PURSUING
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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UNC CHARLOTTE
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SCCS
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Sugar Creek
Charter School

SCHOOLWISE
Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PURSUING EXTRAORDINARY OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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FOREWARD

Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education is an inspiring title. For five of its twelve year history, however, "competent" or even "excellent" might have described the standard set at Sugar Creek Charter School. Then, seven years ago, the Sugar Creek leaders raised the bar and today "pursuing extraordinary" is a fair characterization of the passion that infuses their team.

This pursuit is simple in concept; but difficult in execution. Results emerged slowly in the early years. It is encouraging, however, to realize that success breeds success. Today, every member of the Sugar Creek staff feels like a part of a team effort that is steadily improving the outcomes for its students.

Critical to the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes is the belief that ALL students deserve and can achieve these outcomes. That belief must be consistent and pervasive throughout the environment and practices must be constantly evaluated to assure they align with the belief system. This realization was a watershed moment for the staff at Sugar Creek. Once practices became aligned with the fundamental belief system, extraordinary things began to happen. It is an ongoing journey, but current results prove that extraordinary outcomes are possible for all children.

Dr. Allen and Dr. Lewis have keenly observed and analyzed how Sugar Creek's leaders conducted this pursuit. If their analysis can be of value to others, then the team at Sugar Creek will be gratified.

They, like you, are stewards of their community's most valuable asset; and the success of each educator in this pursuit will be a success for all.

Frank Martin
Sugar Creek Board Chair

Cheryl Turner
Sugar Creek School Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the product of an in-depth research study of the Sugar Creek Charter School (Charlotte, North Carolina) by *The Urban Education Collaborative* at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (http://www.thecollaborative.uncc.edu). Sugar Creek Charter School is a North Carolina School of Distinction and one of North Carolina's highest performing charter schools, serving a K-8 primary population of African American students from low-wealth communities. Sugar Creek's steady increase in student achievement over the course of the last five years depicts a journey that beyond just the telling of their story alone has real and tangible implications for public schools across the United States. The findings of this study particularly have real implications for schools that serve low-income students of color. Sugar Creek's commitment to every single student not only in theory but also in practice debunks any and all discussions that claim that low-income students of color cannot achieve great academic outcomes. The model of extraordinary outcomes presented in this report was conceptualized and developed as a result of our findings at Sugar Creek.

Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education requires that educators and key stakeholders take collective ownership of the process to achieve the extraordinary outcomes that we desire from all students. It is impossible to pursue and achieve extraordinary outcomes in silos; rather, it is our collective strength and continuous collaboration that makes the pursuit and subsequent achievement even possible. In order to pursue extraordinary outcomes, we must create an environment of transparency in our schools, school districts, and governing bodies. This transparency affords us the opportunity to make decisions in the best interest of students. We must be willing to do whatever it takes to pursue the ongoing process of extraordinary outcomes for ALL students.

In this report, we provide the key components of pursuing extraordinary outcomes in our schools - along with fundamental beliefs and corresponding practices - that undergird these beliefs in the quest for extraordinary outcomes. This report is not a quick fix, rather a model of the ways in which our schools can go from good to great (Collins, 2001). This model provides a framework by which we can assess and evaluate where we are, where we need to be, and what we need to do to get to the place that we need to be.

Following are the key points of the eight (8) sections in this report;

Sugar Creek Charter School

- Sugar Creek Charter School became a learning laboratory and afforded open access to the researchers to investigate all aspects of the schools functioning and livelihood.

- Sugar Creek Charter School is a K-8 school which serves a 99% minority and 90% free and reduced lunch student population. Sugar Creek's steady increase in student achievement over the last five years ranges from 47% to currently 80%.

- Sugar Creek Charter School's pursuit of their extraordinary outcome to become a 90-90-90 school ignited school transformation and an overhaul of the ways in which they served all students.

- Sugar Creek Charter School serves as a model for public schools across the country of the ongoing process of pursuing extraordinary outcomes for all students.

Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes

- Pursuing extraordinary outcomes as defined in this report is: The continual, unwavering striving after exceptional results for ALL students, results that extend beyond the status quo.

- Schools that are pursuing extraordinary outcomes must no longer ignore the forgotten percentage of students that have not yet met the achievement measurement. Rather, an extraordinary outcome equals one hundred percent or ALL students.

- In preparation for the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes, four non-negotiables must be adopted: (a) I and me becomes we and us, (b) transparency flows throughout our schools, stemming from accurate data, (c) we commit to do whatever it takes, and (d) we recognize that pursuing extraordinary outcomes is an ongoing process that we are willing to engage in until we reach extraordinary results for all students.

The Model of Extraordinary Outcomes

- The model of extraordinary outcomes provides the framework by which schools can pursue and achieve extraordinary outcomes.

- The model of extraordinary outcomes is a four-part model represented by a student at the center of a rotating world that is upheld by a hand.

- The model consists of the student as the nucleus, the five pillars of school success, the belief-practice alignment continuum, and the process of reflective practice in action.

Student as the Nucleus

- As the nucleus, the student is the core component of the model of extraordinary outcomes. The student is the central feature of the model and is located at the center. If the student is removed, we do not have a model of extraordinary outcomes at all.

- The student as the nucleus requires that all decisions are made and implemented with the individual student's best interest at heart. This requires our schools to meet the social, psychological, academic, and physical needs of each student in our buildings.

- Educational stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, staff members, and parents are also critical to the model of extraordinary outcomes. These stakeholders are influential in ensuring that the student's individual needs are met. Also, educational stakeholders are critical to achieving extraordinary outcomes for all students.

The Five Pillars of School Success

The five pillars of school success are the key components of a school and its functioning. The five pillars must be established and sustained in our schools for optimal support of the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes.

The five pillars of school success are:

1. Shared Vision and Collective Ownership
2. Organizational Persistence
3. Transformative Relationships
4. Climate and Culture of Excellence
5. Culturally Relevant Instructional Framework.

Belief-Practice Alignment Continuum

- In order to pursue and achieve extraordinary outcomes, our beliefs must align with our practices.

- The alignment of our beliefs and practices is a continuum consisting of belief, commitment, buy in, key levers, and practice.

- Our belief-practice alignment continuum must be steadfast as we rotate through the model of extraordinary outcomes.

Process of Reflective Practice in Action

- The reflective practice is a step-by-step process that guides school administrators and stakeholders through a framework leading to extraordinary outcomes for all students.

- Data must be gathered and analyzed to begin the process of reflective practice.

- Assessment provides a strategic and intentional way to develop the most effective solutions.

- Accountability is the road map to develop time frames for action and implementation plans.

- In the evaluation stage, extraordinary outcomes equal 100%. Until 100% is achieved, the new data that emerges is our new data point to set the process of reflective practice back in motion.

The Model of Extraordinary Outcomes Review

Model In Motion

- Pursuing academic extraordinary outcomes will guide stakeholders through the reflective practice in action process utilizing academic data points.

- Pursuing cultural extraordinary outcomes will guide stakeholders through the reflective practice in action process utilizing cultural data points.

In summary, this report will provide the essential structures that we must HAVE in place. Also, we provide the comprehensive beliefs, practices and actions that we must DO to achieve extraordinary outcomes for ALL students. We have setup a framework by which public schools can strive towards extraordinary outcomes in key areas. This report provides great possibilities when stakeholders work together for visionary change. We must keep students at the center of everything that we believe and in our subsequent actions to achieve extraordinary outcomes.
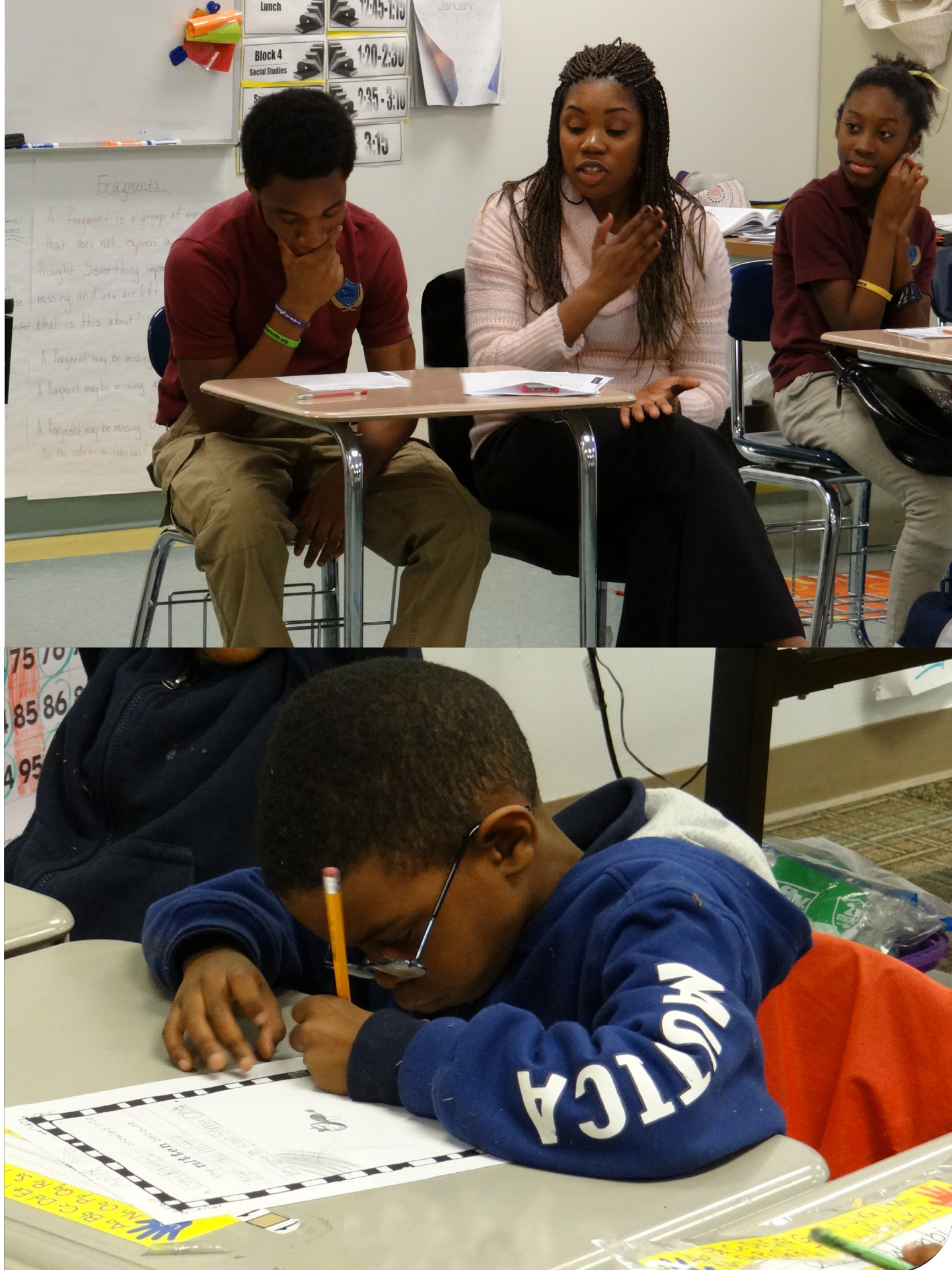
BACKGROUND|
SUGAR CREEK
CHARTER SCHOOL

A Learning Laboratory

Sugar Creek Charter School (SCCS) is a success story! This school became our learning laboratory to explore how they were able to make monumental gains towards achieving extraordinary outcomes. In Fall 2012, SCCS provided our research team the opportunity to examine every aspect of the school's operations. Our research team was allowed to examine programs, policies, academic structure, their character education model, support services, organizational structure, data and many other areas. Our findings laid the foundation for the model of extraordinary outcomes provided in this report.

