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Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators of California

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Serving as a sub-committee to the
Student Programs and Services Steering
Committee

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*“Meet you at the top...
tools to get there.”*

Join us for the JCCASAC Mini Conference at the
Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite National Park

Save The Date!

October 8 – 9, 2015

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VISION

Under the direction of the County Superintendents, and as a sub-committee of the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee (SPSSC), JCCASAC is a professional educational organization dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are competent, caring, and academically prepared for their futures.

MISSION

The mission of JCCASAC is to support student success by creating a collegial network of County Office administrators who:

- Research and share best practices regarding new and innovative program options for at-risk students
- Provide training, support and assistance to new administrators
- Endorse and support legislation that advocates for the learning needs of all students
- Give input and guidance to the superintendents relative to the diverse needs of our student population

GOALS

- Improve student achievement through research and sharing best practices
- Support special projects that enhance instructional programs
- Provide regular training for new county office administrators
- Conduct successful conferences with statewide representation
- Publish the JCCASAC Journal that informs superintendents, administrators, teachers, and affiliated agencies of the latest research, effective teaching practices, methodologies, and that showcases successful programs
- Provide scholarships to eligible graduating seniors in order to encourage life long learning
- Represent JCCASAC through participation in statewide committees
- Monitor legislation affecting County Office alternative education programs
- Advocate for legislation and policies that support the unique needs of our student population

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR- ELECT

MONALISA VITELA - JCCASAC CHAIR, 2014-2015

It is hard to believe my year as Chair of the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California (JCCASAC) is coming to an end. It has been an honor to serve as the Chair this past year. I would like to thank the JCCASAC Board, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, and the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee for their continued support. It has been an interesting year filled with new systems such as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), and Smarter Balanced Assessment System. Administrators and teachers have encountered many challenges however, due to the support from our colleagues and SPSSC we have transitioned and equipped Juvenile Court Community School (JCCS) leaders with the appropriate tools to empower our staff and youth.

JCCS programs continue to provide exemplary services to our youth. There are many unique & wonderful programs throughout the state which showcase your great work. During these difficult times, JCCS staff continues to be creative and views what some call failure as opportunities to teach and learn. We provide a safe learning environment for students and cultivate equality. As Manny Scott, motivational speaker and original Freedom Writer states, "Everything in your life is a wing or a weight." "Cut away the weights, and hold onto the wings."

The JCCASAC Board examines pending and approved legislation and trends in alternative education. We have a team of administrators that monitor bills and the impact they may bring to our county offices. JCCASAC has provided me the opportunity to network with other educational experts throughout the state to improve our practices and student achievement.

Once again, thank you for the privilege of being the JCCASAC Chair this year. I highly encourage you to continue to participate in our membership meetings, mini, and annual conferences. The network will allow you to learn about best practices & continue the great work you do. You will find our meetings to be meaningful and rewarding! Best of 2015-2016.



Monalisa Vitela is the Senior Director of the Imperial County Office of Education-Alternative Education School. She has been an educator for 22 years and aspires in improving the lives of the students she serves. Her passion in working with "at-risk" youth began in her first occupation as a Juvenile Detention Officer at the local Juvenile Hall facility. Her experience includes teaching, counseling, principal, and now the Senior Director. She is committed and lives by the ICOE mission statement which is to provide excellent educational services and leadership to children and families.

TELKA WALSER - JCCASAC CHAIR- ELECT, 2015-2016

Welcome to Napa and the 46th Annual JCCASAC Conference, Make a Difference !!

Everyone who works in the court and community school world was the inspiration for this theme as each one has the drive to Make a Difference in the lives of our students and families. Whether through the classroom, support services or administering our way through the maze of state and federal challenges, we all focus on the outcome of our efforts for students. JCCASAC has been my personal support group for over 7 years. The network of individuals is second to none in their dedication and support of programs and people that support the youth we serve. The sharing of ideas, best practices, war stories and encouragement is what JCCASAC does! I encourage you all to get involved and attend the Mini Conference at Tenaya Lodge on October 8 and 9, and the General session meetings in January and March, one will be in Sacramento and the other in Southern California.

My hope is that you all enjoy the conference, the keynote speakers, presenters, the venue and the conversations over the next three days and leave rejuvenated with new ideas and contacts and the energy to continue to MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



I work at the Stanislaus County Office of Education as Director III, Among other things I oversee site administrators and all state and federal budgets, reporting and plans:) I have served as a site administrator in Alternative and comprehensive education for 21 years.



By OLIVIA DAHLIN M.S., MFT, LPCC, PPSC
 SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“A child experiencing mental health issues is more likely to have problems in school and is at greater risk of entering the criminal justice system”

National Prevention Council, 2011

In the last five years the conversation surrounding mental health treatment services has become an increasingly important topic for education and school based agencies. Unfortunately, the discussion has come at a time when the State has been facing unprecedented educational budget cuts and restrictive funding. This has limited educational institutions availability to develop, create, and implement comprehensive mental health programs to address the growing need for services being requested of schools. According to a report published by the Surgeon General's Office, “A child experiencing mental health issues is more likely to have problems in school and is at greater risk of entering the criminal justice system” (National Prevention Council, 2011, p. 48). San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS) is a County Office of Education that provides services to students referred for enrollment due to difficulties at their district school related to truancy, failing grades, substance abuse and an array of disruptive behaviors. Many students are already involved in the criminal justice system upon referral from district and arrive with a variety of specialized needs to comply with their probation terms of agreement. This places SBCSS in a unique position to provide services and programs tailored to meet not just educational needs but also an opportunity to identify and address the growing mental health needs of this specialized population.

Many students referred to Community Schools enter the program already presenting behaviors representative of mental health disorders. Studies confirm that one

in five children/adolescents experience a mental health disorder during the course of the year and the majority of mental health disorders are present before 14 years of age (Parens, E., Johnston, J., 2008). Tragically, “less than 20% of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental health problems receive the treatment they need” (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2). Furthermore, research indicates “the unmet need for mental health services is greatest among underserved groups including, elderly persons, racial/ethnic minorities, those with low incomes, those without health insurance, and residents of rural areas” (National Prevention Council, 2011, p. 48). San Bernardino County is the largest geographic county in the state of California with over 33 school districts both urban and rural. Within those territories, SBCSS has established over 14 Community School programs providing for the needs of students referred out of their district of residence. Each school is specifically located in one of our three regions: Desert Mountain, West End, and East Valley where San Bernardino County students can easily commute to and attend a local school site. The US Census Bureau (2014) identified that from 2009 to 2013, 18.7 percent of San Bernardino County residents were living below poverty level compared to the 15.9 percent national average. Kidsdata.org (2015) also identified the average median family income for San Bernardino County residents falls significantly below the median income average for the state of California.

During the 2013 to 2014 school year, data obtained from the California Depart-

Median Family Income

- Year(s): 2010-2012

| Locations | Currency |
|-----------------------|----------|
| California | \$67,458 |
| San Bernardino County | \$57,485 |

Table from Kidsdata.org.

ment of Education (CDE) Consolidated Application for Categorical Funds Title I, II & III (2015) identified 66.45 percent of students referred to SBCSS are low income and may therefore qualify for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) under Title I funding. This means many of the students referred may also be eligible for Medi-Cal health benefits including mental health treatment services. From 2011 to 2012 nearly 18.9 percent of students in San Bernardino County reported needing help for an emotional or mental health disorder (Kidsdata.org, 2015). Sadly, we know many of those students will not receive the treatment needed. As a result of these alarming statistics it has become essential upon referral to SBCSS that students are offered skilled assessments and support services. The services must address the referred problematic behaviors and identify whether or not a mental illness may be contributing to the impairments evidenced in academic, social or behavioral functioning.

In an effort to address and resolve the growing concern for children with untreated mental illness, SBCSS opened the Student Services Counseling Center (SSCC). The goal is to provide alternative education students with access to free mental health services located on school campuses. To make comprehensive mental health services available to all 14 Community School Programs, Independent Studies, Juvenile Halls and Alternative Special Education Sites within its jurisdiction, the SSCC partnered with The San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health (DBH). This partnership established SBCSS Counseling Center as a contract agency in which school based outpatient services

are provided free of cost to all SBCSS students up to age twenty-two. This includes those who are eligible for Medi-Cal and meet medical necessity based on a determination of their significant functional impairments at home, school or within the community. Significant functional impairments can be defined as any condition that negatively impacts academic, social, relational performance and/or interferes with developmental progress. Proper diagnosis of mental health impairments can often result in the student being identified and connected with appropriate services for special education programs. In addition, students may also be connected to higher level mental health support services such as Wraparound or intensive outpatient services. Treatment services at SSCC are provided to all students regardless of their insurance provider and billing is only issued to Medi-Cal for reimbursement of students who qualify. This collaborative relationship with the DBH has been instrumental in offsetting County Schools program cost to districts. It has also increased sustainability of the program through staff development and program expansion.

Services available through SSCC are provided by clinical staff with the following licenses or registrations: Licensed Marriage Family Therapists, Marriage Family Therapy Interns, Associate Clinical Social Workers, and Professional Clinical Counselors. The clinical staff is supervised weekly by a licensed practitioner who also oversees their client caseload. The SSCC currently employs 19 clinicians who are located at the school sites and who travel to the SSCC clinic for supervision and professional development. Each school site has been assigned at a minimum one part-time clinician who works no less than two days a week. Many of the larger SBCSS schools however have one or more full-time clinicians on site. The mental health eligibility and treatment is determined through a comprehensive clinical Child/Adolescent Intake Assessment, an interview with the parent and/or guardian and the student. The assessment assists in identifying medical necessity and distinguishing the appropriate level of care needed by the student. The clinical evaluation process is an important step necessary for the

clinical team to establish and document the most suitable service model. This may include: individual, group counseling (i.e. drug and alcohol, anger management, life skills), family counseling, parenting, case management, and/or any other service deemed appropriate to by treatment plan goals. The treatment plan is specifically developed in collaboration with the student to ensure agreement and compliance with therapeutic services. Treatment plan goals address specific behaviors and work toward alleviation of symptoms. The clinician works with parents, guardians, significant support persons, and any community agencies relevant to the services. This team approach facilitates the unison of all supports necessary to subdue symptoms associated with mental illness and reduce impairments to functioning.

“Suicide, which often occurs in the presence of mental disorders, was the second leading cause of death among children aged 12–17 years in 2010, and approximately 8% of children aged 12–17 years reported ≥ 14 mentally unhealthy days in the past month” (Center for Disease Control, 2013, p.15). Various types of interventions can be employed in a student’s treatment plan objectives that focus on amelioration of mental health symptoms and significantly reduce the risk of adolescent suicide. Early intervention and evaluation of students through the SSCC includes a comprehensive suicidal and homicidal threat risk assessment. The clinicians implement ongoing evaluation and utilize a variety of evidence based practices monitored through outcomes measurement tools and weekly clinical supervision. These include use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Solution Focused Treatment, and Motivational Interviewing. Additional strategies to assist students can include the Trauma Resiliency Model (TRM), Art Therapy, Psycho-Education, Sand Tray, Dialectical Behavioral interventions, and Gestalt Therapy interventions. The duration of therapy is determined through measurement of progress on goals and clients eligibility for reinstatement into their district school of residence. A timeline for termination of services is mutually developed with the client, parent and/or guardian to determine when therapeutic support is no longer necessary.

