



*Using ESSA to Redesign
High Schools to
Support Their
Communities in the
21st Century*

Students at the Center

Hope, Agency, Trust & Relationships



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At the start of the school year, high school students and teachers express positive and shared hopes for the school year.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIcU5uHMdTM>
- Students and teachers want similar outcomes when it comes to hope, well-being, engagement, and academic success



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During the School Year, HS Students' and Teachers' Actions Tell a Different Story

- When HS students were asked to express their current emotion:
 - 39% said tired
 - 29% said stressed
 - 26% said bored
- Student apathy, lack of motivation, and behavior are often cited as factors underlying teacher stress, burnout, lack of satisfaction, and turnover



The hopes HS students present at the start of the year more closely resemble their elementary than their high school experience

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2016 Gallup Student Poll Engagement Items

% that strongly agree:	Grade 5	Grade 11
• Do best	35	17
• Schoolwork important	66	28
• Feel safe	62	30
• Have fun	47	16
• Best friend	84	57
• Good work	50	30
• Learned something interesting	59	32
• Adults care	67	24
• Excited about future	71	44

GALLUP STUDENT POLL, 2016



The Result?

- High rates of student and teacher absenteeism, particularly in high-needs and high-poverty schools
- High rates of student suspension
- Clear evidence that high rates of student and teacher absenteeism, and behavioral challenges in class, lead to less learning and poorer school experiences for all

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Hope is Important to Student, School and Life Success

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- Hope involves taking positive thoughts about the future, putting lots of resources and hard work behind them, and gauging your progress until it happens.
- Hope drives attendance, credits earned, and GPA in high school.
- Hope varies by place, not by grade. Those that feel the most hopeless are the lowest income male students in cities with high inequality and low social mobility.
- Students are generally confident in their future, but lack necessary strategies to reach the big goals of graduation and employment.
- 46% are not confident they can find many ways to get good grades.



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**So, why do students and teachers
want similar outcomes but often
get different results?**



Intentions and Actions are Not Aligned

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- Movies like *Lean on Me*, *Dangerous Minds*, and *The Principal in the '80s and '90s* help shaped the perception of what is wrong with schools
 - Focus on being hard and punishing students
 - Belief that schools and students need to be held more accountable
 - Deficit language, culture, family, and community
 - Idea that one charismatic leader can come in and save the school
 - The inner city as the “other”
- These ideas produced policies like zero-tolerance, fostered a need to blame someone, and gave rise to what some researchers call a school-to-prison pipeline
- The evidence base of what works does not support these ideas

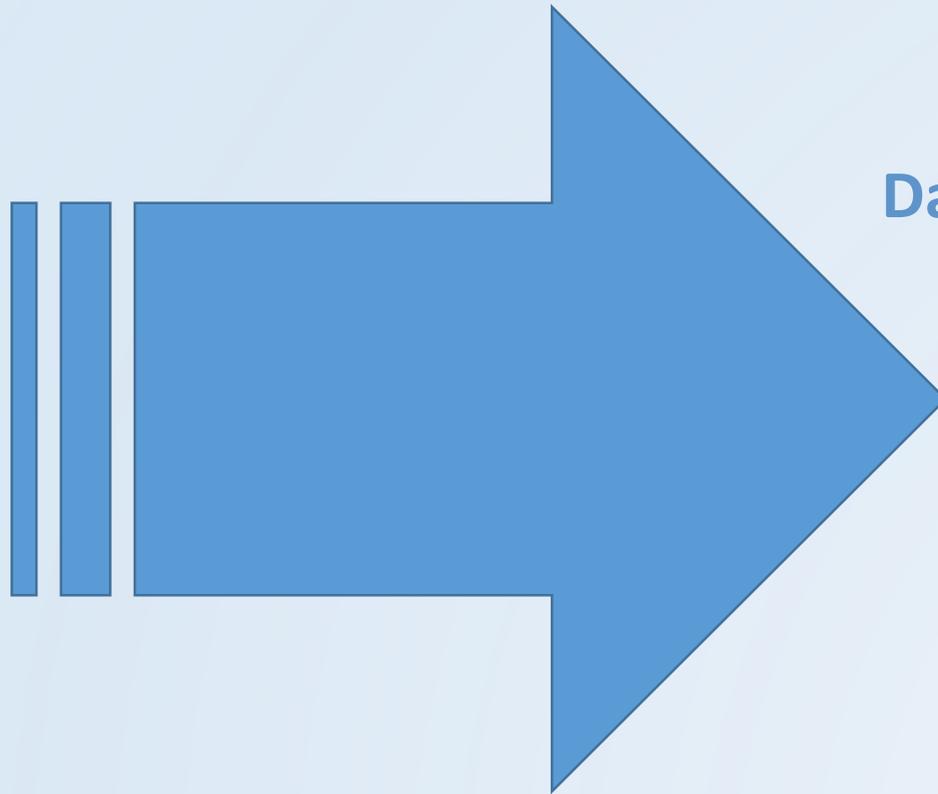


Shifting to Evidence-Based Ideas

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FROM

I am not a social worker
Those People
Data for accountability
Punitive
Deficit
Fixed mindset
Mistake bad
Shame
Half-empty pessimism
Compliance