Sugar Creek Demographics

Sugar Creek Charter School serves approximately 883 students in grades K-8. The demographics of this school are as follows: 96% African American, 2% Hispanic/Latino, 1% Asian, and <1% White. Additionally, 90% of the student population are on Free/Reduced Lunch and 13% are in the Exceptional Children program. SCCS has 85 instructional staff members and 8 administrators (See Table 1).

The Journey

Sugar Creek Charter School has made remarkable progress over the last 5 years. Opening in 1999, SCCS performed poorly in its early years and faced possible closure and revocation of their charter. A monumental decision by their Board and administrative team greatly increased student achievement and now serves as a model of hope and inspiration for public schools across the United States. SCCS has shown an increase from 47% to 80% Composite Achievement Score (measuring the percentage of students performing at or above grade level) in 5 years (See Figure 1). This steady improvement in achievement is critical to the conversation concerning school transformation. Collins (2001) noted, everyone looks for the miracle moment when change happens. But ask the good to great executives, they cannot pinpoint a single key event that exemplified successful transition. The success of SCCS represents a transformation that was ignited when leaders took a real look at student achievement and made a firm decision as to where they wanted to be and the process needed to move to their intended target. Cheryl Turner, SCCS' School

Table 1
Sugar Creek Charter School's Demographics

SUGAR CREEK DEMOGRAPHICS

Grade levels served	K-8
Number of students	883
Number of total staff	121
Number of instructional staff	85
Number of administrators	8
Low-Income	90%
Exceptional Children	13%
Racial Background	
African American	96%
Hispanic	2%
Asian	1%
White	< 1%

Director noted, "If we want transformation, then let's just transform!" This statement started the process of the pursuit to extraordinary outcomes and transformed the mindset of the school.

> **"If we want transformation, then let's just transform!"**
> **-Chery Turner, School Director SCCS**

The Extraordinary Outcome: 90-90-90

Sugar Creek's pursuit of extraordinary outcomes and their vision and mission to become a 90-90-90 (ninety percent low income, minority, and academic achievement) school, catapulted them towards incredible student academic gains. 90-90-90 became the rallying cry of all constituents from the Board members to the students themselves, and ignited a shift in mindsets, beliefs, practices, and actions. Sugar Creek's leadership instituted an extensive and tenacious investigation wherein they researched, explored, and labored to find the very best strategies, programs, practices, instructional tools, and models of success to implement in order to foster the transformation that they needed. Their Chief Operating Officer, Bruce Major, noted, "Transformation did not happen with the leadership alone, rather at the point when we reached critical mass." His statement undergirds the notion that everyone had to buy into and take ownership of the 90-90-90 extraordinary outcome. Even though they are currently performing at 80% proficiency and have not reached their extraordinary outcome of 90-90-90 just yet, their proclamation of this outcome was and is a driving force in pursuing extraordinary outcomes. The naming of their extraordinary outcome and the relentless pursuit thereafter of it, sets the background for this report and the subsequent model of pursuing extraordinary outcomes.

Sugar Creek as the Model

Sugar Creek Charter School is a North Carolina School of Distinction and a model of inspired leadership, fierce instruction, student focused support and all stakeholders doing what was necessary to achieve their vision for student success. Their journey from a 47% to 80% Composite Achievement Score is exemplary. However, SCCS has not settled for this level. They have exemplified the ongoing mission to reach and serve all of their students. They are not a model because they have already reached and achieved extraordinary outcomes, rather they are an example of resilient and continual pursuit in spite of any foreseeable or unforeseeable changes that may arise in the future.

Figure 1
Sugar Creek Charter School's Composite Achievement Scores (2008-2012)

Source: Schoolwise (www.schoolwisecharlotte.org)

PURSUING
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES

What does it really mean to pursue extraordinary outcomes?

This report presents a framework for what we need to think, believe, practice, and implement through deliberate action in order to pursue and achieve extraordinary outcomes for all students in our schools. The definition of each word in this statement serves as a foundational place by which to have a common meaning for pursuing extraordinary outcomes. For this particular case and point let's begin with the definitions of each word.

Pursue *(v)*
- to strive to gain or accomplish
- to proceed along the course of
- to carry further; advance
- to be engaged in

Extraordinary *(adj)*
- going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary
- exceptional to a very marked extent

Outcome *(n)*
- something that follows as a result or consequence

Reference: Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012).

Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes

To strive to gain or accomplish something that follows as a result of going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary. The continual, unwavering striving after exceptional results for ALL students, results that extend beyond the status quo.

Measuring Extraordinary Outcomes

How can we measure extraordinary outcomes? In our definition of pursuing extraordinary outcomes noted below, we are striving for exceptional results for ALL students. Therefore, we have not reached an extraordinary outcome until we reach 100%. This is quite bold and some might say overly ambitious and unreasonable, but we can no longer ignore the forgotten percentage of students. In the field of education, we often cite the percent of students that have reached the desired performance benchmark; however, what about the forgotten percentage? For example, if three schools are performing at 30%, 64% and 98% respectively; the forgotten percent of students are 70%, 36% and 2%. What

cases, our fear of failure has impeded our strides toward achievement. Our responsibility is to educate our great asset on Earth -- our children. Henry Brooks Adams noted "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell, where his influence stops." As a result, we must stretch our nation's students to new levels of achievement. Given this focus, we can no longer pursue any outcomes that are less than EXTRA-ordinary?

Preparing for the Pursuit

In many of our schools, a mentality of "I and me" instead of "we and us" stifles our ability to act and make decisions for the best interests of our students. To begin the journey of pursuing extraordinary outcomes, a commitment must be made

EXTRAORDINARY Outcomes = 100%

are we going to do to make sure the forgotten percentage of students achieve while keeping the others moving forward? In our shared definition, extraordinary outcomes means ALL, therefore; we can no longer strive for outcomes that are less than 100%. Our hope is that schools are pursuing extraordinary outcomes that equal 100%.

Why Pursue Extraordinary Oucomes?

Extraordinary outcomes are results that transform the entire landscape of public education for ALL children. In many

to our schools, communities and our students. As a result, this journey needs preparation.

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell, where his influence stops."
-Henry Brooks Adams

PREPARING FOR
THE PURSUIT

First, all stakeholders must collectively and simultaneously move from an "I and me" to a "we and us" mentality. No individual efforts matter more than collective impact. In order to pursue extraordinary outcomes, we all must take ownership of this process.

Second, pursuing extraordinary outcomes demands a level of transparency and realness that is often excluded from our educational and intellectual discussions. The level of transparency required to pursue extraordinary outcomes must flow from the top down, bottom up, and all areas in between. We have to put it ALL on the table in order to pursue extraordinary outcomes.

Third, we have to commit to doing whatever is necessary for our students to achieve. To pursue extraordinary outcomes, we must remove ALL excuses! The rewards and outcomes will come as a result of minimizing excuses and maximizing strategic efforts.

Lastly, pursuing extraordinary outcomes is an ongoing process. We must remain committed to going through the process as often as necessary until the ultimate goal of extraordinary outcomes is reached.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

- **We and Us**

- **Transparency**

- **Whatever it takes**

- **Ongoing Process**

THE MODEL OF
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES

FOUR COMPONENTS OF
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES

2
**Five Pillars of
School Success**

3
**Belief - Practice
Alignment
Continuum**

1
**Student
as the Nucleus**

4
**Process of
Reflective Practice
in Action**
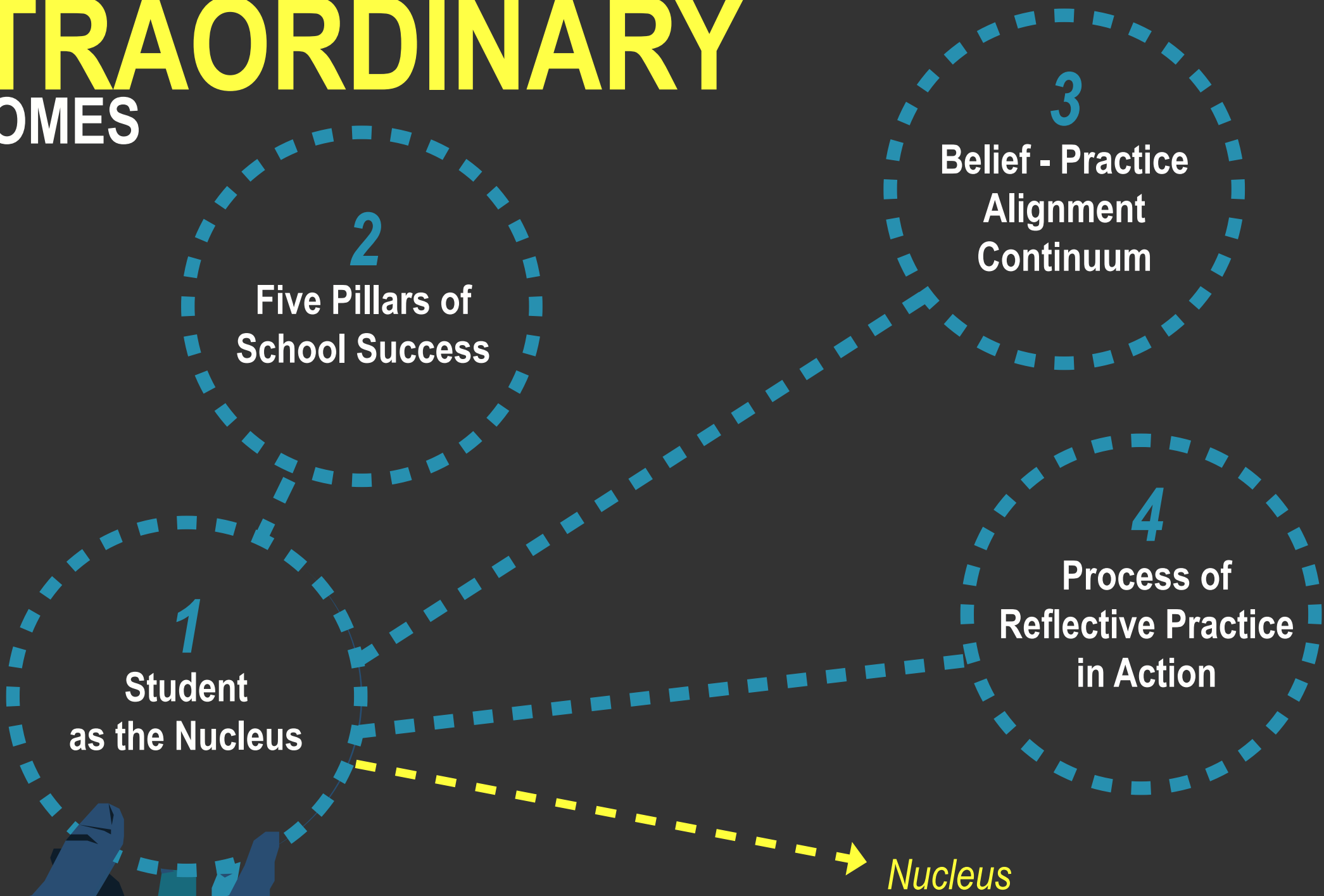
Nucleus

*The central and most important part of
an object, movement, or group, form-
ing the basis for its activity and growth;
The core.*

Reference: Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012)

PURSUING EXTRAORDINARY OUTCOMES | ALLEN & LEWIS

STUDENT AS THE
NUCLEUS

In the model, the student is the nucleus. A nucleus is a central or essential part around which other parts are gathered or grouped (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). This means that the individual student is the center of the world and our educational universe. As the student's world evolves, our model evolves with him or her. Our beliefs, practices and actions are always in the best interest of our students. McCombs and Miller (2009) contend, "student centered means the focus is on the psychological, emotional, social needs of students and interventions that maximize healthy development and functioning such that motivation, learning and achievement are promoted for all learners" (p. 8).