Certificates are provided to students upon successful completion of program requirements predetermined by school districts, probationary agreements and/or court mandates.

The clinical staff at SBCSS Student Services Counseling Center is also actively involved in projects that enhance school culture and climate. The intent of these projects is to improve goal setting and academic success as well as to prevent incidents of bullying and violence on campus. These projects include Student Assistance Programs such as Synergy Days, Career Days, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) activities and classroom educational presentations. The clinician presents curriculum and/or organizes guest speakers on topics such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases-HIV/AIDS Prevention, the iEmpathize exploitation program, substance abuse prevention, suicide prevention, anti-bullying, domestic violence and Narcotics Anonymous. The mental health clinician is directly involved in assisting the school in PBIS implementation, alternatives to suspensions/expulsions, monitoring and providing services for Individualized Education Plans (IEP’s), promoting positive mental health on campus and establishing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with outside agencies. In addition to these programs, clinicians are providing Designated Instructional Services (DIS) counseling for students who are qualified under Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). These services although deigned to address an educationally related goal include the full scope mental health services offered to all students in the clinic. The clinical team provides those services to eligible incarcerated students within the Juvenile Justice Program as well as a mental health treatment for the County High School Specialized Education Center

The recommendation from the Surgeon General National Prevention Strategy suggest we: Implement programs and policies to prevent abuse, bullying, violence, and social exclusion; build social connectedness; and promote positive mental and emotional health. Implement programs to identify risks and early indicators

of mental, emotional, and behavioral problems among youth and ensure that youth with such problems are referred to appropriate services. Ensure students have access to comprehensive health services, including mental health and counseling services (National Prevention Council, 2011, p. 50).



SSCC has been working diligently to ensure all of those recommendations have been included in our program goals and are being addressed by a comprehensive mental health program. This includes school and staff support of mental health initiatives and collaboration of both academic and mental health services. Teachers are actively involved in referral, data collection, parent engagement, and implementation of strategic interventions in the classroom. In his Psychology Today web post Mental Health and Stigma (2013) Graham C.L. Davey identified that adolescents report mental health stigma specifically from peers, school staff and family members. He identified that 46% of stigma from family was in the form of assumptions, avoidance, lack of trust and talking about the individual negatively. The peers stigma reported by 62% of teens showed up in loss of friendships or acquaintances and 35% of adolescents suffering from mental illness reported stigma from school staff in the form of avoidance, dislike or being regarded with low expectation of their abilities or potential. The endeavor to in-

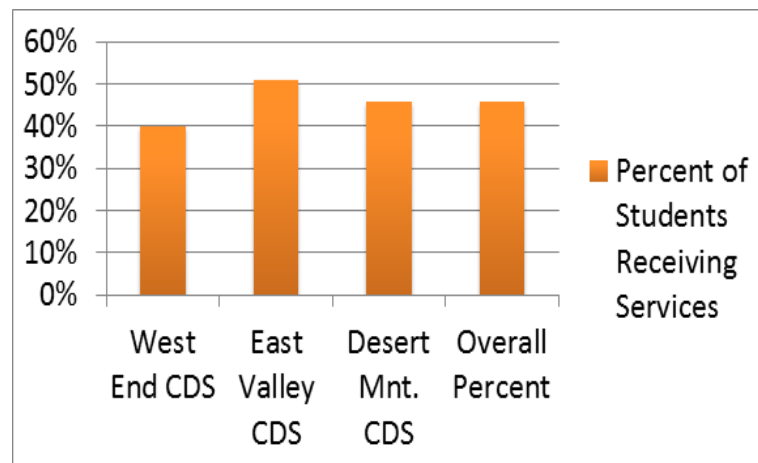
corporate mental health services in all academic settings reinforces the reduction of stigma among staff, students and parents, directly impacts school culture and promotes awareness of the link between behavior and mental illness.

As of July 2014, approximately 46 percent of students enrolled in County Community School programs were receiving mental health services by a clinician stationed at their school site.

During the past two years, the SSCC has provided over 930 certificates of completion for Drug/Alcohol and or Anger Management programs. In addition, the program has been able to hire seven additional clinical staff to provide therapy for the SBCSS Community School sites. The staff increase has resulted in a minimizing of the clinician’s caseloads to increase service delivery to each student. The DBH partnership has enhanced SSCC’s ability to expand services and provide even more intensive services to those students who are dealing with particularly difficult mental health concerns. By addressing each student’s unique needs, SSCC is working to directly impact school climate and provide greater opportunities for time to be focused on academic achievement and teaching in the classroom. The National Institute on Mental Health (2013) identified “Over 50 percent of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older who are served by special education drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.” This research furthers our motivation to stay current on issues pertaining to the multi-faceted needs of this diverse population. We are very proud of the work being done through the SSCC and the efforts being made to support student achievement and social emotional wellness. San Bernardino County Schools’ leadership has prioritized the mental health needs of the Community School population and advocated and supported advancement and funding for mental health services in our County Schools. This administrative support has been absolutely essential in the program growth and success. SBCSS students are receiving comprehensive mental health treatment free of cost in a school environment which values and esteems personal

and emotional development and growth. This significant contribution to the lives of at risk youth is just one of the many ways SBCSS is showing their students, families, staff and communities that they value the lives of each and every individual that crosses the door into the program.

Olivia Dahlin M.S., MFT, LPCC, PPSC is the Program Manager for Clinical Services at San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Student Services Counseling Center. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and has a Pupil Personnel Service Credential. She has been providing mental health services for at-risk students for more than nine years and is involved in the leadership team for PBIS implementation at County Schools.



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“Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation.”

—Lao Tzu

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Abstract

Given the hunger for leadership, why are leaders in such short supply? Goffee continues this sentiment and says leadership should always be viewed as a relationship between the leader and the led (Goffee, 2006). At Virginia Tech, our Principal Preparation Program focuses on developing effective school leaders by redefining popular conceptions of 21st Century leadership and instructing students in the new ideas, attitudes, and approaches to work— making mind shifts— aspiring leaders need to make to transition from teaching to leading. The transformation to becoming the leader you need to be, want to be, ought to be, and will be will occur when the aspiring leader makes significant mind shifts in their approach to leadership. Leadership is changing and is now more commonly defined as a shared, collaborative responsibility rather than an individual one (Pink, 2009). To train upcoming leaders to succeed in the 21st Century, we must consider new paradigms of leader behavior. The role of the leader is to visualize both the future and how the future might be achieved. Shifting focus from *what* happens—the events themselves—to *how we respond* to what happens is a key to transitioning into leadership. Ultimately, the way we transition and make change is our personal choice and responsibility (Brenner, 2011). This article discusses the self-transformation of the new leader—a personal behavioral and change process, first in thought, and later in action, that will help people make the mind shifts necessary to become more effective leaders.

“Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your ownself-transformation.”

- Lao Tzu

Given the hunger for leadership, why are leaders in such short supply? Research suggests two reasons. Firstly, organizations, despite wanting leaders, structure themselves in ways that stifle leadership. Too many organizations systematically destroy leadership by encouraging conformity of role-players leading to an impoverished sense of who they are and what they stand for. Secondly, conventional understanding of leadership is somewhat narrow. The main body of leadership literature focuses on the characteristics of leaders. As Michael Fullan suggests, characteristics and behavior can be changed, there are specific leader behaviors that need to be taught and understood (Fullan, 2014). Neither environment makes for creating effective leaders (Zuieback, 2012). The popular assumption is that leadership is something we do *to* other people. Leadership experts believe we should conceive of leadership as something we do *with* other people. Goffee continues this sentiment and says leadership should always be viewed as a relationship between the leader and the led (Goffee, 2006).

At Virginia Tech, our Principal Preparation Program focuses on developing effective school leaders by redefining popular conceptions of 21st Century leadership and instructing students in the new ideas, attitudes, and approaches to work— making mind shifts— aspiring leaders need to make to transition from teaching to leading. In our program, we collaborate with colleagues and discuss new ways to challenge aspiring leaders to grow, individually and collectively, in the direction necessary for successful school leadership. The program faculty recognize that many aspiring leaders are in a period of transition—from teaching to becoming teacher-leaders and eventually moving on to become school

leaders of teachers. Many aspiring leaders experience uncertainty during these transformations. Many search for clarity and direction in understanding what “leadership” means and has become. The faculty discussed several paradigm shifts or mind shifts to consider (Barker, 2001). Seeing leadership in a new way may help an aspiring leader to move forward in their career. The transformation to becoming the leader you need to be, want to be, ought to be, and will be will occur when the aspiring leader makes significant mind shifts in their approach to leadership.

Leadership is changing and is now more commonly defined as a shared, collaborative responsibility rather than an individual one (Pink, 2009). Preparation programs, even work environments, are changing and being redesigned, too. We can change the format of a program—we can change the organizational environment to encourage the development of new leaders or to fit new definitions of leadership—but before we do any of that, we must first help aspiring leaders change their thinking. By teaching new conceptions of appropriate leadership behavior, we also teach new ways to approach and solve problems (Fullan, 2014). To train upcoming leaders to succeed in the 21st Century, we must consider new paradigms of leader behavior.

The word “paradigm” was popularized by Thomas Kuhn’s book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, originally published in the latter part of the 20th century and recently updated in an 50th anniversary edition (Kuhn, 2012). The word “paradigm” in the dictionary means “pattern” or “model.” Joel Barker offers an extended definition: a system of rules and regulations that first establish boundaries, then offer guidance on how to successfully solve problems within those boundaries. Paradigms, as he explains them, offer a model for problem solving (Barker, 2001). The essence of both paradigm shifts and leadership is devising new ways of seeing problems and then planning for change (Denning, 2012). The role of the leader is to visualize both the future and how the future might be achieved.

The greatest challenge for a leader is to successfully initiate change (White, 2007). In other words, we move from the passive state of just watching events unfold to the active state of creating a hoped for outcome of our own choice. Shifting focus from *what* happens—the events themselves—to *how* we respond to what happens is a key to transitioning into lead-

ership. Ultimately, the way we transition and make change is our personal choice and responsibility (Brenner, 2011).

Researchers have conducted many general investigations on paradigm shifts and how leadership should be defined and discussed in the 21st Century (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). Unfortunately, in the specific field of school leadership, very little research has examined the personal transformations required to transition from classroom teaching to school administration, especially considering that new definitions of leadership are being developed and programs for preparing school leaders are being revamped by schools of education. It is as though we have a new definition and a new curriculum challenge, but someone forgot to talk to or about the person being trained (Wagner, 2006). No research studies focus on the “whys” and “hows” of challenging upcoming leaders to think differently about the work they aspire to do (Robinson, 2011). Sir Ken Robinson goes on to write about the urgent need to re-invent our education system and by definition the training of teachers and administrators as a corollary to help transform schools and improve student learning. This article discusses the self-transformation of the new leader—a personal behavioral and change process, first in thought, and later in action, that will help people make the mind shifts necessary to become more effective leaders.

