Dads & Muffins for Moms
  • Leadership Scholars
  • Born Learning Academy
  • My Block
• Working with school committees
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Partnerships were developed to support the needs of the whole child and the family.
  - Kindergarten Readiness
  - Academic supports
  - Socio-emotional supports
  - Health and wellness
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• KINDERGARTEN READINESS
  • Madisonville Pipeline – Think Tank for Community Agencies led by school
  • Early Childhood Network – Home and Care Center Providers, Birth to Age 5
  • Born Learning – Training program to prepare learners for Kindergarten by implementing literacy activities in the home
  • United Way Red Nose Project – Community and parent project to encourage school readiness
  • Community Reading Corners – Business in community host a corner for literacy materials supplied by the school
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• Partners with direct service to learners are required to engage the family.
  • Pre-meeting for participants in the after-school programs.
  • Parent celebrations
    • Boys and Girls Club of Greater Cincinnati
    • Madisonville Education and Assistance Center (MEAC)
    • Whiz Kids dinners
    • Community Connectors
    • CYC Girls Club
• Partners work collaboratively to combine partner resources to meet learner needs.
  • Afterschool Program
  • Literacy Nights
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• Partners work collaboratively to combine resources to meet learner needs.
  • Afterschool Program
    • MEAC
    • Boys and Girls Club
    • Whiz Kids
  • Literacy Nights
    • MEAC
    • CET
    • LeSoupe
    • Mission2Move
    • Cincinnati Health Department Clinic
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Partnerships to support our new program focus: Global Environmental Literacy
TESTIMONIAL: COMMUNITY CONNECTORS MENTORING PROGRAM

• Mentoring Initiative - sponsored by the Ohio Governor’s Office
• Brings together students, their parents, schools, community, faith/values-based organizations, and businesses
• Targets students in Grades 5-12
• Partners Grade 5-6 students with high school juniors and seniors as mentors along with opportunities for interaction with a business partner.
COMMUNITY CONNECTORS
MENTORING PROGRAM GOALS

1. Set goals for the 21st Century
2. Build Character
3. Develop Pathways to Achievement
4. Build a Sense of Resiliency
5. Believe in a Positive Future
COMMUNITY CONNECTORS
MENTORING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

• Weekly mentoring activities with the support of instructors
• Service Learning Projects
  • Can good collection/donation
  • Garden maintenance
• College Visits
• Shadow Day
QUICK WINS FROM INITIAL GEL INTEGRATION

- Increased enrollment by 16% in one year
  - 355 students to 425 students
- Garnered more partnership support with resources
- Offered more training opportunities for staff in teaching core curriculum using innovative strategies
QUICK WINS (CONT.)

- Developed more hands-on/project-based curriculum in all grade levels
  - Teaching composting in Pre-K and Kindergarten
  - Using pumpkins from pumpkin patch for mathematics study in Grade 1, 5, and 6
  - Conducting recycling project to teach mathematics skills in Grade 3
  - Promoting the understanding of ecosystems using the garden in Grade 2 & 5

- Increased achievement schoolwide
  - Annual Measured Objectives (0 to 89.9 points)
  - Performance Index (56.2 to 70.7 points)
GRADE 4 DATA FROM STATE ASSESSMENTS

Series 1
Series 2
Goal 2018
GRADE 5 DATA FROM STATE ASSESSMENTS

- GR 5 Reading
- GR 5 Math
- GR 5 Science

2016
2017
Goal 2018
GRADE 6 DATA FROM STATE ASSESSMENTS

- 6 Reading
- 6 Math
- 6 Social Studies

Goal 2018

2016

2017

2018


QUESTIONS