Student Focused Decision Making

Educational rhetoric such as 'keep students first' has become cliche. We do not disagree with this statement, however, we advocate for the reconceptualization of our vision of the student as first. This model pushes us to view students in all phases of everything that we do in our schools. This means that students are the focal point throughout the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes and the 'center of it all.' Since our model positions the student at the center of all actions, we have a responsibility to know every student well enough to appropriately address his/her academic, social, emotional, psychological and physical needs. We

have a legal, ethical and moral obligation to educate and support EVERY child in our building. As a result, the student is the NUCLEUS.

The Role of Educational Stakeholders

Although the students are the nucleus, we must consider the role of educational stakeholders. These stakeholders include: teachers, parents, administrators, office staff, cafeteria employees, janitorial staff, nurses, counselors, teacher assistants, community members, board members, transportation employees, district staff, etc. In order to pursue extraordinary outcomes, leadership must be in place to make sure all of these stakeholders are performing at an optimal level.

How do we ensure that students are the nucleus and at the center in our schools?

In order to ensure that students are truly the nucleus, we must eliminate all decisions and actions that impede student progress. This also requires a paradigm shift for many decision makers. This commitment requires a sacrifice. As an example, the master schedule for a school can not be convenient for educational stakeholders, rather it should be based on what works best for the students in the building. The underlying question is: Are we willing to do whatever it takes for the good of our students? Our students need to know and believe that they are the most important and essential component in their educational journey. Students must also know, believe and be confident in the fact that we will always act in their best interest. With the student positioned as the nucleus, he or she is the central part around which all school programs and services are gathered. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2
Student as the Nucleus
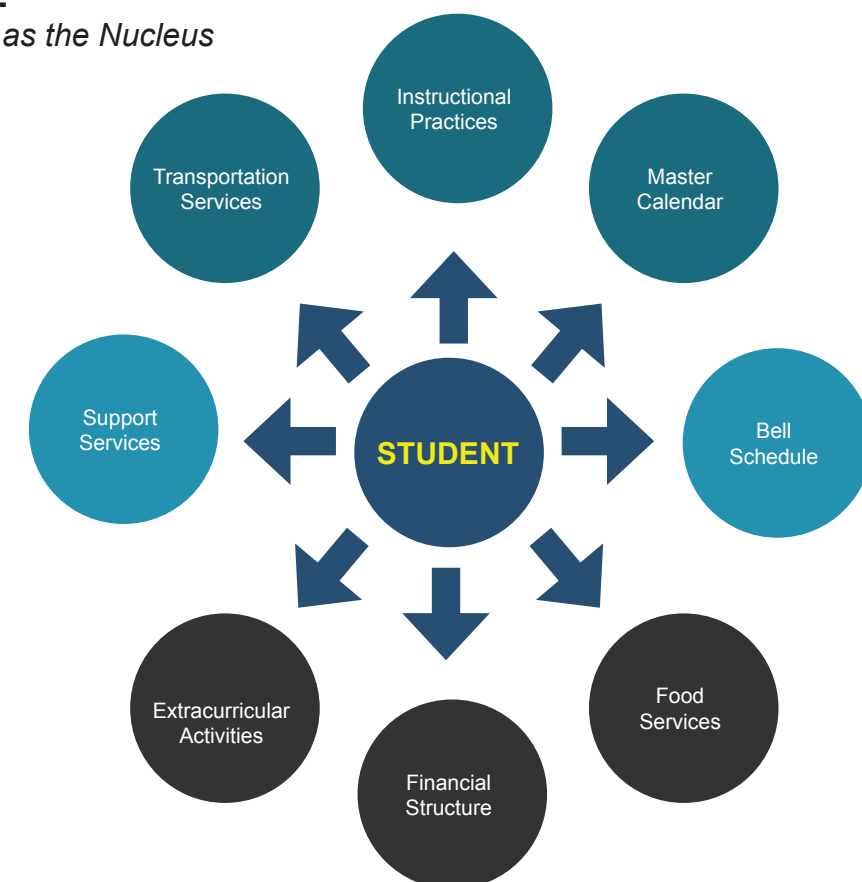
THE FIVE PILLARS
OF SCHOOL SUCCESS

The five pillars of school success represent the components of our schools that must be established and sustained to uphold the student as the nucleus world. The pillars keep the structure of our schools together, and must be in a firm place for optimal functioning of our schools as we pursue extraordinary outcomes. In the model, the entity of school is represented with a hand. There are four fingers and one thumb on a hand just as there are five pillars. Within our model, this hand is symbolic in that it represents that our schools are the place where we hold the student's world in our hands. It is typically by our hands that we serve others and as educators our primary responsibility is to serve our students. The five pillars of school success must be in place to carefully support the model as it is in motion.

(5)
CULTURALLY RELEVANT INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

(4)
CLIMATE AND CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

(3)
TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

(1)
SHARED VISION AND COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP

(2)
ORGANIZATIONAL PERSISTENCE
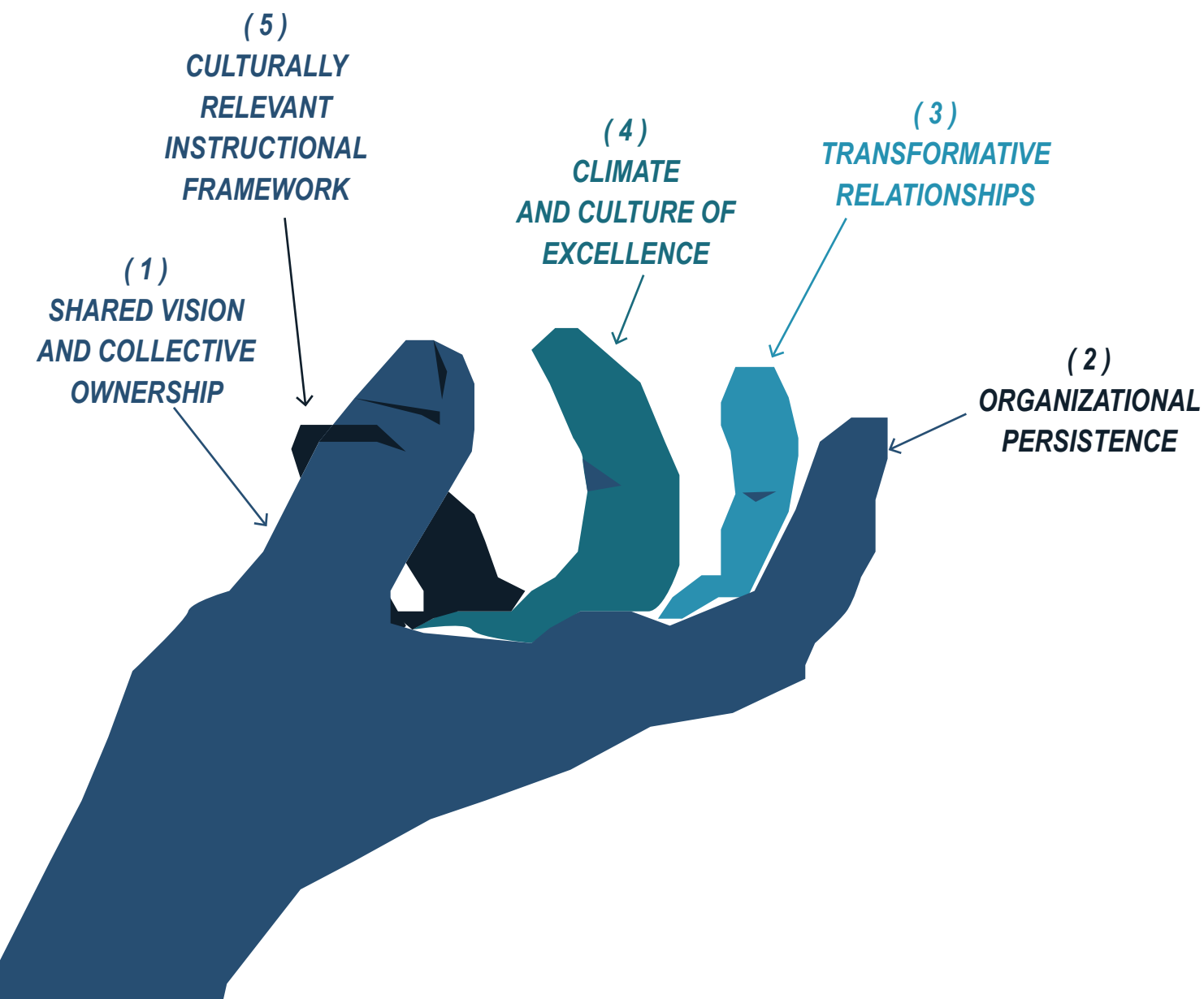
Shared Vision and Collective Ownership

A shared vision and collective ownership is the first pillar of school success. According to Duke (2008), our shared vision serves as a road map of constant referral with ongoing quality control and planning required. It is our values, mission, and goals that undergird the vision. In our model, this shared vision and collective ownership reflects the need for our schools to perpetuate a "we and us" mindset, and commitment to each individual student and the process that yields extraordinary outcomes. Our collective ownership demands that all of us take responsibility for every student. We can no longer operate in silos but we must take full responsibility and ownership of the vision. All stakeholders must embrace the vision. Our teams must relentlessly and strategically fight for the vision until we have reached all students.

Establishing a shared vision

The vision must be driven by the premise of high expectations. The school leader is the primary visionary and must have a comprehensive vision for the school. The school leader must see and believe in the vision to usher all other stakeholders into the acceptance and belief of the vision. He or she can see the alignment of the goals, values, school mission and practices that support the push towards extraordinary outcomes. The leader does not lose sight of the vision but adjusts as necessary to keep continual progress.

In the model of extraordinary outcomes the vision remains the same: Extraordi-

nary Outcomes = 100%. School teams must work together to embrace the vision as a shared one in which collectively all take ownership and do their part.

Recommendations

- Establish a clearly defined vision and mantra that is student centered.
- Ensure that every stakeholder at every level embraces and takes ownership of the vision by making the vision known and displaying it in a common/high traffic location throughout the school.
- Make sure all decisions and actions at every level point back to the vision.
- The school's mission, values, and goals at every level must support the vision.
- Relentlessly pursue buy-in, and push to reach critical mass with stakeholders, particularly the students.
- Develop vision collectively by establishing think tanks which will clearly help create a vision that extends beyond the present.