There are three areas of management all leaders must master to successfully create an environment that fosters change—in particular, change that has resulted from making a mind shift that allows for understanding former problems and behaviors in new ways. The three areas are:

- A. Big picture thinking, personal development and collaboration
- B. Conversations and peer interactions
- C. Innovation in tackling assignments, creating products, and providing solutions

Each of the following areas defined and explained below contribute to the mind shifts aspiring leaders must make to move from an old world management perspective to a 21st Century one.

Area A. Big picture thinking, personal development and collaboration

In regards to area one big picture thinking, the following may help clarify. The phrase “the big picture” means

the major, main, or important part of something—and is usually future focused. A person is described as seeing the big picture when he can understand a situation or concept as a whole rather than getting bogged down on specific details. So, from a personal perspective what you believe is needed and where you see the organization going---it’s all about a philosophy, a vision and seeing the “big picture”. Great leadership is not a technique. It comes from within. In *Impact*, Irwin suggests that truly engaging others flows from the essence of who we are—from our core. Management is positional; leadership is personal (Irwin, 2014).

The sub parts of the “big picture, personal development and collaboration” area might include the following statements to help an aspiring leader or even the leader’s mentor to determine if one understands the essence of Big Picture thinking:

1. From being led to you being the leader in your own learning and life goals, professionally and personally.

Successful leadership depends on growing and protecting our core. Of course, self-awareness is key. Our culture’s obsession with striving to look perfect makes us reluctant to look at our own behavior—that some of our impulses are noble, while others are not so benevolent. It is not that we have yielded to our shadow, but we prefer to deny that we even have a shadow (Irwin, 2014). Whether you are near the top of the ladder or still have a ways to climb, you can eliminate your dysfunctions and move to where you want to go. Leaders often have to overcome unconscious annoying habits to attain a higher level of success (Goldsmith and Reiter, 2007). Power and our tendency to misuse it is an area we need to be aware of. Self-awareness and self-regulation must grow in direct proportion to the power we exert (Kouzes and Posner, 2010).

2. From being a teacher with a boss to being the boss. Instead of looking to someone for tone, direction and answers to you being the person who sets tone, direction and believes you can find the answers.

Tim Irwin has suggested, too, that leadership failures rarely reflect a problem with the leader’s competence. Most often the fall occurs because of a breach of something inside the leader. This is not surprising be-

cause we lead from our core. No matter how polished we become on the outside, eventually what is on the inside comes through (Irwin, 2014). Personal analysis of one’s strengths is key. Careful personal analysis can also offer perspective on how talents can emerge in different ways for each unique individual (Rath, 2007). You have to accept the responsibility of leading, to lead, and as Bell says in his book, *Great Leadership*, a leader also needs to take charge of his or her growth while leading others (Bell, 2011).

3. From playing it safe to taking calculated, responsible risks. Push yourself in your growth and development, embracing the uncomfortable in order to grow and become more than you are now.

With an acceptance of your natural self comes a willingness to experiment, take risk and grow in the process—be quick and nimble (Bryant, 2014). When we feel able to experiment, take risks and make ourselves vulnerable, our ability to learn, to increase our self-awareness (and our awareness of others) to change our immediate impulsive reaction and over ride our emotions in order to achieve our goals increases dramatically. Buckingham and Coffman suggest that great managers share one common trait: They do not hesitate to break virtually every rule held sacred by conventional wisdom (1999). Don’t be afraid to try new things, take risks and use your natural strengths (Baldoni, 2011). Make it safe to fail (as well as prevail). Reasonable risk, daring to try something radical while keeping a grip on what works and what doesn’t, is critical to every breakthrough success. Asset-based thinking is a way of looking at yourself that emphasizes what is working in your life and the strengths you possess (Wasiak, 2008). The practice of mindfulness--the ability to focus our attention on what is rather than be distracted by what isn’t--can be a powerful antidote to the distractions and stresses of our modern lives, especially our working lives (Mackenzie, 2014). Maxwell says that leadership can be learned by anyone but it’s not easy. Leadership is demanding and complex. He writes that leadership is the willingness to put oneself at risk. And finally that leadership is the passion to make a difference with others (Maxwell, 2008).

4. From doing for you, to doing for others.

The easiest way to create a sense of we, says Kurtz-

man, is unfortunately to create the specter of them. Because it is easy, it is probably the reason you see this dynamic played out in so many organizations. While it is a shortcut to common purpose, it can also be a path to organized opposition. Organizations are created to achieve goals that are beyond the capability of an individual to accomplish alone. They are a method of aligning groups of people so they achieve common goals (Kurtzman, 2010). Being able to read a situation is fundamental to this balance and it comes from having both self-knowledge and a quality best described as *mindfulness*. The essence of servant leadership is to serve others, to have an outward focus (Temes, 2007).

5. From being part of a group to leading the group. Bill Cohen has said that heroic leadership is special. It requires leading a group with absolute integrity while raising individual performance to a personal best and building a team spirit of sacrifice for the common good, and adds, heroic leadership requires tough standards (Cohen, 2010). Michael Maccoby states in his book, *The Leaders We Need*, that to lead in the global enterprise you'll need to know even more about people (Maccoby, 2007). We will learn how to use kindness to: motivate, recognize unique talents, nurture; establish a supportive environment; spur organizational growth; adapt to change; stimulate risk-taking; prepare the next generation of leaders for the good of their organizations (Baker, 2008).

A great person attracts great people and knows how to hold them together. - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Area B. Conversations and peer interactions

David Whyte says the core act of leadership must be the act of making conversations real. Conversations, and sometimes what are referred to as difficult conversations, are what build relationships. Conversations that provide the opportunity for possibility and conversations about choice are also in the arena of the leader who leads. Leaders create the opportunity for conversation. By bringing people together for conversation they increase engagement, commitment and accountability. Leaders ask people to share their own genius and assume personal leadership. At that point the ability to listen becomes paramount (Whyte, 2011).

The sub parts of the “discussions and peer interactions” area are:

1. From a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Ev-

eryone is capable of learning and changing, and not only being a good team leader, but when called for, being a good team member—even a follower.

Choosing to lead is one of the most rewarding decisions you may ever make. Your job is to use your gifts to help others express, make known and fulfill their potential. Influencing others with a purpose, a calling, and with opportunities they never imagined they had. It's a mindset of service. It's a mindset of continual learning. It's a mindset of growth. The single biggest truth of leadership is that we build who we are by building up others (Dweck, 2007). In *Reinventing Leadership*, Warren Bennis wrote that good leaders should also be good followers. Leaders and followers share certain characteristics such as listening, collaborating, and working out competitive issues with peers that when seen in terms of everyone growing and becoming more than they are the whole organization benefits (Bennis, 1995).

2. From a garden being watered to watering a garden. A successful culture is like a green house garden where people and ideas can flourish—where everybody in the organization, regardless of rank or role, feels encouraged to speak frankly and openly and is rewarded for sharing ideas about new products, more efficient processes, and better ways to serve customers (Bryant, 2014). Investing in people by understanding their strengths and nurturing them like a gardener with prized plants. To some degree however, developing people in an organization is impossible. You can't develop them; they develop themselves, and so your job is like that of a head gardener. You figure out what the various microclimates are around the place, and then you figure out the qualities of the plants that you need to go into those microclimates. Similarly, you select the people based on their strengths and place them accordingly (McKinney, 2007).

3. From a reactive posture in behaviors and questions to proactively driving the conversation forward by adding depth and value. Learning to move from reacting to responding. Looking for solutions instead of pointing out problems. Complaining sessions are useless.

In *What's Holding You Back?*, Herbold writes that we need gutsy leaders make sure that their organization has a simple, understandable, clear game plan for the future, a culture that is curious, even paranoid about the future, to keep people always looking for new ways to help the com-

pany grow and prosper. Management that doesn't confront problems and make the necessary tough decisions to change, typically ends up with a culture focused on pride in the past and the protection of old procedures (Herbold, 2011).

4. From presenting and putting on a show to facilitating discussions and conversations. Talk less, listen more, and find ways to foster learning for yourself and others.

Chris Thurman wrote in *The Lies We Believe*, that some of our causes of our unhappiness are the lies we believe in life. Too often, we operate apart from reality. Given a choice between reality and our version of it, we are inclined to choose the latter. The result is drama not peace. Instead of getting the results we want, we often end up with reasons, stories, and excuses for why things did not work out—leading to more drama, disengagement, judgment, and ineffective leadership (Thurman, 2003). As a leader your job is to create and facilitate environments where listening becomes the norm.

5. From directing to coaching and bringing out the best in others.

A question Kouzes and Posner have reported that they are asked time again is “*What's new in leadership?*” They answer that while the *context* of leadership as changed dramatically, the *content* of leadership has not changed much at all. The fundamental behaviors, actions, and practices of leaders have remained essentially the same since they first began researching and writing about leadership over three decades ago. That is probably the fundamental truth of leadership development. You must first understand where people are coming from---what they believe and understand. With that understanding, you can develop leaders in all contexts and weed out fact from fiction by helping people to see problems in new ways (Kouzes and Posner, 2011). With new mind shifts-new perspectives-leaders can move forward with new behaviors and approaches to leading and working with others, while bringing out the best in others. Inspiring leaders supply the right ingredients, earning his team's respect and trust with a blend of integrity, partnership, and affirmation (Blanchard and Muchnick, 2003).

Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens. – Jimi Hendrix

Area 3. Innovation in tackling assignments, creating products and providing solutions

Great leaders are not great because they are su-

per-human. Instead, they are ordinary but growth-oriented people with character that have chosen to make a commitment to a bold course of action that is in the best interest of those they serve despite the odds (Christensen, 2010). Great leaders are both creative and innovative with their problem solving thinking.

The sub parts of “innovation in tackling assignments, creating products and providing solutions” area are:

1. From one way to many ways to get to a product or solution.

The most significant contributions leaders make are not to today's bottom line, but to the long-term development of individuals and institutions that adapt, prosper, and grow. The effects leaders have on organizational life and culture-and the effects that organizations have on them are keys to getting problems solved (Kets de Vries, 2010). People should never take the job of leadership if they're unwilling to see beyond their own needs. If they do, they will ultimately fail and schools and students will suffer (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). Leaders have to continually find innovative ways to get the job done (Christensen, 2010).

2. From asking: Is this what you want? To showing: This is what I've done to create this product to accomplish this task.