TO

How can I help
We are the people
Data for improvement
Restorative
Asset-based
Growth mindset
Mistake learning
Resilience
Half-Full Optimism
Commitment



Aligning Our Intentions and Actions

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- There is no one-size fits-all approach to redesigning schools
- Evidence-based research continues to stress the important work of aligning our intentions and actions in two ways:
 - Incorporating Student Voice
 - Cultivating Agency



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Let's Explore Student Voice



Incorporating Student Voice

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- Offer multiple opportunities for students to provide feedback and input
- Not only hear the voices, embolden student voices
- Incorporate student ideas into the decision making process
- Culturally relevant education:

Attempts to engage and empower students by incorporating their cultural backgrounds in classrooms and focusing on issues that are relevant to their lives



Hearing their Voices

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- Don't quit on me
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpFG6mNAkAc>



Using “Dropouts” as an Example

- 20% of young people per year don’t graduate from high school
- 200 young people were interviewed in 30 facilitated groups in high-poverty areas
- What researchers found: young people did not want to be called dropouts
 - Other preferred terms: non-graduates, early school leavers, continuous enrollment and interrupted-enrollment
- These young people offered many reasons for interrupted enrollment

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Don't Call Them Dropouts

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Cultivating Agency

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- Agency: the capacity and propensity to take purposeful initiative—the opposite of helplessness
- Young people with high levels of agency do not respond passively to their circumstances
- The development of agency may be as important an outcome of schools as the skills we measure with standardized testing
- Evidence suggests that positive relationships in school—including student-teacher relationships—contribute to students’ success



Developing Agency, Building Hope

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***Warning: Challenging
Interactions Ahead!***



Cultivating Agency

The Influence of Teaching

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Exhibit 5

Implications for Teaching Across the 7Cs to Develop Agency

1. CARE

Be attentive and sensitive, but don't coddle.

2. CONFER

Encourage and respect students' perspectives, but don't waste class time with idle chatter.

3. CAPTIVATE

Make lessons stimulating and relevant while knowing that some students may hide their interest.



Cultivating Agency

The Influence of Teaching

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4. CLARIFY:

- Clear up Confusion
- Lucid Explanations
- Instructive Feedback

Take regular steps to detect and respond to confusion, but don't just tell students the answers.

5. CONSOLIDATE

Regularly summarize lessons to help consolidate learning.



Cultivating Agency

The Influence of Teaching

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6. CHALLENGE:

- Require Rigor
- Require Persistence

Anticipate some resistance but persist.

7. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Achieve respectful, orderly, and on task student behavior by using clarity, captivation, and challenge instead of coercion.



Building Agency, Developing Hope: Strategies

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NYC Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) implemented these strategies

- Promote relationships through mentoring programs
- Take responsibility for student learning and success
- Build on students' strengths
- Provide academic supports to keep students on track for college—some schools provided intensive test preparation for the New York State Regents exams, the PSAT, and/or the SAT
 - Focus writing instruction on college-level writing and research papers
 - Partner with higher education institutions that allow high school students to take college classes and earn college credit



Building Agency, Developing Hope: The Superpower of Positive Adult Relationships

- Evidence shows that positive adult relationships that provide support without pity, and practical problem-solving ability, are the strongest and most universally successful student support at our disposal
- For example, in NYC, chronically absent students assigned a success mentor who interacted with them in school at least 3x per week, gained nine additional days of schooling, which was educationally significant. Overage chronically absent students returned to school the following year at much higher rates.

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Hopeful About Discovering the Geniuses

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Two quotes:

“I have never encountered any children in any group who are not geniuses. There is no mystery on how to teach them. The first thing you do is treat them like human beings and the second thing you do is love them.” – Asa Hilliard

“We are a people. A people do not throw their geniuses away. And if they are thrown away, it is our duty... as witnesses for the future to collect them... if necessary, bone by bone.” – Alice Walker