Organizational Persistence

Organizational persistence requires that our schools have an organizational structure in place that can consistently support our vision. It is the maintenance of the structures that holds the school together. In other words, the organizational structure is so strong that one individual does not impede the progress of the vision. Organizational persistence requires that our schools establish an advisory council or a think tank task force composed of community members, parents, teachers, administrators and students. This advisory council acts as an external body for evaluating school progress and success. In order to reach extraordinary outcomes, our schools must have a coherent flow of decision-making among leaders, faculty and staff. This means that there are layers of support for every person in their respective role. Likewise, relevant and meaningful professional development is essential.

Establishing a think tank taskforce

Schools can develop think tanks to address problems, issues and challenges that occur throughout the year. These think tanks have an intentional purpose to pursue solutions to problems. The taskforce does not need to be a fixed group of individuals but can be a flexible group depending on the task. The task force should be a diverse group of individuals representing all constituents including, but not limited to, teachers, parents, community members, students, alumni, board members and other partners.

Recommendations

- Organizational persistence is not about individual people, rather the layers of support offered for each role.
- Organizational persistence requires flexibility to strategically place and shift people into the greatest areas of their individual impact. (Ex. switching teachers' teaching assignments across grade levels to maximize student success if need be.)
- Establish an advisory council for your school consisting of community members, parents, students, teaches, and outside influences. This advisory council should be considered imperative to your accountability and support. The advisory council can also serve in the role of a governing body such as a board of directors or a think tank task force consisting of all constituents.
- Place great leaders in the appropriate positions and offer them the mentorship and support they need to be successful in their role
- Place great faculty and staff in the appropriate positions and offer them the mentorship and support they need to be successful in their role.
- Establish transition protocols for the cases in which people leave their roles. It's the classic example of having contingency plans in place if a situation arises when one can no longer serve in their role and capacity, it is essential that someone is waiting in the pipeline and has the knowledge and skill set to fill in when needed. (Change management protocols)

A POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK
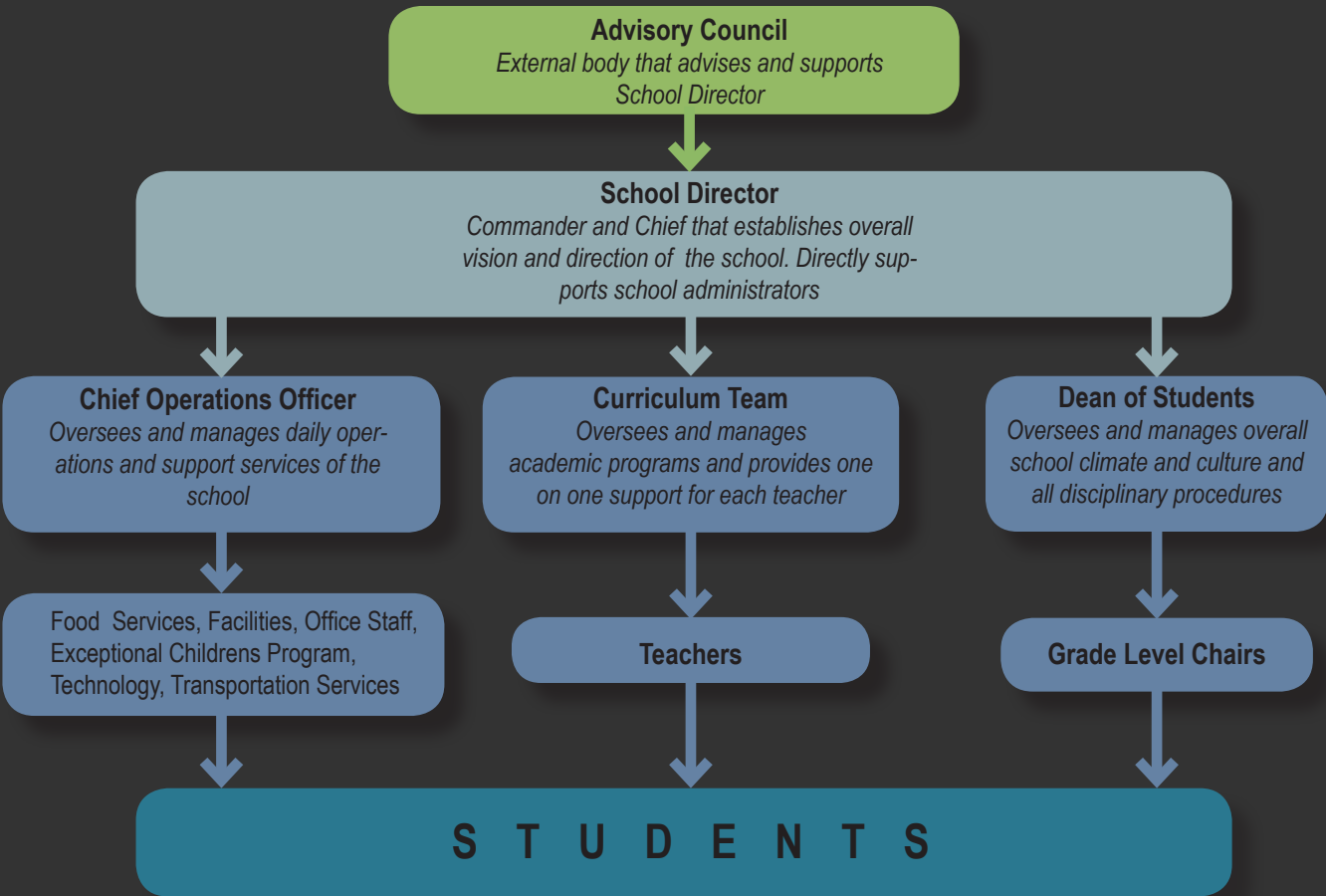
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Summer Professional Development

New Teachers	136 Hours
Returning Teachers	80 Hours

School Year Professional Development

Full Days	40 Hours
Half Days	27 Hours

*All instructional staff receive one fully funded conference for professional development annually

Reference: Sugar Creek Charter School

Transformative Relationships

Transformative relationships is the next pillar of school success that is critical in the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes. These transformative relationships must be genuine enough to make a difference in students' lives (Cranton, 2006). These type of relationships must exist amongst leaders-leaders, leaders-teachers, teachers-teachers, teachers-students and students-students. Across the school, an atmosphere of mutual respect and 'family' must be present. Every relationship should plant a 'seed of greatness' to all members of the school community. These relationships require us to meet the needs of our school community with support, encouragement and care.

Transformative Student Relationships Quotes to Ponder

"When teachers don't see students as individual people, authentic relationships are not possible" (Cranton, 2006).

"In educational systems there are often socially constructed notions of what students are like. An uncritical acceptance of these social norms lead educators to define the persona of 'student' and then use this persona to form rules about how students behave. If the habitual expectations about how students behave are critically questioned, it is possible for teachers to transform their perspective

on students until it becomes multifaceted and open to the differences among the human beings who are their learners" (Cranton, 2006).

"An educator must be present (in the moment and self-aware), connect (acknowledge and validate to awaken trust), extend learning (extend child's knowledge and understanding). All these go hand and hand with nurturing a positive relationship" (Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson, 2011).

Transformative Parent Relationships

Transformative relationships in schools carefully consider the role of parents. Hong (2011) challenges traditional school models of parent involvement. Her work encourages schools to prioritize relationships by changing the institutional nature of schools to a community connected by relationships of trust and caring. Parents support schools in ways that encourage home-school communication and collaboration. It is imperative for our schools to make the distinction between the activities of parent involvement and the process. Activities based parent involvement can distract from meaningful relationship building because it appears that parents support schools by participating in school activities that are initiated by school personnel.

The model of extraordinary outcomes does not solicit parent involvement in activities, rather parental support. Parental support means that parents support the efforts of the school by reinforcing school behavioral expectations, academic supports, and supporting their children through the learning process. Parent support is not only about the number of times parents show up for meetings or participate in PTA events.

Recommendations

- The establishment of transformative relationships must be genuine and authentic.
- Build and nurture relationships with your students and their families.
- Encourage your students to get to know each other beyond the surface level of 'classmate,' but encourage a brother and sister environment.
- Take a vested interest in your students' lives beyond the classroom.
- Be real with your students about your own personal journey and life story.
- Parent support vs. Parent involvement: Recognize the commitments of your parents. Do they work during hours that you host school events including parent-teacher conferences and meetings? Have a structure in place that allows parents to support their student and your efforts toward success. Discuss your school's approach to parental support and involvement.
- Foster opportunities for staff to engage in multiple team building activities and support shared transformative relationships.

Climate and Culture of Excellence

A climate and culture of excellence requires high expectations that permeate every fiber of the school. The moment that anyone enters the school space, there is a feeling of excellence throughout all areas of the school. This feeling can be captured in student-to-student interactions, student-to-teacher interactions and teacher-to-teacher interactions. This type of culture requires all stakeholders to have a clear understanding and commitment to the values of this newly envisioned school. To achieve extraordinary outcomes, schools need to establish extraordinary expectations of everyone in the building. Also, students must work hard, behave, model strong character and do their best (Lemov, 2010). Schoolwide positive behavior support should be fostered on school policies and teacher professional development. Schools with a strong climate and culture of excellence are safe places for students, teachers, staff members and families.

Recommendations
A climate and culture of excellence has:

- A supportive and nurturing environment.
- School-wide positive behavior support "Behavior supports cannot be universally applied without attention to culture and context." (Fallon, O-Keeffe, Sugai, 2012, p. 211).
- A Character Development Model: Instruction beyond academics that teaches students how to be model citizens and human beings that serve their communities.
- Robust student support services including: social work services, health services, counseling services.
- A framework for a clearly defined and outlined high expectations for students.
- An Ambassadors Program where students are ambassadors for the school, welcoming guests and leading visitor tours.