Authors Chris Brady and Orrin Woodward, stress the importance of becoming a Performer in leadership development—the need to create a record of performance. That is to say, you need to become a great follower, a great contributor. In their book, *Launching a Leadership Revolution*, they said, the quickest, most assured way of gaining that track record of performance is to absolutely master the patterns of success already established in an organization. It should be the goal of every leader striving to become a Performer that the entire organization notices his abilities from a track record of performance. This will give him a platform and the experience to help others accomplish similar results. The route to influence is from past performance (Brady and Woodward, 2005). And in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Csikszentmihalyi says that by ordering the information that enters our consciousness, we can discover true happiness and greatly improve the quality of our lives while performing at our highest level of efficiency and effectiveness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). We get to the new by coming from

the past and into future with alignment of values, beliefs, expectations, and new performance behaviors/solutions. 3. From doing the assignments “as assigned” to suggesting how an assignment will help you grow and develop your skills more appropriately. If there is a better way to help you grow and learn, be proactive in making your needs known. There are no mind readers here.

Charles Handy, in another thought-provoking distillation of his thoughts, *Myself and Other More Important Matters*, ponders the idea of getting to the bottom of who we really are and the difficulty of seeing ourselves as others see us (McKinney, 2008). Handy suggests that throughout our lives we all play many parts and in a sense, become different people. He asks good questions: Can we become something different from what we see ourselves as being to this point? Can we become a leader? Handy weighs in further and says in psychology scholars ask whether we have a core identity that is sitting there in our inner self, waiting to be revealed, or whether our identity evolves over time. One of the perennial questions that bug organizations is a corollary of that debate – are leaders born or made (Handy, 2006). The connecting with others grounded in empathy and vulnerability that consultant David Noer writes about is not something we can work up. It comes as the result of our own struggles and growth. It is through our own struggles that we come prepared to help others (Goldsmith, Kaye & Shelton, 2010). We are born and we are made.

4. From submitting work with potential errors to a adopting a peer-review process - getting another pair of eyes on your products prior to submission. Take the chance to develop your skills in having “courageous conversations” with one another. There is nothing tidy or clean about leadership. It’s messy, but so is the rest of life. Working with others to improve work products is a must.

What makes an effective leader is a contradictory collage of motivations and drivers, rewards and costs (Pink, 2009). We cannot teach leadership, not in the sense that we’ve been trying thus far. We cannot look at all the theories of leadership and say: Do this, this, and this, and you will become or create a good leader. But we can understand leadership much better than we do now. If we take a look below the surface, into the heart and pulsing arteries of leadership, we are bound to understand leadership as a

process much, much better (Smith, 2008). Leadership is a collaborative process on many levels if all angles are being considered, both personally and in process with peers. Team member collaboration and learning is also one key indicator of team effectiveness and leader influence (Higgins, 2009).

5. From “good enough” to “wow!” The standard of your work passes the “boss’s boss test” - where your boss advocates for you to his/her boss and uses your work products as demonstrative of your high competence and skill.

Everyone needs to behave like a leader—no matter what they do. Everyone needs to do a part to shape culture. Everyone needs to be positive and inspirational. Everyone is a leader. But everyone is not the same (McKinney, 2007). And as Jim Collins has suggested, good can be the enemy of great. You can become so conditioned to think of performance as something that develops along evolutionary lines -from poor to good to outstanding- that it takes a minute to grasp the notion that competence can actually inhibit achievement. Make sure you work is of the highest caliber and quality. Do your best and do it again and again until you know for sure the product meets your high standard. In summary, when we find ourselves on our path, not knowing which way to turn and wishing for guidance, we can turn to ourselves. We may not know the right answer rationally or intellectually, but if we simply ask, let go, and wait patiently, an answer will come. The more we practice this and trust this process, the less we will look outside ourselves for teachers and guides for we will have successfully become our own leaders and our work will meet the “wow” criteria (Taylor, 2014). When your work meets your criteria it is likely going to be work your boss will also be proud to share.

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. – Harold R. McAlindon

Bottom-line 1 “Big Picture”: Superintendents (or bosses) do not have time to do their job and yours, too. They cannot handhold and create precise rubrics for what they want you to do as a leader. Rather, superintendents hire leaders who think creatively and strategically to assess, create, innovate, implement, evaluate, and repeat the cycle (Christensen, 2010). Bottom-line 2 “Conversations”: Colleagues and staff, “are looking for vision, a leader to collab-

orate, be creative and articulate the direction” (Martin, R. personal communication, February 5, 2015). If you need too much direction in these processes, the boss will find someone else who can do it more autonomously. Bottom-line 3 “Innovations”: You about you. Make sure your work meets your standard. You have done your best and you know it. Leadership literally defines the promise of hope or future life. Extremely capable leaders are needed in all walks of life but particularly in education where schools are being asked to do more and be more than ever before (Kolditz, 2007). In *The Tipping Point* Gladwell changed the way we understand the world. In *Blink* he changed the way we think about thinking. In *OUTLIERS* he transformed the way we understand success (Gladwell, 2011). Be the innovative leader you are capable of being, it only takes self-transformation and it begins with thinking differently about where you are and how to get to where and what you want to be.

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**“Education is not
the filling of a pail, but
the lighting of
a fire.”**

-William Butler Yeats

College Connection builds a relationship with students, which creates trust. Our incarcerated students say, “You come back to help me when others do not.” ”

The United States flourished partly because of its strong public education system, but students traditionally served through county office alternative education programs are most at-risk of not completing high school and have seemingly little chance of attending college. Students served through Riverside County Office of Education's (RCOE) College Connection are incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities, are parenting teens, are on probation, are in foster group home placement, are expellees, and/or are recovered drop-outs. Most come to our programs credit deficient, with multiple suspensions, and high transient rates. These students lack home and community support to assist and mentor their personal growth and education. Unsuccessful in traditional school settings, yet desiring to make something of their lives, they desperately need individualized support and structured guidance to succeed. Our students have suffered the disappointments of deferred dreams, but we give them a chance to realize their dreams of a successful future. Students served are scattered across 27 different school site locations over 7,300 square miles in Riverside County and, for many, RCOE is the last chance and best hope as an alternative to dropping out of school. We equip students with the necessary tools and supports to facilitate their academic progress and successful transition to post-secondary education, since surveys show that 72% of our students want to attend college after graduation.

College Connection helps students identify pathways to earn a diploma, a GED, or a certificate of completion, and to develop a transition plan that details requisite academic resources, college links, and necessary career and technical training. Our students deserve the opportunity that we offer

for a second chance, a chance to save a valuable resource and prevent the all too common consequences of dropping out- crime, drug abuse, and welfare dependency. College Connection offers that chance via the guidance and structure from RCOE staff. We are fully committed to do “whatever it takes” for our students to succeed, complete their high school education, and go on to higher educational options.

The U.S. Census Department shows a direct connection between earning power and quality of life and advanced educational levels. In his 2013 State of the Education address, County Superintendent Young talked about the relationship between education and quality life in Riverside County. “High quality education and technical training are vital keys to solving repressive, long-term economic problems.” Key to a good quality of life for students is preparing them for college and the modern workforce. College Connection directly addresses this need and is aligned with the goals of the Common Core State Standards in preparing students for college and career readiness. College Connection builds what David Conley (2010) calls “contextual skills and college awareness (college knowledge).” Students learn about the college context and the personal relations skills necessary to cope with post-secondary options. Our students need significant assistance to see the possibilities that lie beyond their own, often devastating, life experiences. Research shows that at-risk youth have a better chance of achieving academic success when they have caring adults who assist with educational and career guidance in an environment that is student-centered, and characterized by high expectations, trust, and frequent positive interactions (Allensworth and Easton, 2007). When students establish meaningful

relationships within the school community, they feel both connected and empowered to succeed. College Connection builds a relationship with students, which creates trust. Our incarcerated students say, “You come back to help me when others do not.”

The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools made a commitment to increase high school graduation rates and career and college readiness for all students within our county. Our emphasis is on long-term outcomes that have lifelong relevance to students, parents, and communities, and RCOE’s efforts are producing results: according to California Department of Education statistics (April 2014), the county’s high school graduation rate has increased for three consecutive years and is now the third highest among comparable sized counties. For our RCOE Alternative Education students, survey results show continual increases from 2011 to 2013 in students’ self-reported academic achievement, confidence in graduation, and college aspirations. These increases

represent a 20% growth in survey results related to high school completion and higher education goals.

Linking the students’ educational program to individualized, personalized learning opportunities is the key to relevance. College Connections has successfully assisted over 1,000 highly at-risk students to attend college. Its highly individualized approach insures that no students fall between the cracks, and that they receive personalized, targeted support throughout all aspects of the transition process. Students learn how to develop and work toward goals and objectives. They receive direct individual guidance and support through a process that includes follow-up at every step of the way through mentoring, coaching, and support. When students enroll, a Career Interest Inventory is administered during orientation. Students then review records to determine progress toward graduation, and develop a personalized education plan detailing steps for completion of high school graduation requirements with specific attention to what is needed to enroll in college. Students have access to over 35 courses that meet a – g requisites.

This process sets high expectations with built-in accountability and follow-up based on students’ individual plans insuring students have the support and guidance necessary for successful transition from high school into a post-sec-

ondary pathway. There is a checklist for each student tailored to individual needs and circumstances. Students are given homework assignments such as finding out their California High School Exit Exam scores or gathering information to complete financial aid applications. This builds student confidence and accountability, and breaks down the path of progress into small tasks and steps. Once a senior student is identified as eligible to graduate, the planning process for transition to a post-secondary institution is accelerated. College application and financial aid documents are completed with a staff member sitting side-by-side with the student on the staff’s laptop or in the school’s computer lab.

RCOE staff, through numerous partnerships, connects students with entry-level assessments and college admission counselors. Afterwards, students are required to call and report the results to RCOE staff. In some situations, RCOE staff members meet students in the admissions office or walk students through the admission process. Students’ faces light up when familiar faces are there to assist them every step of the way and to advocate on their behalf. Each student receives a personalized portfolio folder where the student maintains important documents such as enrollment confirmation and financial aid approval. Additional support is provided through college tours, career days, financial aid workshops, senior nights, college and career days, parent nights, college visits, college guest speakers, and career exploration activities. These experiences help actualize our College Connection participants. One student remarked during a recent tour, “I am on a college campus and college students look just like me.”

College Connection has created a high-expectation culture with our Alternative Education programs and created a college-going mindset within Riverside County. A recent editorial in the Press Enterprise congratulated RCOE’s College Connection “for not giving up on students who have not given up on themselves” and for “helping turn many at-risk young people into productive citizens.” Lindsay Simmons, a single teen parent of a two year old, recently graduated from the Ben Clark Training Center as a medical technician after completing an intensive educational program and passing the state board exam for certification. Lindsay stated that “Without the support of College Connection, I would not

have gained the courage to move forward.” Lindsay connected her boyfriend Gilbert, a former gang member, with RCOE’s Come Back Kids drop-out recovery program. Gilbert graduated with his high school diploma and is enrolled to complete a medical assisting program at Riverside Community College. Both Lindsay and Gilbert attribute their success to RCOE’s College connection program. Their family now has adopted college-going culture since they are planning for their daughter Kylie’s graduation and college enrollment in 2026!

Many of our students are the first in the family to graduate from high school and most are the first to attend college. Raul is another success story. Raul left his college financial aid paper work at home, and hesitant to phone home to ask his parents to bring the paperwork to school, he asked the College Connection staff to call his dad, who agreed to bring the paperwork to school. When his dad arrived, Raul began completing the financial aid application online with help from RCOE staff while his mother and sister waited in the van. Having learned this, the teacher invited both into the classroom to wait. Raul’s sister stated that she also wanted to attend college. She was set up on a computer and completed the application and financial information as well. Raul’s father, who was celebrating his 80th birthday, tearfully proclaimed that it was the best gift ever with his children enrolled in college.

College Connection is sustained by careful and efficient use of available human and material resources, collaborative community partnerships that surround students with support, and a highly trained staff dedicated to creating a better future for at-risk students. RCOE administrators from the Student Programs and Services Division work closely with staff to provide ongoing support, access to current research information and policy, and data compilation. RCOE administrators ensure that College Connection staff are connected to a larger network from districts and school sites throughout the county. The quote by Anatole France best describes College Connection, “To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only to plan, but to also believe.

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“My contention is that creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.”

- Sir Ken Robinson

BY: DANIEL J. LOEWEN, MA AND COREY GREENLAW, ED. D

“Those instructors who have chosen to teach in a court school have the unique opportunity to effect positive change in a young person’s life when it is needed most”

-Karger & Currie-Rubin, 2013

Like so many Court Schools across California the teachers that choose to make a difference in juvenile justice settings face academic and social odds that consistently make instruction challenging (Gagnon & Bottge, 2006; Karger & Currie-Rubin, 2013). With the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) looming in 2009 it became evident that the Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE) Juvenile Justice Campus (JJC) curriculum needed to be updated. The update would require a revamp of standards, curricular materials and, most importantly, instructional practice. This process was going to require thought, time, and substantial mathematical knowledge on the part of the instructors.

The minors being held in custody within Fresno County are housed within FCOE’s Juvenile Justice Campus. This facility generally houses upward of 300 students and has a fully accredited high school on site. The evolution to this location and the school within it has a rich history of the collaborative efforts of the Fresno County Probation office and the Fresno County Office of Education. From the early 1970’s to 2006, young offenders were housed near downtown Fresno. The primary goal of this first facility was to incarcerate, as well as rehabilitate, young people who required detainment. It was during this time that Alice M. Worsley was hired as the first teacher within the Juvenile Justice system. The aim of the new, one room schoolhouse within the complex was to rehabilitate, while teaching academics such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and history. As the population within the facility grew, the educational staff and curriculum also grew. In 2006 a new facility was built to house offenders as well as the school they attend.

The Alice M. Worsley Court School, lo-

cated on the Juvenile Justice campus, is divided into two school locations. The detention portion of the campus is comprised of students who are awaiting direction from the court. The average length of stay for individual students is one week. An open enrollment combined with a high turnover rate does not allow for accurate longitudinal assignments; or assessments, therefore the teachers in these 11 classrooms develop lessons for an ever changing classroom dynamic. The commitment section of the school houses 15 classrooms with an average length of stay for a student of three to eight months. Although the middle school students are placed in a separate classroom, it is typical for grade levels in all of the classrooms to vary.

The Fresno County Community Schools consist of three sites. Kermit Koontz Educational Complex (KKEC) hosts an average of 140 students who have been suspended from their home districts. The seven instructors at KKEC teach in self-contained classrooms. The current average length of stay for a student is three months. Violet Heintz Educational Academy (VHEA) is home to six teachers and hosts 78 students. These students are currently on probation and are awaiting direction from the court. The average length of stay for these students is three to six months. The DNA Core Conditions work specifically with students housed within a group home setting. These students often have special academic and social needs and require specialized instruction, with a total population of about 20 students per class. (Fresno County Office of Education).

In order to address some of the concerns with transition to common core and update effective math practice in the Court Schools, FCOE applied for a grant

with the California Department of Education. The grant, titled “Creating Algebraic Thinkers” (CAT), was submitted to the Math Science Partnership (MSP) and provided an in-depth introduction to Common Core standards and instruction to participating teachers (Radford, 2014; Radford & Peirce, 2006). The CAT working group consisted of key individuals from the Court Schools, FCOE, Fresno Pacific University (FPU), and representatives from six other school districts within Fresno County. This group designed the framework and overall structure for the three funded years. The participants were given two options: teachers could participate in professional development courses during the year and summer for a stipend or the teachers could use their stipend combined with a reduced rate to receive their Master’s Degree in Mathematics Education from Fresno Pacific University. Ten Court and Community School teachers participated in the three-year MSP Math Partnership grant. As a direct result of their participation, six teachers within the Court and Community Schools earned Master’s Degrees in Mathematics Education from Fresno Pacific University, culminating three years of dedicated learning and teaching.

The focus of the CAT program model was on two areas of teacher professional development – continuing education in mathematics, and practice in effective pedagogy in creating algebraic thinkers. The first area addressed the issues concerning math coursework received during pre-service training. During the three years funded by the grant, the teachers received a minimum of 60 hours of professional development in Common Core Mathematics; 40 hours which took place in an intensive one-week summer institute coordinated by FCOE and conducted by professors from Fresno Pacific University. To address effective pedagogy academic coaching, 21 additional hours of follow-up training were provided throughout the year. Weekly coaching conversations revolved around appropriate pedagogy, and practice related to the training provided in the grant.

As part of the grant activities, the participants needed to overhaul the current assessment system. During the 2011/ 2012 school year, one of the primary goals for the Fresno County Court and Community Schools was to build a solid benchmark testing system. The system need-

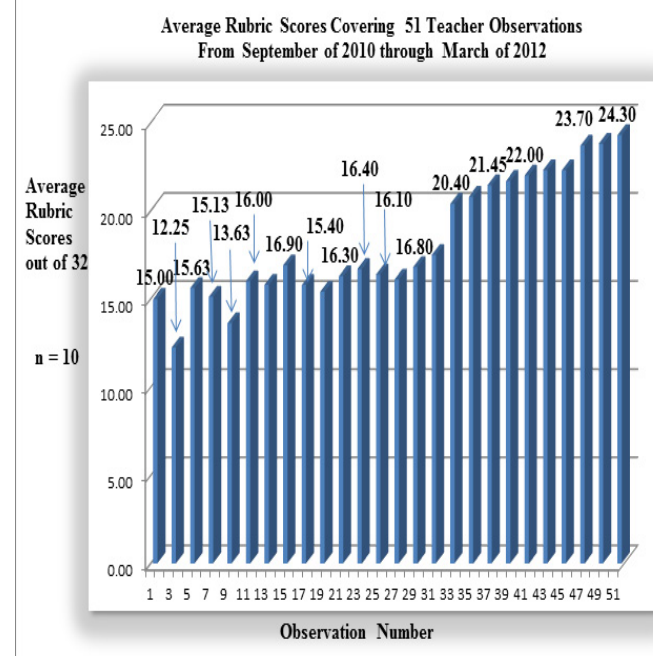
ed to be used to document student progress over time and guide in lesson planning and best practices within mathematics instruction. In progress towards this goal, over 100 exams in Algebra were aligned or developed within the data management system. High student turnover rate became a problem when planning mathematical units and assessments required during coursework (Gagnon & Bottge, 2006; Karger & Currie-Rubin, 2013). The continual changing student population was identified as the single most important issue to address when developing accurate benchmarks or unit exams. Answering questions concerning yearly progress on student performance was very problematic. Teachers noted that shorter units and more targeted exams assisted in mitigating this problem. Although these strategies seemed to help, teaching Common Core units required more time. The issue of how to teach Common Core in the unique educational environment that is the Court Schools consistently dominated discussion.

As the goals of realigning the assessment system were reviewed, the primary goal of the grant became clear. Deepening the instructors’ mathematical knowledge base in a graduate level academic setting created the foundation for higher mathematical conversations that directly affected classroom instruction (Stegall, 2013). How benchmarks are given to student changes with curriculum, data management systems, and new technology; however, how students learn mathematics is dependent on the math instructor’s knowledge base in mathematics and his/her ability to problem solve.

One of the measures used to assess questions concerning growth in algebraic thinking and pedagogy was the use of a rubric that addressed Common Core teaching practices and confidence in lesson development and delivery (Bonner, 2006). The Court School teachers were each observed 51 times over the three years and given a score out of 32 possible points by their coach. In addition, the instructors were asked to assess themselves using the same rubric. As Figure 1 denotes, the first year (first 14 observations) showed little improvement and some struggles; however over the period of the next two years, growth in mathematical confidence and pedagogy increased. These data show that the summer institutes, graduate coursework, coaching, and collaborative time with fellow instructors creat-

ed depth of knowledge and confidence in teaching higher math to their students (Bonner, 2006).

In review of the collected results, it was identified that collaborative academic discussion was one of the most important foundation building pieces of this endeavor. During observations it was noted that participating Court School teachers consistently provided leadership during Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings and facilitated collaboration that addressed appropriate curricular pacing, data gathered and testing protocol. These instructors led in the transition to the Common Core and helped develop timelines and curricular evaluation groups.



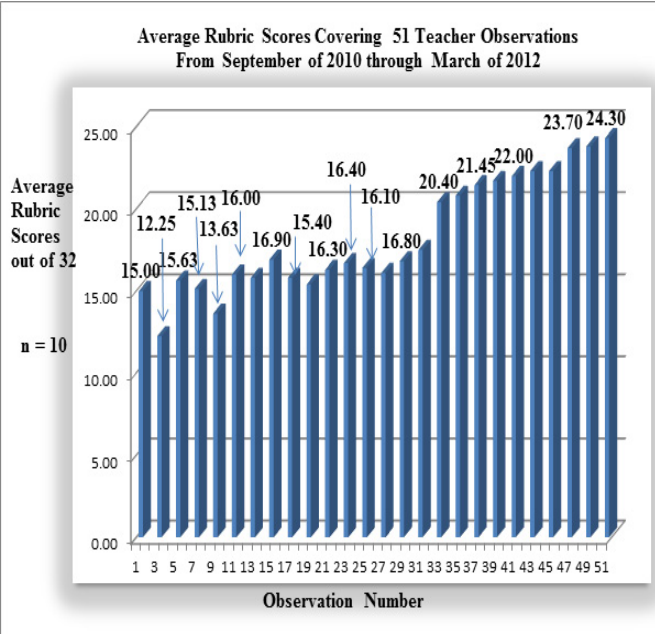
development and training, it is clear that the grant had a significant impact. Academic coaching continues to be a crucial part of Fresno County Court Schools' mathematics and science programming. Collaboration, coaching, and professional development attest to the sustainability of the CAT Grants' purpose.

Those instructors who have chosen to teach in a court school have the unique opportunity to effect positive change in a young person's life when it is needed most (Karger & Currie-Rubin, 2013). Although Court Schools instruction is a multifaceted job requiring skills that go beyond mathematical knowledge teaching with high levels of confidence is key when striving to effect lasting change in these students' lives. (Bonner, 2006 and Stegall, 2013).