- A streamlined plan and protocol concerning student discipline with a chain of command and layers of support for students needing additional support.
- An administrator such as a Dean of Students to champion school culture and discipline.
- Culture of celebration, positive incentives for teachers, students, administrators.
- Pervasive celebration of success.
- Consistency from classroom to classroom and throughout school building
- The highest of expectations of behavior for students and staff.
- A heavy value on the physical appearance and upkeep of the school building.
- Students, teachers, staff, and families should be able to take great pride in their school building.
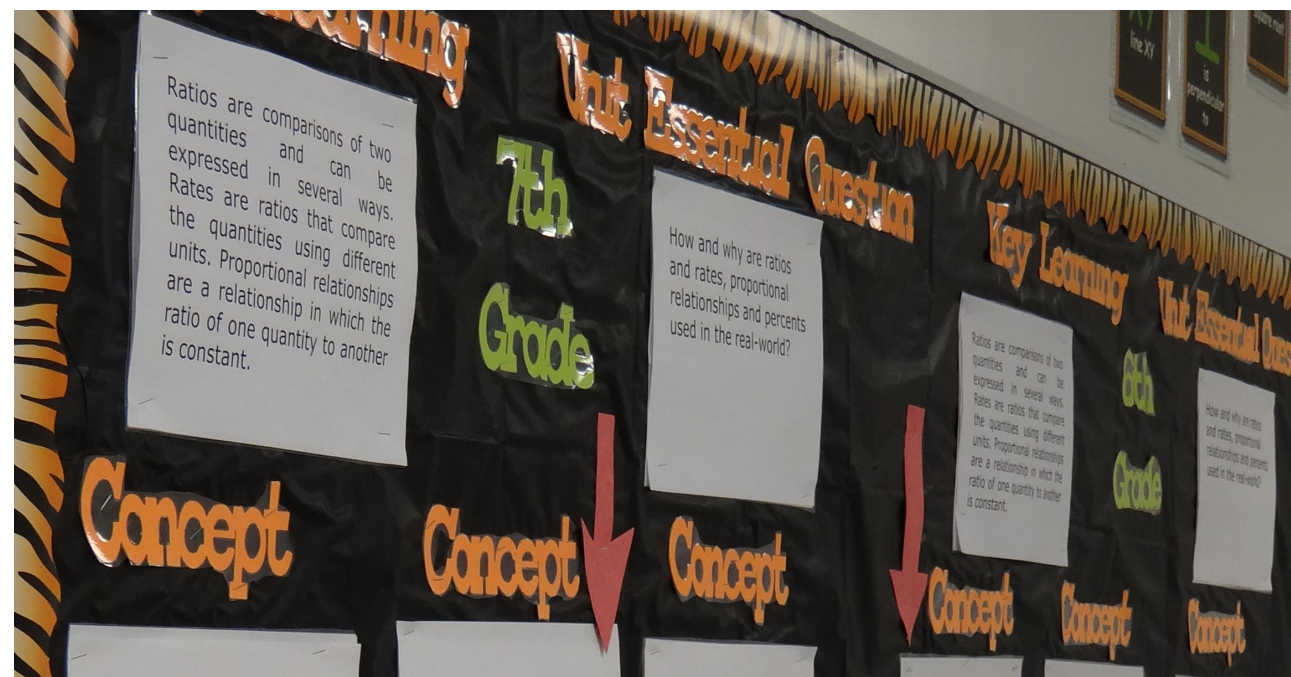
Culturally Relevant Instructional Framework

The last pillar of school success is a culturally relevant instructional framework, we must have an inclusive instructional framework that caters to the individual needs of our student population. This framework must be adopted and implemented in every single classroom, and schools must commit to the ongoing support and professional development of teachers in the framework that is adopted. The key point is that this culturally relevant instructional framework MUST be implemented and supported in every single classroom on the campus. Extraordinary outcomes extend beyond teacher good intentions: "Even when teachers have good intentions, they sometimes do not really believe in the abilities and capabilities of their particular students. Teachers' thinking about their students, about their students' abilities and about their students' established knowledge and possibilities can serve as a precursor to what is possible instructionally" (Milner, 2011, p. 61). It is required that every student in our building has access to the best, the necessary curriculum and classes that sets him or her on a trajectory towards college and career readiness. With the onslaught of the common core, we all have a set of standards that guides us in terms of the knowledge and skills our students must acquire to reach high levels of achievement. Likewise, in the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes, we must have a culturally relevant instructional framework to support such curriculum that has been designed and prescribed for us. It is not so much the curriculum that is up for discussion, however; it is the delivery and implementation of instructional tools and practices that we are focusing on. Ladson-Billings (2011) supports such a contention: "No curriculum can teach itself. It does not matter if teachers have access to exceptional curriculum if they do not have the instructional skills to teach all students" (p. 37). The key word in this quotation is ALL students. In other words, all students can access

the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2011) through a culturally relevant instructional framework that begins from a place of acknowledgment of the unique background and perspectives our students bring to the classroom[1].

The Learning Process

A successful instructional model is aligned to cognitive process theory and includes the ways in which students acquire, store, organize, retrieve and express information. In order to pursue extraordinary outcomes, we must implement a framework for instructional delivery and student internalization that makes students thought partners and joint contributors in their own learning process. This framework for instruction should be deliberate, intentional, systematic, and precise. The learning process incorporates students' self reflection, learning mapping and benchmarking of progress towards a goal[2]. Higher level thinking skills are essential to the learning process.

1 See Milner (2011) and Ladson-Billings (2011) as cited in the reference page for further information about culturally relevant pedagogy.

2 See Learning Focused by Dr. Max Thompson & Dr. Julia Thompson for an example of a student-centered learning process framework.

Recommendations

- Instructional framework should have a student centered process of knowledge and skill acquisition.
- Instructional framework should be accessible and student friendly. It should

guide students and show them where they are and where they are going in the learning process.
- Incorporate robust professional development for teachers that offers them strategic coaching and support with planning, content, and instructional delivery.
- Bulletin boards in every classroom that are dedicated to objectives and benchmarking of objectives.
- Explicit professional development concerning the ways in which to incorporate culturally relevant instructional practices into lessons as a supplement to the common core and/or curriculum.
- Instruction and methods that position students as joint knowledge makers in the learning process.
- A systemized instructional model that is standardized and implemented in every single classroom in your building
- Curriculum specialist or teacher coaches must be appointed to support teachers in lesson planning, instructional delivery, assessment delivery, long term planning, differentiation, etc.
- There should be layers of support for teachers and differentiated professional development where teachers teach other teachers and all glean off of the strengths of one another.
- Reassessment of grading practices. A commitment to grading practices that are based on student mastery.
- Teaching to mastery (reteaching, reteaching, reteaching)
- Differentiated instructional practices
- Teacher assistants and interventionists to support remediation and acceleration of the material based on student needs and performance levels.
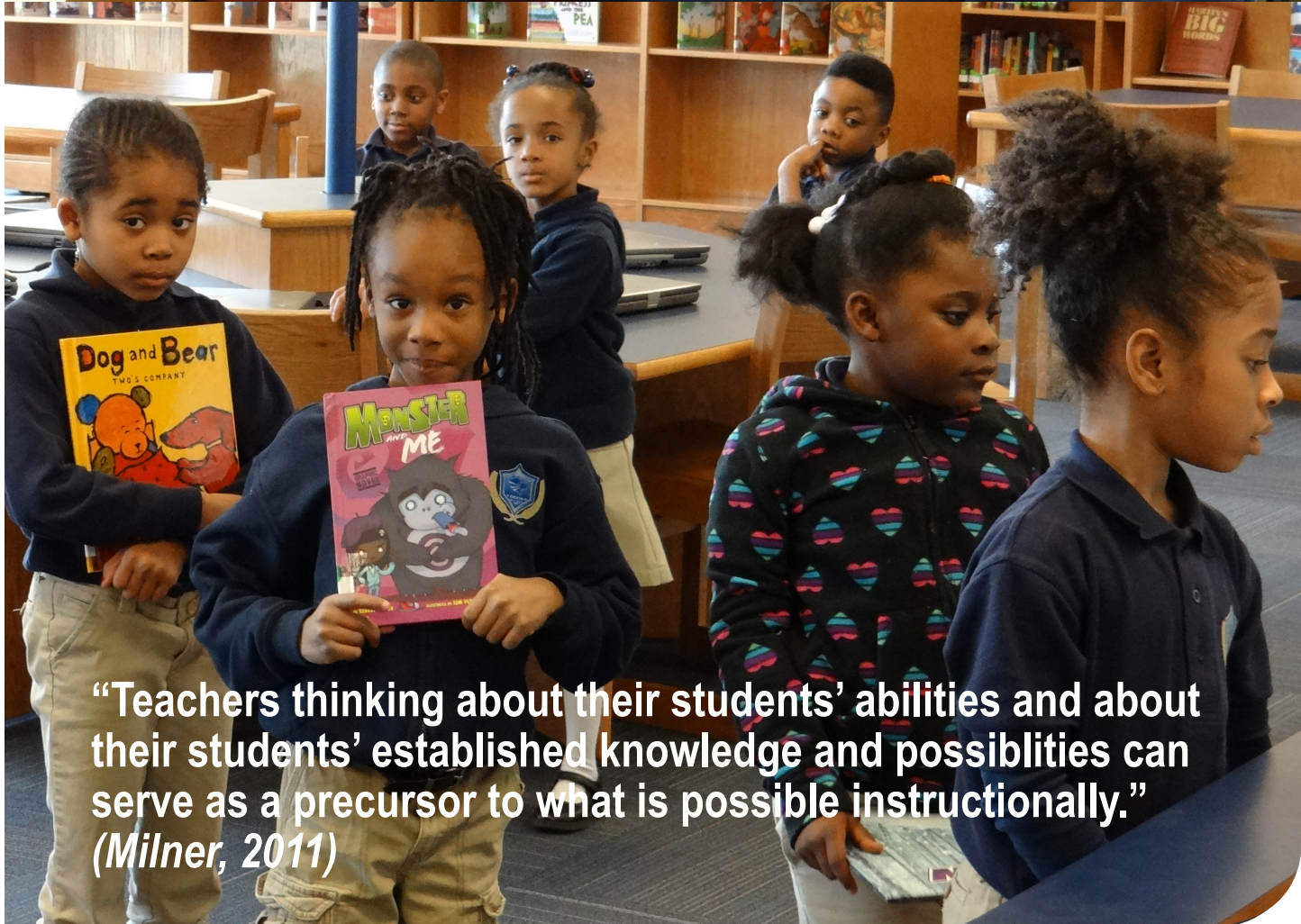
"Teachers thinking about their students' abilities and about their students' established knowledge and possiblities can serve as a precursor to what is possible instructionally."
(Milner, 2011)

THE
BELIEF-PRACTICE
ALIGNMENT CONTINUUM

The third component of the model of extraordinary outcomes is the Belief-Practice Alignment Continuum. Our beliefs must align with our practices in the pursuit of extraordinary outcomes. The alignment of this continuum is illustrated by the diameter of the student as the nucleus world. This is because our beliefs and practice run through everything that we do for students. It is a continuum because it can be a progressive process through stages to reach the point where we practice what we believe. First, we will start with the definitions of belief and practice.

PRACTICE

One's repertoire of dispositions, behaviors, and skills in specific areas of performance

BELIEF

The values, visions, biases, and paradigms stemming largely from one's experiences that significantly influence ways of thinking and behaving. Beliefs create the lens through which we view our worlds.

Definitions highlighted from York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere and Montie (2001).

Belief Practice Alignment Continuum

Belief   **Commitment**   **Buy In**   **Key Levers**   **Practice** →

Belief	The values, visions, biases, and paradigms stemming largely from one's experiences that significantly influence ways of thinking and behaving. Beliefs create the lens through which we view our worlds. (York-Barr, et.al., 2001)
Commitment	There must be a die-hard commitment to the belief. We can not move along the belief practice alignment continuum until we commit to the belief. This is the stage of the continuum where 'whatever it takes' and 'transparency' are committed to.
Buy In	All stakeholders must buy in to the belief. We must continuously strive to reach critical mass. Buy in is an ongoing process and usually occurs as positive outcomes emerge.
Key Levers	Now that we have the commitment and buy in from key stakeholders the key levers are our action items that push us towards the stage of practice. For example, we make the necessary decisions and put in place our resource investments, appropriate allocation of time, and we position people in the appropriate places to support our belief and move the needle even further towards our practice.
Practice	One's repertoire of dispositions, behaviors, and skills in specific areas of performance (York-Barr, et.al., 2001). In this model, our practice represents the actions we strategically and intentionally implement to ensure that all students achieve extraordinary outcomes.

The Challenge of Belief-Practice Alignment

The challenge with the alignment of beliefs and practices is that it is often elastic. When we do not readily see the desired outcomes, we often abandon our practices. We can't allow this to happen. Our belief-practice alignment is linear. Imagine the alignment of our beliefs and practices to be the very foundation upon which our students stand.

The alignment of our beliefs and practice must function like a balance beam. Although it may be hard to balance our beliefs and practices, our beliefs must remain steadfast and secure. It is critical that we continuously work through the stages of the Belief-Practice Alignment Continuum. Once we effectively move through this continuum, our students begin to believe in themselves and begin to change their daily practice.

Recommendations
What should we believe?

- Every (100%) student in our building can and will learn.
- Every (100%) student in our building can and will achieve extraordinary outcomes.
- Every (100%) student in our building can and will meet behavioral expectations.
- Our school is a family and we will all take ownership of every child in our building.
- Our school will educate the whole child (intellectual, social, emotional, character development, etc.).
- Our school is not an island; we are all in this together.
- Our school will be flexible, compassionate, committed and unselfish to meet the needs of students.
- Relationships in our school will be paramount to student success.
- Our school has the ability to move students from a place of perceived deficits to high achievers.

How do we practice what we believe?

- Every decision that is made must be student-focused.
- We ensure that our practices reflect every child's individual needs.
- Our actions and implementations always support our beliefs.
- We dedicate ourselves to the stages of the belief-practice alignment continuum until our practice truly align with our beliefs.

"We need to just get it done! We have a generation of students who need to learn. We also have a generation of teachers who need to learn how to learn and how to teach. We have to be willing to take on all challenges to get our students taught. Education becomes revelation when it is relevant!"
-Marlon Harris, 5th Grade Level Chair, SCCS

THE PROCESS OF
REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
IN ACTION

The process of reflective practice in our model is represented in the cyclical structure that is wrapped around the world. The process represents the actions we must take in order to achieve extraordinary outcomes. This process is not a quick fix, rather a strategic framework for constant improvement towards extraordinary outcomes.

Pollard (2008) contends, that reflective practice supports a shift from routine actions to reflective action emerging from professional thinking drawing from external evidence-based sources. Dewey (1963) and Farrell (2004) noted that reflective practitioners must be:

- open-minded (to new ideas, thoughts, and approaches)
- wholehearted (to commit to an idea, with such fervent determination even in spite of fear and uncertainty)
- responsible (the awareness and ownership of one's own actions)

Data
(Where are we?)

Our data is the starting point of the reflective practice in action and sets the model in motion. In this stage, we must collect data to inform our decisions. This data informs us of where we are as a school and serves as a baseline data-point for improvement. Note: We cannot pursue or achieve extraordinary outcomes without data. The more data we have the stronger the foundation.

Recommendations
What types of data should we gather to set the process in motion?

- Appropriate data depends on the area in which we are utilizing the reflective practice process. Data will alter depending on whether we are seeking extraordinary outcomes in academic results, campus climate and culture, relationship building, or shared vision and collective ownership. Data should be appropriate to inform where we currently stand in the area that we are pursuing.
- Formal and informal assessments including standardized test scores, reading inventories, rubrics, and teacher observations.
- Data from progress reports, report cards, attendance records.
- Data from school and district reports.
- Data collected from surveys for teachers, parents, students, and community members.

Assessment
(Where do we need to be?)

The second phase in the reflective practice in action process is assessment. This is the stage at which we get REAL with our data. In this stage, we are beyond simply looking at our data, but we must shift to a full out interrogation of our data: "Data, after all, do not speak for themselves. They presuppose certain ways of asking questions and certain ways of interpreting results" (Josselson, 1995, p. 29). This quote sets a frame for the way in which we can and must utilize our data to lead us towards extraordinary outcomes. At the end of this process in the cycle, we will know where we are going or better yet, where we need to be. We must treat our data in a manner where we excavate meaning of all sorts (explicit and implicit) to understand what our data is really telling us. There are two critical parts that are discussed in Josselson's (1995) statement:

Data Interrogation
We must ask questions

Since our data doesn't speak for itself, a question that we ask must warrant answers that lead to greater understanding. A question must get to the heart of our issues and our problem. Just like a criminal interrogator, we need to ask questions that go beneath the surface of what we see. Remember, this process of extraordinary outcomes demands us to do more than look at our data.

Recomendations
### What types of questions should we ask of our data?

- What does the data represent?
- What is the context of our data? (How do we compare to similar demographics, within district, state, national pools?)
- What are the primary and secondary issues most impacting our data?
- How has this data point evolved over time?
- Who directly impacts this data point (teacher, administrator, parent, student)?
- What factors and seemingly unrelated factors should we consider?
- If our data reflects positive outcomes, what factors contributed to the positive outcome as to replicate and continue its implementation.
- If our data reflects negative outcomes, what factors contributed to the negative as to improve upon it and avoid future mistakes.

"Data, after all, do not speak for themselves. They presuppose certain ways of asking questions and certain ways of interpreting results." (Josselson, 1995)

Surgical Data Analysis
Systematic Data Interpretation

Assessment is the deep data dive process. Now that we have gathered our data sources and asked and answered pertinent questions, the systematic approach of interpreting results in assessment pushes us further along on our journey of pursuing extraordinary outcomes. Referring back to Josselson's (1995) quote concerning the data analysis process, assessment is the process by which we interpret our data. This second part of the assessment phase of the process of reflective practice encourages us to utilize a medical framework of assessment.

Stages of Surgical Data Analysis

Think Tank Task Force
Triage
Autopsy
Diagnosis
Treatment Plan
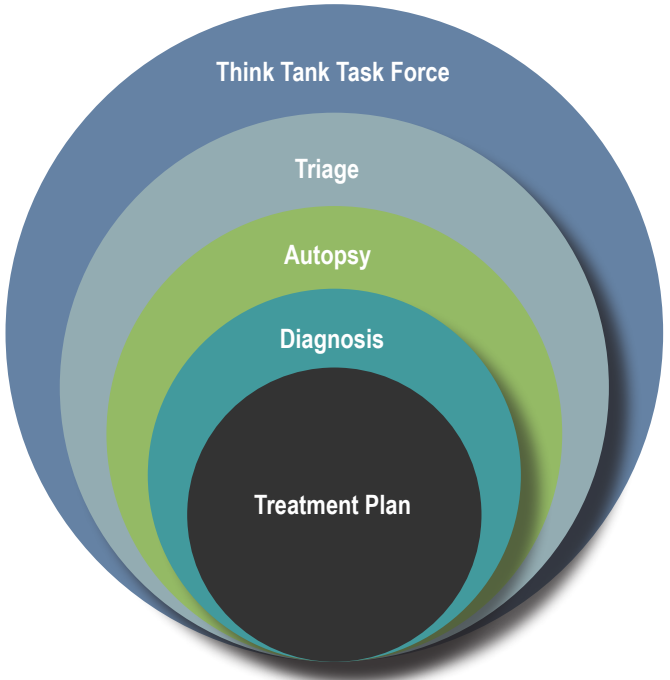
Stage 1: Think Tank Taskforce

The first stage of our surgical data analysis is for us to gather our surgical team, or in the case of our pursuit of extraordinary outcomes, we will gather a think tank taskforce that will be charged with the surgical data analysis process. A think tank taskforce is a diverse group of individuals representing various constituent groups and areas of expertise, who will implement this process. The taskforce is not a fixed group of people, rather there is flexibility in group membership. In fact, there will most likely be several think tank taskforces working on various projects simultaneously. Note, the taskforce does not just consist of the leadership team. In fact, many schools most likely already have these groups in place such as through the means of administrative team, grade level teams, vertical and horizontal teams, and content teams.

Stage 2: Triage

Our next phase is to triage. In the medical field, triage refers to the process of determining the priority of patient's treatment based on the severity of their condition. The triage process assists medical personnel in the categorization of patient needs and subsequent actions. In the same vein, we as educators have to utilize a triage process in order to pursue extraordinary outcomes. An educational triage gives us a systematized framework towards assessment of our data and towards extraordinary outcomes. In our educational triage, we will need to sift through, sort, and categorize our data and determine our prioritized course of action based on the severity of our condition. This bite size approach to assessment takes away some of the overwhelming pressure associated with having a lot of problems that need to be fixed all at once. This triage process helps us avoid biting off more than we can chew, because our focus is on fixing the area of 'greatest bleed and need'.

Stage 3: Autopsy

Next, we must perform an autopsy of our data. We seek not to utilize an analogy of gross anatomy, but this stage is the point of dissection where we dig deeper to identify the 'cause of death' or the main issues at hand. In the autopsy stage, the think tank explores all of the possible causes and reasons for the issue that will be addressed. This phase does not propagate or warrant finger pointing or the cascading of blame, rather a real and transparent conversation must take place about the data points. The think tank must uncover hidden issues within the data.

Stage 4: Diagnosis

The diagnosis of our problem emerges as a result of the in-depth and productive exploration in the autopsy stage by the think tank taskforce. Our diagnosis identifies: (a) our critical issue and (b) identifies 3-5 subsequent issues. Identifying our critical issue and our subsequent issues sets us up for the next phase where in which we will pursue solutions.

Stage 5: Treatment Plan

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In the last stage of our surgical data analysis, we will carefully craft our treatment plan that will push us towards extraordinary outcomes. The treatment plan ushers us into the next phase of reflective practice in action which is accountability. Our treatment plan is in fact our accountability plan.

Accountability
(What do we need to do?)

Now that we have gathered and assessed our data, we have entered the phase of accountability. The accountability phase is our treatment plan. This is the phase at which we partake in the marriage of our beliefs with our practices and the point at which we script out and follow our action plan. This plan must be systematic, intentional, measurable, and reflective. Furthermore, Collins (2001) contends: "Change fails because there is a lack of accountability, a failure to achieve credibility, and there is no authenticity" (p. 3). Our steps of accountability will lead us towards our extraordinary outcome.

Steps of Accountability

Step 1: EO=100%

The first step of accountability requires the entire school to believe. Our extraordinary outcomes equal 100%. In this step, ALL stakeholders must commit to the goal of 100%. Despite the current data, we must move forward with intense momentum toward the 100%. As a result, we must be accountable for ALL of our students, including the forgotten percentage that may not be doing well at the moment of this transition.

Step 2: Benchmark

Benchmarking is the setting of measurable goals and our progress towards extraordinary outcomes. These benchmarks can be either formal or informal assessments or a combination of both. For example, a standardized test benchmark would look different from a teacher morale and satisfaction benchmark. As a result, the benchmark assessment data point produces how close we are to the 100% goal. It also gives us a framework where we can set other time intervals for future benchmarking.

Step 3: Action Steps

Our action steps are the specific actions, practices and tasks that we will implement at the school site. Our practices must align with our beliefs as outlined in Step 1. Also, they must be innovative and research-based and push the school towards extraordinary outcomes.

Step 4: Milestones

Our milestones are our established dates and times by which we will implement and complete the specific actions that we identified in Step 3. By (date) we will implement (action step). By (date), (action step) will be complete.

Step 5: Calendar

After we have completed the scripting of benchmarks, action steps and milestones, it is recommended that an implementation calendar is developed. This calendar should be centrally located where all stakeholders can have access. Also, this calendar should be specific with benchmarks, action steps and milestones by weeks and months to guide the vision of the school.

Step 6: Champion

Identify the team members who will lead this process. These persons will lead the implementation of action steps and facilitate the process with stakeholders. These leaders are trustworthy and truly own the best interest of the vision for the school. These champions will be decided in the last stage because they have the expertise and ability to follow-through on the completion of the process.