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The mathematics instructor for the Court Schools met once a week over lunch as well as once a week during their PLC time with the participating teachers. The legal, social, and academic issues that define the reality of a Court and Community School classroom continue to; however, the way a mathematics instructor chooses to address these issues can adapt persist (Maccini, Gagnon, Mulcah, Mulcahy, Leon, & Leone, 2006). The methodology used to instruct students has changed; Depth of Knowledge (DOK) is replacing simple rote memory without context. A student's ability to speak intelligently concerning an accurate solution is crucial to forward progress in school and life. As teachers continue to seek out and attend influential professional

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Daniel J. Loewen, MA, Fresno County Office of Education Court Schools

Daniel Loewen, MA is currently working as a math and science coach, and has been an instructor for the Fresno County Court schools since 1997.

Corey Greenlaw, Ed. D. Fresno County Office of Education Assessment Data and Grants

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

-John Dewey



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Congratulations to the 2015 Award Recipient

Sandy Mast

I have had the best career of anyone I know. I always looked forward to going to work in Alternative Education. In Santa Cruz County, everyday was a grand adventure. Sometimes it felt like a root canal, other times like winning the big prize in the lottery, like when a student with an incredibly devastating story (we all have one) GRADUATED! Then, 10 years later, they grabbed you in a parking lot to tell you they were the nurse in charge of an emergency room. That is what it is all about for me. Grabbing one back from the precipice and making a difference.



Sandy began her career in education after serving as a therapist for a number of years in a chemical dependency center during the 1980s. After a few years as a teacher in an impoverished area of Fresno, Sandy and her late husband Jeff moved to Santa Cruz. Teaching jobs were difficult to come by at the time, so Sandy pursued another passion, wine. For the next seven years, Sandy managed the sales department of the Bonny Doon Winery. But she missed the students. She returned to the classroom and pursued an administrative credential. In 1998, Sandy became Assistant Principal at a local comprehensive high school. Still, she was looking for more.

In 1999, Mast began a fourteen-year career with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education. Here she spent “the best years of [her] life, finding ways to build programs that were student and community centered.”

In 2006, Sandy became the Director of Alternative Education, which gave her even more opportunities to lead. During her tenure, she grew programs and developed leaders. At OASIS, Sandy partnered with the local Community College and arranged for an Independent Study Program to operate on campus. This program has resulted in high levels of concurrent college enrollment, a focus on A-G courses, and post-graduation college participation. At Ponderosa and Nat-

ural Bridges she created partnerships with the Regional Occupation Programs (ROP), selected the right staff and built cutting edge school programming that focused on college and career readiness. Students at Ponderosa and Natural Bridges schools participate in community service as well as numerous ecological, project-based learning opportunities.

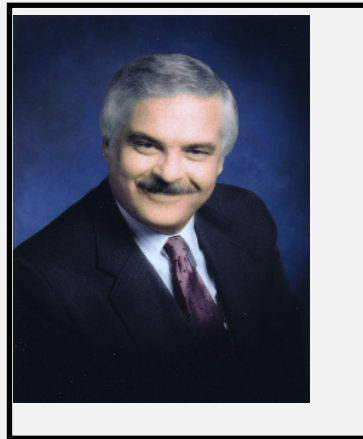
During her career in Alternative Education, Sandy served the JCCASAC membership, where she completed her tenure as the Board’s Treasurer. Wherever she was, she took the time to get to know people. According to one employee, “Sandy got to know her staff and identified their strengths. She inspired her staff to fulfill their potentials and provided opportunities to grow.”

She has been an advocate for countless students, believing in them and providing hope where hope had waned. “Sandy always took the time with students, even the most hardened, to help them see and remember who they really were. And she did this without judgment,” recalled another colleague.

When asked what career lessons she would want to impart to educators in the field, Sandy shared the following:

- It is more important to love than be right.
- Do not allow the agenda of the day to prevent you from being present in the moment.
- People will not remember so much about what you said but how they felt when you said it.
- Act/Take risks. If you step in it, you can always apologize later. In other words, it is sometimes easier to apologize than it is to get permission.
- People without a vision perish.
- Do not always take yourself so seriously. It isn’t always about you.
- Take time to laugh and play and do not drive yourself insane thinking you have to get it all done, unless you are doing brain surgery or a life is at stake. Then, you dig deep and pull an all-nighter if you have to.

As an administrator and a JCCASAC Board Member, Sandy tirelessly advocated for and believed in the futures of all students. She dedicated the last 14 years of her career to the students, families, and staff of Alternative Education throughout the State. And, for that, we honor her as the recipient of the 2015 Peshkoff Award.



John Peshkoff (1935-2006) was one of the founding fathers of JCCASAC (then known as Juvenile Court School Administrators of California or JCSAC). John served as the JCCASAC president in 1977-78 and again in 1990-91. He advocated for legislation and practices which support quality educational services for students in alternative education programs. He also served as a mentor, friend, and cheerleader to his peers and colleagues in the field.

The John Peshkoff Award is presented annually for memorable vision, service, leadership and commitment to JCCASAC students and programs.

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to Douglas Corbin Contra Costa County Office of Education



Douglas Corbin has been involved with “At Risk” kids since he was discharged from the Navy in 1998. At that time he was working his way through college and volunteering as a Youth Counselor with the Leadership Excellence Organization out of Oakland. Eventually, he graduated from Berkeley with Honors then went on to get his teaching credential.

Doug has been a Counselor/House Manager for Oakland’s Potter House as well as a Group facilitator for the Village Academy School in Oakland. Doug started with the Contra County Office of Education as a substitute teacher. He was quickly recognized for his love of kids and his creative teaching ability. In short order, he was offered a teaching position at the Mt McKinley High School in the Martinez Juvenile Hall. He is presently the Lead Teacher and a member of the “Teacher of Teachers” program at the Golden Gate Community School of Pittsburg. Notably, Doug has fostered a relationship with NASA and Stanford University bringing experts in the field of Astrobiology directly into his classroom via live video feeds. Because of this relationship, Doug’s students have improved academically and socially.

Doug is currently enrolled in a Masters of Arts program in pursuit of becoming an administrator in the near future.

Congratulations to all of our Teacher of the Year nominees.

Renee Estrada, Riverside County Office of Education



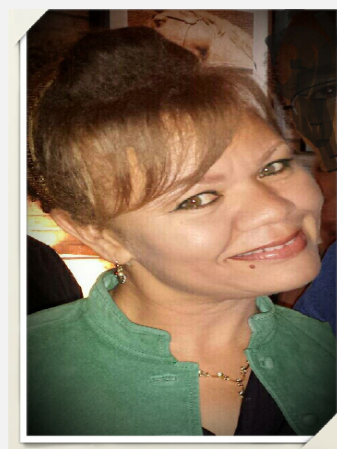
Renee has worked for Riverside County Office of Education since 2012. She is like no other teacher. Her energy and dedication to working with her students is undeniable. The walls of affirmation, displays of project based learning, and her use of impromptu wet labs provide students with consistent feedback that this is a place of learning and respect. She has a desire to help her students succeed beyond the boundaries of teaching traditional students in a traditional classroom. Renee recognizes her students as needing an education to be successful in life, in their life. She gives what is expected of a teacher, a mentor and much more.

Joe Bahash, Orange County Office of Education



Joe has worked for the Orange County Office of Education since 2005. He is an exceptional educator and team member. He has an overall willingness to go the extra mile for the students he serves. He regularly trains or helps train staff in various intervention strategies, goal writing and compliance issues. Joe is always ready to lend a helping hand or brainstorm about unusual and unique problems our staff faces in providing support and services for his students. He has a calling for his life, and that calling is teaching. He teaches his students to strive for excellence, respect each other, the importance of reading and math, and he teaches all his colleagues to give their best for their students. His high expectations is inspiring for all those around him and he is sought after by his peers as a resource and support.

Tyrese Crawford, San Bernadino County Superintendent of Schools



Tyrese has worked for the San Bernadino County Superintendent of Schools since 2007 as a Special Day Class Teacher and Alternative Education Teacher. Tyrese serves as a model for other teachers in San Bernadino County. Teachers observe her to learn how to implement various learning strategies into the alternative education classroom, in addition to observing her classroom management style. Her continued devotion to the field of education serves as an example for people who aspire to teach. She is a pleasure to work with because her positive attitude makes nearly any work seem fun and interesting. Her ability to calm angry or frustrated students is unparalleled, and it is because of her excellence in this area that she is repeatedly asked to mentor many students in trouble.

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees



Kathi Dunham-Filson, Stanislaus County Office of Education

Kathi has worked for the Stanislaus County Office of Education for the past four years. She consistently proves herself to be a truly outstanding teacher who exemplifies all of the characteristics that a successful alternative school teacher must possess. Her skills as a teacher are evidenced by her organized and creative lessons, her generation of class participation, and her knowledge of curriculum, her enthusiasm for the subject matter, classroom control, and a classroom environment that allows students to feel cared for intellectually and emotionally. She continually displays professionalism and compassion when interacting with students, parents, and staff. She fosters meaningful relationships with her students allowing them to reconnect to the academic environment.



Nancy Dempsey Napa County Office of Education

Nancy has been a teacher in the Napa County Office of Education for the past 24 years. She has served at several sites during her tenure at Napa County Office of Education often times volunteering to open new innovative programs. She came to the county office many years ago when they were a very small program. As the programs began to expand, Nancy became the mentor to many new teachers in the program. She spent countless hours before and after school working with new teachers while maintaining her own classroom. She worked with a construction teacher to develop a program where the academic instruction was aligned with skills needed for the construction trade. She has always taken on leadership roles. She has written technology plans for the program and been a leader in training staff on the use of the Promethean Board. Nancy has been an inspiration to students, parents, teachers, and a myriad of community partners in Napa for many years.



Greg Murphy, San Luis Obispo County Office of Education

Greg has worked for the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education for the past fourteen years. In his current position as the Sober School teacher, in a self-contained classroom, Greg has created an environment that is safe, supportive, responsive and accepting. Greg helped in developing the Sober School adolescent drug treatment program. He supported the early development of this program by helping with coordination, logistics, and guidance on working with community school students. He is admired by his students and consistently encourages them to focus on how their current choices affect their future. One of his most impressive characteristics is his continuous efforts to improve his practice. He is a self-starter and a trail-blazer and excels as both a leader and a team player.



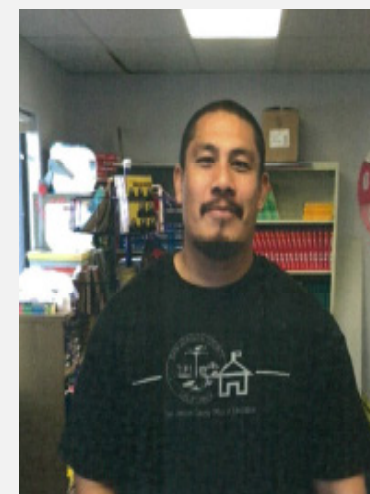
Matt Purdy, Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Matt has worked for the Kern County Superintendent of Schools since 2000. Throughout his years of service to Kern County, he has consistently proven himself to be a truly outstanding teacher who exemplifies all of the characteristics that a successful Alternative Education teacher must possess. He has exceptionally high standards for himself as a professional and holds his students to high standards as he works tirelessly to ensure that all his students leave his class better students and people than when they entered. He serves students in a variety of ways including using mini grants to purchase guitars for a music elective course, participating in curriculum updates, and supporting staff development in common core math practices as part of the Math Curriculum team. He is currently the lead teacher for Community Learning Center.