Evaluation
(How do we know if we achieved extraordinary outcomes?)

In the evaluation stage, we must look closely through a lens of authenticity on progress towards the goal. The evaluative process requires us to examine the success and failure of what has been put in place at the reflective practice stage. At this point, we continue to engage in the reflective practice until extraordinary outcomes (100%) are achieved. In the evaluation phase, it is helpful to have an advisory council to also assess our progress. This will provide another key stakeholder that will assist in evaluating our progress towards extraordinary outcomes.
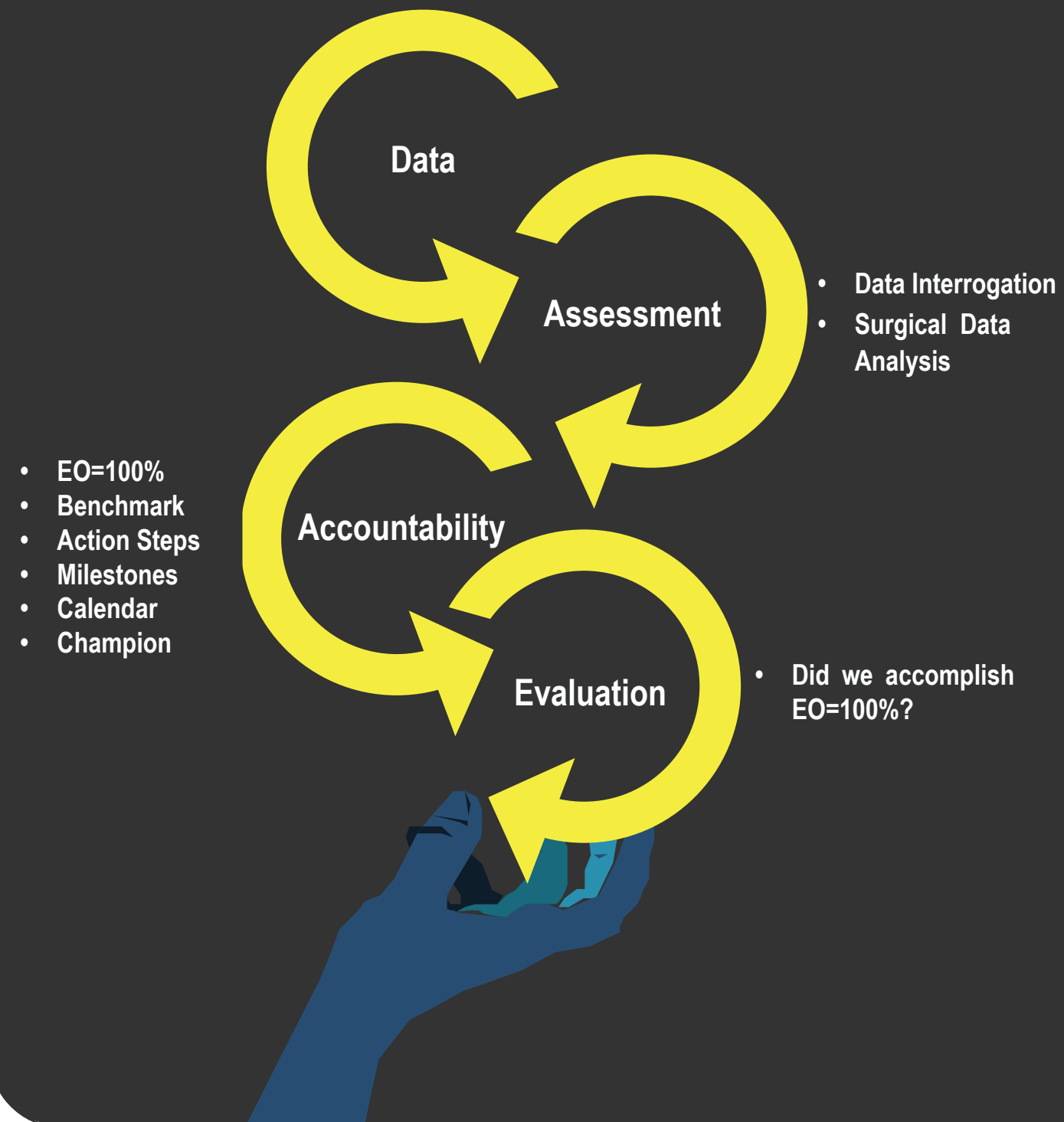
EXTRAORDINARY Outcomes = 100%

Reflective Practice Quotes to Ponder

"To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealing with future experience."
(Dewey, 1963)

"Reflective practice serves as a foundation for continuous learning and improvement in educational practice so that children are successful in school and in life. It is a complex process that requires high levels of conscious thought as well as a commitment to making changes based on new understanding of how to practice. Reflective practice must not be viewed as yet another band-wagon - here today, gone tomorrow. It has the potential to significantly improve education if its foundation and assumptions are honored. Unless the integrity of reflective practice is upheld, efforts at implementation will be superficial and will result in few positive gains."
(York-Barr, et.al., 2001)

"Reflecting determinedly to improve something requires effort and sustained, focused thinking centered on a particular issue or concern. Being reflective requires active consideration about actions and their consequences."
(McGregor, 2011)

THE PROCESS OF
REFLECTIVE-PRACTICE
IN ACTION OVERVIEW

Data

Assessment

- Data Interrogation
- Surgical Data Analysis

- EO=100%
- Benchmark
- Action Steps
- Milestones
- Calendar
- Champion

Accountability

Evaluation

- Did we accomplish EO=100%?

THE MODEL OF
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES REVIEW

ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION WITH:

I. Student as the Nucleus

II. Five Pillars of School Success
- Shared Vision/Collective Ownership
- Organizational Persistence
- Transformative Relationships
- Climate and Culture of Excellence
- Culturally Relevant Instructional Framework

III. Belief Practice-Alignment
- Belief
- Commitment
- Buy-In
- Key Levers
- Practice

IMPLEMENT REFLECTIVE PRACTICE BY:

I. Data

II. Assessment
- Data Interrogation
- Surgical Data Analysis

III. Accountability
- EO=100%
- Benchmark
- Action Steps
- Milestones
- Calendar
- Champion

IV. Evaluation

EXTRAORDINARY Outcomes =100%

"When educators speak with clarity, possibility, and accountability and when they interact with others in respectful and mutually satisfying ways, they empower themselves and their organizations to produce extraordinary results. Such interactions add purpose, joy, and energy to our lives and the lives of those with whom we relate and increase the organization's capacity to engage in demanding, complex tasks and to sustain that effort over time."

(Sparks, 2005)

MODEL IN MOTION

The model in motion guides stakeholders through the process of pursuing extraordinary outcomes using the Process of Reflective Practice in Action. We will lay out the framework with an academic and a cultural example to demonstrate the way in which schools, administrators and teachers can achieve extraordinary outcomes for all students.

PURSUING *ACADEMIC* EXTRAORDINARY OUTCOMES

DATA

Based on end of year data, 20% of our students are proficient in reading according to their standardized test scores.

ASSESSMENT

Data Interrogation

Meaningful Questions

- What is the reading proficiency by grade level?
- By teacher?
- By individual student?
- By individual student over time?
- By females?
- By males?
- By students with an IEP?
- By reading area (reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, etc.)
- What is our current instructional reading model?
- How are we trending from years past?

Surgical Data Analysis

Think Tank Taskforce
Academic Director, Literacy Specialist, Advisory Board Member, Teacher #1, Teacher #2, Curriculum Specialist, Reading Interventionist and School Psychologist.

Triage
Which areas need our quick and immediate attention? Where are we going to focus our energy towards pursuing extraordinary outcomes? For example, the answer may be 4th and 5th grade.

Autopsy
Dig into 4th and 5th grade reading scores, looking at every single assessment, performance by students, by child over time, teacher performance, content area: reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, etc. Return to the above meaningful questions to see if more information can be excavated that highlights the root issues.

Diagnosis
Based on our example (autopsy), our critical issue in 4th and 5th grade is reading comprehension. Our subsequent issues are vocabulary, sequencing and cause/effect.

Treatment Plan
See Accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY

Extraordinary Outcome=100%

We believe that 100% of our 4th and 5th grade students will be proficient in reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Benchmark

We will utilize a reliable and relevant benchmark assessment and will have the following results: (a) 30% on the September benchmark; (b) 40% on the October benchmark; (c) 50% on the November benchmark; (d) 60% on the December benchmark; (e) 70% on the January benchmark; (f) 80% on the February benchmark; (g) 90% on the March benchmark and (h) 100% on the official standardized test given by the state.

Action Steps

- Place a full time reading interventionist in each reading class to assist with small group instruction
- 4th and 5th grade reading will be extended by 60 minutes each day
- Hold parent meetings in multiple formats (in-person, Skype, phone, etc) to inform them about their child(ren) data and needs of improvement
- Mandatory reading tutorials after school
- Hire reading specialists from local universities to implement professional development with teachers twice per month.
- Mandatory word walls in every classroom and in the hallways that contain the highest frequency words for 4th and 5th graders
- Test taking strategy block explicitly geared towards cause and effect and sequencing

Milestones

- Reading Interventionist - Immediate implementation
- Extended 60 minute block - Implement over a 2-week period
- Parent meeting - (Set a date and send out appropriate communication to families)
- Reading tutorials – 2-week window to recruit tutors from local universities and teachers for extra duty pay.
- Reading Specialists - Reach out immediately to make arrangements and set dates for professional development.
- Word Walls - One week
- Test taking strategy block - Immediate implementation

Calendar

Place specific milestones, action steps, and benchmarking dates in the monthly calendar with weekly tracking of progress by the champions.

Champion

Academic Director & Literacy Specialist

EVALUATION

Depending on the results of our final benchmark we will know where we stand in reaching this goal. Let's assume for the sake of this example that our final benchmark indicated that our reading scores have risen from 20% to 60% by end of year. We can now see that we made 40% gains in achievement which means that we have reached extraordinary outcomes for that 40%, but we cannot forget that we still have 40% more to make in order to achieve extraordinary outcomes. In this example, we must go through the process of reflective practice once more utilizing our new data point of 60% and repeat the process again until we reach the extraordinary outcome of 100%. New data emerges out of the evaluation stage and sets us right back in motion to continue on the journey of reflective practice in action. The question we must ask as the evaluation of our pursuit of extraordinary outcomes is do our:

EXTRAORDINARY
Outcomes =100%

PURSUING *CULTURAL* EXTRAORDINARY OUTCOMES

DATA

Due to a heightened number of recent suspensions we decided to look at our suspension records. According to our records and reports, 75% of all students in out of school suspension (OSS) are African American males.

ASSESSMENT

Data Interrogation

Meaningful Questions

- Who are the individual students that have been on OSS?
- Are there repeat offenders?
- What are the infractions that our students are being suspended for?
- What is our total number? What does 75% constitute in real numbers?
- Did we do everything we could do to prevent them from being suspended such as followed protocol, etc.?
- Are the students on OSS also students with multiple ISS and detentions?
- What does the data look like by grade level?
- What is the time of day that most suspensions are rendered?

Surgical Data Analysis

Think Tank Taskforce
Dean of Students, School Director, Chief Operating Officer, School Psychologist, Grade Level Chair #1, Teacher, School Nurse, Grade Level Chair #2, Community Members(Police Officer), Community Member (Juvenile Judge)

Triage
Do we need to focus on repeat offenders and individual behavior plans? Is there a particular teacher or grade level that has the greatest number of offenses.
The Answer: Our greatest number of OSS for Black males is in the 8th grade.