Shira Smith, Santa Cruz County Office of Education

Shira has been a teacher in the Santa Cruz County Office of Education Alternative Education Programs for the past 7 years. She has been an itinerant RSP teacher for the last 6 years, working at a number school sites with many different students with diverse needs. She is a truly remarkable teacher in her approach in helping students to see their potential within themselves. Her ability to connect with her students and her talent at teaching simple concepts, as well as engaging her students by challenging them to do their best, is truly superior. She is a true team player who always has time to sit, listen, mentor, and process with her colleagues. She is a dedicated professional who cares deeply about her students and she is an incredibly valuable member of the Alternative Education Family.



Lucas Homdus, San Joaquin County Office of Education

Lucas has worked for the San Joaquin County Office of Education since 2008. He is the academic teacher at Youth Build San Joaquin, where he has taught multiple subjects, English, Math, and Independent Study. Students love and respect Lucas. When you walk into his classroom, there is always a sense of organization, high expectations, mutual respect and calm, peppered with engaging conversation and laughter. He is gifted when it comes to finding the right formula that fosters a climate of respect, cooperation and tolerance and provides a conducive environment for learning. He gives freely of his time outside of school hours to provide transportation and accompany students on community service events. He is a role model and mentor for both his students and colleagues and is recognized as a leader by his peers and county administrators.

BY: GINA MICKLEY

“Longitudinal data showed a significant reduction in violent behavior after implementing dual strategies of reducing risk factors and implementing resiliency education over a two-year period”

-Resnick, Ireland, and Borowsky

Recently I attended a conference in which the keynote speaker made reference to Ann Masten's theory on the six competencies of resilience. As she was speaking, I became more and more interested in how resiliency competencies might be taught, and, if taught, how resiliency education might impact student violence. Shortly after the conference, we experienced a summer of unprecedented violence; many of the incidents involved kids who were either enrolled in our program, or had at some point been enrolled. Questions about these young men and women abounded. What happened to make them choose to engage in violent and criminal behavior? Could their teachers have detected patterns that might have predicted these outcomes? If so, was there anything that might have been done to prevent these crimes? I began reflecting on what I'd learned about Ann Masten's theory and wondered if resiliency was a key to helping students repudiate violence and build self-efficacy. While violence intervention programs are available to the expelled and adjudicated students enrolled in the SJCOE Alternative Education Program, no preventative curriculum exists for those students who are already responding to life's difficulties with violence. Many of these students believe that violence is an appropriate response, and is a viable solution to their problems. I began researching information on resiliency in order to determine if a resiliency curriculum exists, and if so, would teaching resiliency reduce the incidents of violence among our student population?

Resiliency refers to one's ability to experience a traumatic or difficult situation and

despite the emotional or psychological ramifications, adapt, then thrive within current social norms. Children who lack resiliency are more likely to engage in violent behavior, perform poorly in school and/or abuse drugs (Masten and Coatsworth, 1998). Research has indicated that resiliency education is an effective means of preventing and minimizing the social exclusion of at-risk children (Apostlov and Edwards, 2007). Children who experience social exclusion are more likely to engage in criminal behavior. (Rak, 1996). Children who live in the inner-city are exposed not only to violent living environments, but must also deal with a greater probability of friends and/or family members becoming victims of violence (Martinez-Torteya, Bogat, von Eye and Levendosky, 2009; Blum 2012). This exposure leaves children and adolescents vulnerable to criminal activity as a means for survival, as well as escape (Duncan, 1996). Race and socio-economic status, as well as family social structure contribute to at-risk behaviors that necessitate resiliency education. (Martinez-Torteya, et al., 2009; Blum, 2012, Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick, and Sawyer, 2003; Werner, 2012). Policy-makers have become involved in promoting resiliency education for children as they observe adolescents experiencing social exclusion and turning to deviant behavior as a result. Research identifies factors that show how some children are more resilient than others, and provides insight into how resiliency education can produce positive results. (Rak, 1996; Apostlov and Edwards, 2007).

In the past, mental health professionals

have sought to provide preventative measures and tools for at-risk children, particularly those experiencing antisocial disorder. Studies researched by Miller, Brehm and Whitehouse (1998) provide evidence for resiliency education as a means for prevention as well as de-escalation of the progression of at-risk behaviors. Preventative measures help to equip children and adolescents with the skills to overcome adversarial situations; however, resiliency education must also speak to the needs of older children and adolescents who are already living in abusive and other detrimental environments (Masten and Coatsworth, 1998; Martinez-Torteya, et al., 2009; Miller 1998)). Resnick, Ireland, and Borowsky (2004) analyzed longitudinal data that showed a significant reduction in violent behavior after implementing dual strategies of reducing risk factors and implementing resiliency education over a two-year period.

One issue with implementing resiliency curriculum is the lack of assessment necessary to measuring resiliency needs in children. The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (RSCA) was studied by Prince-Embury (2011) and proven to be a reliable test of resiliency needs in children and adolescents. This allows for the development of universal resiliency curriculum development. Understanding the concept of resiliency is instrumental in creating resiliency constructs and implementation strategies. Resiliency needs change with environmental stressors, therefore constructs must be elastic in nature (Olsson, et al., 2003; Prince-Embury, 2011). The development of resiliency education must answer the question, how are some children able to seemingly recover from traumatic circumstances and go on to become successful while others experiencing the same conditions develop antisocial, deviant, violent and/or addictive behavior issues? (Blum, 1998; Miller, 1998; Apostlov, 2007; Prince-Embury, 2011). Studies show lack of resiliency is the answer to this question. (Prince-Embury, 2011; Resnick, 2004).

If lack of resiliency answers, in part at the very least, problems of violent behavior, and studies show that resiliency can, indeed, be taught, we owe it to our students and the so-

ciety in which they live to provide the means for developing resilient minds.

Biography:

Gina Mickley has taught for 14 years and has taught for the San Joaquin County Office of Education's one. Program. She is currently completing her Master's Degree focusing on Resiliency Curriculum for at-risk populations.

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BY: SCOTT BAILEY AND JULIA MURPHY

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-Emma Goldman

“I think the biggest impact of the Writing Exchange is that we have students opening up and writing about their lives.”

About the Author
Scott Bailey is a Special Education Instructor at Table Mt. School in the Butte County Juvenile Hall. Julia Murphy is an Instructional Paraprofessional at Table Mt. School. Both Bailey and Murphy live in Butte County; both are dedicated to their students, and proud to be part of the team at TMS and BCJH.

Scott Bailey believes in the power of self-expression. A Special Education instructor at Table Mountain School, his job includes connecting kids with their voice, and offering a time and place to use it. As the force behind the Writing Exchange, he has seen kids reap the benefits of claiming their voice since 2006, when he first started having students write about their lives in a single classroom at South County Community School, a court school in Oroville, CA. Says Bailey,

Eventually my job was split between two schools, which led to the exchange; we started sharing writing between North (Chico) County Community School and South (Oroville) County. During the summers, I started doing the exchange in the hall (Butte County Juvenile Hall/Table Mountain School)...first one classroom, the next year two pods (classrooms), and then three. From there, I just wanted to try new things.

Bailey’s interest in facilitating writing groups for kids in court schools was due in large part to Erin Gruwell, author of the book *Freedom Writer’s Diary*. After reading the book with his ED class in 1999, Bailey attempted to contact Gruwell with letters and phone calls until his class was able to speak with her on the speaker phone. Later that school year, they traveled to see her present at a local event, which eventually led to Bailey working as one of the original Freedom Writer Teachers, a group that has grown to over 300 teachers worldwide. Gruwell and Bailey have had a working relationship for over ten years, and Gruwell was extremely

supportive as the Writing Exchange began to emerge, to the extent of conference-calling with pods and sending autographed copies of her book to the young women in the school when the exchange first entered Juvenile Hall.

To follow the evolution of Bailey’s “new things” for Table Mt. School: the students began exchanging with Fresno’s Juvenile Hall; the current exchange came about as a result of an affiliation with Gruwell and another Freedom Writer Teacher from Fresno Juvenile Hall, Bill Feaver. Says Feaver about his students’ reaction to the exchange:

I treasure this partnership with Scott. He helps me inspire my students, who work very hard to complete the writing prompt each month. The Writing Exchange does so much to teach students about the writing process. My students have to write and revise their work at least three times before they submit it for teacher review. They are inspired by the possibility that their work may be published on the blog. Also, critiquing the writing after publication is huge.

Fresno and Butte County students have been exchanging work since June 2008. The partnership between the two schools has propelled the students’ work by giving a wider scope than just their own Juvenile Hall; it has also solidified the community and support at each school separately, with kids taking ownership of their school’s work in a way that transcends the author and includes the whole school. For a time, the Writing Exchange shared work with student on the East coast who were being tried as

adults and even with students in South Africa one summer. Sacramento and Lassen Juvenile Halls have also been participants in the exchange; but because of Bailey's connection with Feaver, Fresno and Butte County have been the most consistent and longstanding participants in the exchange.

In addition to partnering with other Juvenile Halls, the Writing Exchange blog www.writeyourtruth.blogspot.com also brings a wider audience to the participants' work. The blog gets roughly 600 hits per month, with people from places as far-off as France and China reading students' stories, poetry, and journal excerpts. There is also student artwork on the blog, most of which is submitted by Table Mountain School's art teacher, Macy Joachim. Her work deserves another entire article; the startlingly good student art on the website complements and adds richness to the blog and to the written submissions.

Students welcome (in fact, eagerly await) both Joachim and Bailey's lessons, which foster self-expression and strengthen creative confidence. Even jaded and disenfranchised kids find that with a little persistence and a supportive environment, they can completely surprise themselves with their own creative prowess. Says Bailey:

I think the biggest impact of the Writing Exchange is that we have students opening up and writing about their lives. Students who would consider themselves "non-writers" are now motivated to write, and asking when the exchange will happen. Students hand me writing even when it is not a writing day! Our students are very eager to have their work read, published, and shared.

Student enthusiasm for the exchange at Butte County's Table Mt. School might be due in part to the fact that Bailey enters student work every year in the local weekly paper's writing contests, "Fiction 59" and "Poetry 99." Student work has been selected for inclusion in the Chico News & Review contests every year since Bailey started submitting it; indeed, in some contests, student work from Table Mt. School has fairly dominated the entries. And for good reason: the

submissions from students are undeniably compelling.

The future of the Writing Exchange is...well, unwritten. Bailey is committed to the exchange for the long haul:

Even if it's simply the three pods in our hall, it is amazing. I have tossed around the idea of having a few students continue to write after they leave the hall, but I'm not there yet. We published two small booklets of writing while the exchange was at the local court schools. I would like to take all of the writing from the last three years and put together another book at the end of this school year...