Autopsy

Dig into our 8th grade discipline records, reading through every teacher behavior referral, every grade level chair referral, and every piece of data concerning the handling of the infractions of the young men in this grade level. Dig to ensure that proper protocol has been followed in each incident. Seek data from each individual student in the 8th grade to see if there are repeat offenders or students who are constantly in conflict with one another. Are there groups of students who are perpetually in trouble together? Dig for trends in infractions: Are students being suspended for profanity, fighting, gang affiliations, violence, disrespect, etc.?

Diagnosis

After thorough autopsy, our diagnosis is that there is major tension and fighting amongst the male students from two different neighborhoods, which is a result of neighborhood gang violence. These students have been suspended for fighting 90% of the time.

Treatment Plan

See Accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY

Extraordinary Outcome=100%

We believe that 100% of our black males in the 8th grade will not get on OSS for the remainder of the school year. We will have zero fights in 8th grade between all students due to the cultural overhaul that we will implement.

Benchmark

As a result of our implemented action steps, we will have 60% of black males in 8th grade on OSS by September, 50% of black males in 8th grade on OSS by October, 40% of black males in 8th grade on OSS in November, 30% of black males in 8th grade on OSS in December, 20% of black males in 8th grade on OSS in January, 10% of black males in 8th grade on OSS in February, 5% of black males in 8th grade on OSS in March, 0% of black males in 8th grade on OSS in April.

Action Steps

- Law enforcement agents and judge will have an interactive workshop with students in the 8th grade about gang violence and the consequences that ensue.
- Law enforcement agents and judge will give staff professional development concerning the ways by which to identify gang activity and to address issues and maintain a safe environment.
- Law enforcement agents and judges will give parents a mandatory session concerning the ways by which to identify gang activity and promote positive behavior from their children at home.
- Individual parent meetings in person, by Skype, phone, Face time, etc. to have a family gathering with law enforcement agents and judge.
- Repeat offenders will have a *'Beyond Scared Straight'* (A&E Real Series produced by Arnold Shapiro) experience and spend a day touring the jail and speaking with inmates, judges, and police officers.
- The repeat offenders will receive weekly therapy sessions with the student support counselor.
- Weekly incentive plan when incentives will be given to all students in 8th grade who stay off of OSS such as free dress passes, gift cards, no homework free passes, extended recess time, ice cream socials, pizza parties, field trips, positive notes and communication home.

Milestones

The three meetings with law enforcement agents - completed in two weeks
Individual parent meetings - Immediate implementation until complete
Beyond Scared Straight Day - implement in two weeks
Weekly counseling sessions - immediate implementation
Weekly incentives - immediate implementation

Calendar

Place specific milestones, action steps, and benchmarking dates in the monthly calendar with weekly tracking of progress by the champions.

Champion

Dean of Students and 8th Grade Level Chairperson

EVALUATION

Depending on the results of our final benchmark, we will know where we stand in reaching this goal. Let's assume for the sake of this example that our final behavior report indicates that black males in the 8th grade make up 10% of the students on OSS. With our starting point of 75% of black males in the school, reaching 10% is a great outcome and shows significant gains and progress. This achievement definitely warrants celebration and demonstrates incredible progress, but we still are on the path towards extraordinary outcomes. When black males in the 8th grade make up 0% of the students on OSS which means that 100% of them have stayed off of OSS, we have achieved an extraordinary outcome indeed. In this stage, the champion, think tank, and other relevant stakeholders should do an intensive reflection session where they capture all of the things that went right and wrong with their plan and with the implementation of their plan. Again we must ask the question do our…

EXTRAORDINARY
Outcomes = 100%
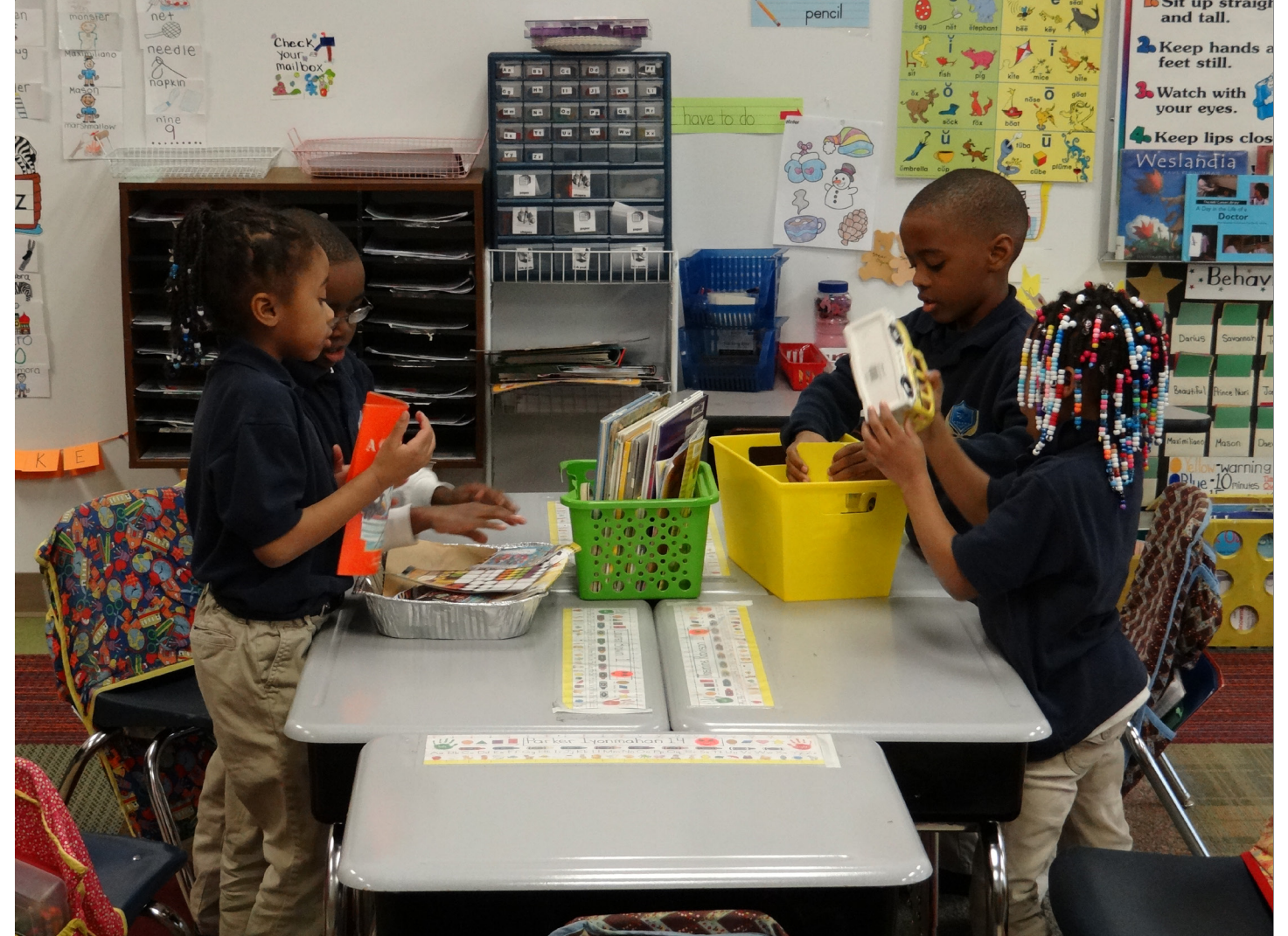
PURSUING
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION
AN EPILOGUE

Chance W. Lewis, Ph.D.

Carol Grotnes Belk Distinguished Professor of Urban Education
Director, The Urban Education Collaborative
College of Education
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

As we enter the year 2013, we must understand the symbolic significance of this current moment in history as it pertains to the field of education. The United States of America has just re-elected its first African American president and we are still one of, if not, the world's most prosperous country where people come to pursue and live the 'American Dream.' However, a few miles from our nation's capitol and throughout the streets and neighborhoods of many urban communities, a quiet revolution continues to test the resolve of this great nation – our educational system has not met the needs of our nation's children. We are one year away from 2014, when several educational policies and mandates, particularly the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which stated by law that all students, no matter where they live in the United States of America should be proficient in all core content areas (i.e., math, science, reading, etc.) by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Yet, many internal and external stakeholders concerned about education have not sounded the alarm on this matter, the fact that 2014 is just one year away and all of our students still are not performing proficiently.

Unless something miraculous happens over the next few months, we will have more students than any other time in our recent history that are not prepared for the world in which they live. More specifically, we find that American students, particularly students of color in urban areas are greatly impacted by this systemic disenfranchisement that occurs everyday in our nation's schools. This systemic disenfranchisement is seen through less than satisfactory school facilities, a less than challenging curricula, some unmotivated teachers, ineffective policies and school district bureaucracy, ineffective leadership and many other symptoms that highlight an educational system that is in need of total transformation. The resulting fact that is when we look at students from all racial groups, nearly 50 percent or more of all public school students are not proficient in the aforementioned core content areas. In some racial groups, this number climbs to as high as 90 percent.

To begin the change in a positive direction, this report, *Pursuing Extraordinary Outcomes in Public Education*, from *The Urban Education Collaborative* at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Sugar Creek Charter School (Charlotte, North Carolina) provides a roadmap to give us hope that our nation's schools can transform with the current times to be centers of learning excellence, not just for a privileged few; but, for all students who enter their doors everyday. We must understand that if positive change is going to happen, we can no longer operate at a status quo level. We have to move past the petty arguments that we hear in the field of education daily (i.e., public schools vs. private schools; traditional public schools vs. charter schools, etc.) and strategically partner with those who are willing to say enough is enough – our kids deserve better. We must clearly understand that we are seeking improvement for all students, no matter their zip code. Now is the time to pull together and move forward.

Finally, we applaud Sugar Creek Charter School (Charlotte, North Carolina) for having the courage to initiate this report and for forging a true partnership with an urban research university (*The Urban Education Collaborative* at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte) to pave the way for public schools to have a roadmap for moving forward to pay the educational debt we owe to our nation's children. We encourage every stakeholder, internal and external, to read this report and take action in your local area to transform your school or school district. Additionally, we encourage individuals who are passionate about the field of education, to put copies of this report into the hands of the leaders (e.g., school board members, principals, superintendents, etc.) who have the capacity to implement the contents of this report. We no longer have time to waste – the time is now!

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The Urban Education Collaborative
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

The vision of *The Urban Education Collaborative* is to become a national model of excellence for partnering with urban schools, community organizations and the business community to improve economic, educational opportunities and the quality of life for our nation's urban students. This is achieved by advancing the intellectual, social, economic and educational conditions of urban students in the state of North Carolina and the nation through knowledge dissemination, innovative programming and strategic partnerships.

Sugar Creek Charter School
Charlotte, North Carolina

Sugar Creek Charter School is a North Carolina School of Distinction and one of North Carolina's highest performing public schools with a primary population of African American students from low-wealth communities.

Schoolwise
Charlotte, North Carolina

Sugar Creek Charter School has partnered with *The Urban Education Collaborative* at UNC-Charlotte to form a new initiative called Schoolwise to transform public education and provide educational opportunities for all students.