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“The majority of students at the truancy sites are significantly behind academically and present with vast learning gaps in reading, writing and mathematics.”

About the Author
Kathy Tenney, Randi Carlson, Livell Mitchell, and Brian McClay are truancy intervention teachers at the one.® Frontier sites for the San Joaquin County Office of Education

Student truancy is a problem that school districts face statewide. What are community school programs doing to combat this major problem? The San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) Alternative Program has identified the problem as being so significant that we have established, "Increasing Attendance and Decreasing Truancy" as a program goal for WASC, our Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), and is a goal in our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

In the 2012-2013 school year the one.® Program opened a school site, one.® Frontier to solely focus on truancy. Two teachers operate the school site and students are referred after exhausting the entire truancy process. Some students are referred upon enrollment into the one.® Program, if they are coming via a district School Attendance Review Board (SARB) referral and upon review of their file it is found the student has not attended school for an extended period of time. In the 2013-20-14 school year the one.® Program opened a second truancy site, one.® Frontier 2, to accommodate the increased number of truant students in San Joaquin County.

The one.® Program is currently operating the two truancy school sites and serves approximately 100 students in grades 7th – 12th grade. The student population, like every school in the one.® Program, is very diverse and each student comes to school with their own unique set of barriers and roadblocks to success. Many of our students have significant physical, social and/or emotional issues that keep them from attending regularly. Students whose par-

ents are not able or willing to bring them to school become accustomed to not attending and use transportation as a reason not to attend. Several students also have children of their own. The majority of students at the truancy sites are significantly behind academically and present with vast learning gaps in reading, writing and mathematics. In an effort to address social and emotional issues of students several interventions are in place. The one.® Program partners with the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) for mental health services at Frontier 1 and Frontier 2. CAPC provides mental health clinicians for one-on-one counseling for students identified as in need of mental health services and who qualify through Medi-Cal. Additionally, the CAPC provides group-counseling sessions at the school sites to focus on working through barriers to education and building life skills. The one.® Program also partners with the San Joaquin County Probation Department. The Probation department provides probation assistants who support the school sites by helping monitor attendance, conduct home visits, and provide transportation in specified situations.

The school schedule is designed to be enticing and not overwhelming to the students who have been chronically truant, often for several years. The Frontier sites operate under a contracted learning model. Students are required to attend class four days a week, Monday – Thursday, for a minimum of 2 hours each day. When students do not attend their assigned class time the site teachers follow up with a phone call and home visits. When meeting with families or mak-

ing phone contact the teachers, administrators, probation assistants, therapists, school nurse, and counselors attempt to identify needs and address them. The Frontier sites attempt to eliminate barriers by connecting students and their families with resources available in the community.

When calls are unsuccessful, teachers follow up by conducting home visits. The home visits are an effective avenue for building better relationships with parents, guardians, and/or caregivers and help teachers gain an understanding of the home environment students are coming from. Students who continue to not attend are placed on a list for a multi-agency truancy sweep that includes school administrators, law enforcement personnel, probation officers, and school counselors. The truancy sweeps are held quarterly during the school year.

The Frontier sites are small school settings with two teachers at each site so strong relationships can be established. This is part of the intensive supervision and intervention plan to establish healthy relationships and routines with school. Once a student has exhibited significant improvement in both academics and attendance the teachers, students, and parents meet to discuss where the next school site placement should be. Students are placed at either a daily attendance or contracted learning site in the one.® Program. Occasionally a student returns to his or her district of residence if they are eligible. When students transition from a Frontier site, the teachers follow-up to check in on the progress of the students at the new school site. The intention is to continue to provide support and help student's transition into a more regular routine and find success in education.



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-Aristotle

“one.® Charter AVPA provides creative students with the tools needed to develop their passions and potential...”

About the Author
Todd Baker has been a teacher with San Joaquin County Office of Education's one.® Program since August, 2007. He has worked at several community schools, juvenile hall and Insight (an intervention site). Todd is currently a teacher at one.® Charter Academy of Visual and Performing Arts and was part of the self-study team that recently earned 6 years accreditation with a mid-cycle review from WASC.

one.® Charter Academy of Visual and Performing Art's (AVPA) mission is to provide students with the opportunity to identify and pursue their purpose, passions, and potential through academic and art integration. Located in Northern California's San Joaquin County, one.® Charter AVPA consists of three separate school sites serving approximately 175 students. On any given day students can be observed tackling academic concepts while infusing the arts into their studies. Digital portfolios, community performances, onsite open mics and quarterly student showcases are just a few of the ways that students are able to apply their passions and potential towards their education at one.® Charter AVPA.

The staff members and stakeholders of one.® Charter AVPA firmly believe in the connection between art and adolescent's cognitive, emotional and social development. The heart of the one.® Charter AVPA, therefore, is the enrichment artist program. There are approximately 6 enrichment artists including professionals in the fields of sound engineering, world music, slam poetry, vocal development, drums, guitar, piano and visual arts. While each site strives to incorporate art daily, one day is set aside each week for students to immerse themselves in artistic self-expression. Students and staff

often refer to these days as “enrichment days”. On enrichment days the students work with the enrichment artists on both personal and academic related art projects. Students can be observed painting, drawing, singing, dancing, recording and more. Each site provides unique artistic resources ranging from a professional dance studio to a state of the art black box theater and music-recording studio. The students are able to take advantage of these state of the art facilities on a daily basis. The one.® Charter AVPA provides creative students with the tools needed to develop their passions and potential while also acquiring real world skills necessary for life long learning. Such real world experiences include opportunities both in and out of the school site environment.

Enrichment artists, teachers, staff and stakeholders collaborate to provide opportunities and experiences for students that stretch beyond the typical school day. Student internships have included working with professional sound engineers in local recording studios, assisting in the production of Apollo Night, a local singing competition, and production of other local non-profit performances and competitions. The students not only volunteer as interns but also participate and perform in many



local performances and competitions as well. one.* Charter AVPA students can be seen running booths at local fairs and festivals, displaying art pieces in local museums and art shows, and performing their music and poetry at a variety of different venues for both entertainment and competitive purposes.

The blending of artistic expression and academics has led to increased attendance, participation and an overall improved site culture. Student testimonials provide evidence of a program in which students are "excited to come to school" and willing to apply themselves in a way that forces them to expand their cognitive, social and emotional capacities. The staff, students and stakeholders of one.* Charter AVPA continue to strive for increased and improved opportunities to inspire students through art and academics.



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| 1971-72 Chuck Lee San Diego | 1982-83 Roy Savage Riverside | 1993-94 Bob Michels Santa Clara | 2004-05 Jeanne Dukes San Luis Obispo |
| 1972-73 Doug Booth San Mateo | 1983-84 Ken Kammuller Marin | 1994-95 Larry Springer Los Angeles | 2005-06 Paula Mitchell Santa Clara |
| 1973-74 Joe De Mello Contra Costa | 1984-85 Wayne Toscas Santa Barbara | 1995-96 Claudette Inge Alameda | 2006-2007 Maruta Gardner San Diego |
| 1974-75 Marshall Lomax Los Angeles | 1985-86 Greg Almand Contra Costa | 1996-97 Ken Taylor Kern | 2007-2008 Peter Kostas Mendocino |
| 1975-76 John Hull Sacramento | 1986-87 Hedy Kirsh Orange | 1997-98 Mick Founts San Joaquin | 2008-2009 Mary Lou Vachet Orange |
| 1976-77 Rocco Nobile San Diego | 1987-88 Shirl Schmidt Shasta | 1998-99 Dolores Redwine San Diego | 2009-2010 Mary Bell Sacramento |
| 1977-78 John Peshkoff Santa Clara | 1988-89 Chuck Lee San Diego | 1999-00 Vic Trucco Sonoma | 2010-2011 Sean Morrill San Diego |
| 1978-79 Jerry Matney Orange | 1989-90 William Burns San Mateo | 2000-01 Janet Addo Los Angeles | 2011-2012 Janine Cuaresma San Joaquin |
| 1979-80 Miltie Couteur Butte | 1990-91 John Peshkoff Orange | 2001-02 Michael Watkins Santa Cruz | 2012-2013 Deni Baughn Orange |
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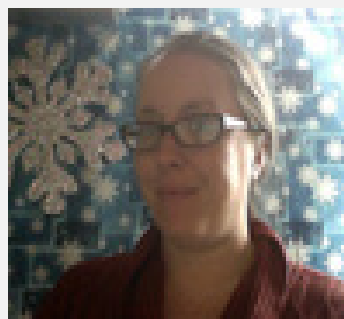
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PERFORMANCE TASK'S IN THE ALTERNATIVE ED SETTING
COLLABORATION AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING AT ITS BEST

BY: JONNA WEIDAW, TEACHER ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT MCOE

EDITED BY: MERRY CATRON, DIRECTOR MCOE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

COLLABORATION AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING AT ITS BEST



About the Author:

Jonna Weidaw, is an Alternative Education teacher and graduate of Sonoma State University. She has worked with SSU NBISP programs as a Teacher Lead for the Teaching American History Projects and the Common Core Implementation and Professional Development Projects. She has been awarded a Digital Excellence Award from the State of CA for technology integration and instruction. Jonna is currently working for the Mendocino County Office of Education as a teacher on special assignment.

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The Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) Alternative Education teachers and instructional paraprofessionals gather to examine English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Common Core State Standard (CCSS) Claims, and create scaffold supports for the practice Performance Task (PT) we will roll out in the spring semester. Discussion includes identifying key vocabulary, reviewing multimedia task stimuli, note taking with graphic organizers and framing the final written product. The team also reviews the CCSS rubric checklist; common pacing guides for student collaborative instruction, and assigns appropriate lessons related

to the task across subject areas, taking into account the Smarter Balance Summative Assessment ELA and Math Claims. This semester will mark the fourth program wide Performance Task that MCOE Alternative Education has implemented. These span across Court, Community and Independent Study School Programs to better prepare our students for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). This process isn't easy; in fact the staff agrees that the level of collaboration, technology skills, and tasks themselves are "difficult" for our population, which are

enriched with students who are disengaged from the educational process.

Using PT Released vs. Creating your own PT for Specialized Populations

Choosing which Performance Task will work best for your student population is a tough decision as the objective is getting students familiar with rigorous material and real life scenario's as well as teaching the skills needed to conduct, evaluate, analyze, collaborate, and synthesize their research.

Achieving and acquiring these skill sets is often more difficult than the task itself. This is why implementing and conducting school-wide performance tasks is so important, as practice leads

to deeper level of understanding and proficiency. See Table 1 (opposite page) for an overview of Performance Tasks used in the MCOE Alternative Education Programs.

Using the Released Performance Tasks from Smarter Balanced (SBAC)

During a PLC our staff chose our first Performance Task, which was the 11th grade SBAC Released ELA Task, Nuclear Power: Friend or Foe. This task engaged students in a real world situation by having students make a recommendation to their local state representative on the hot topic of allowing

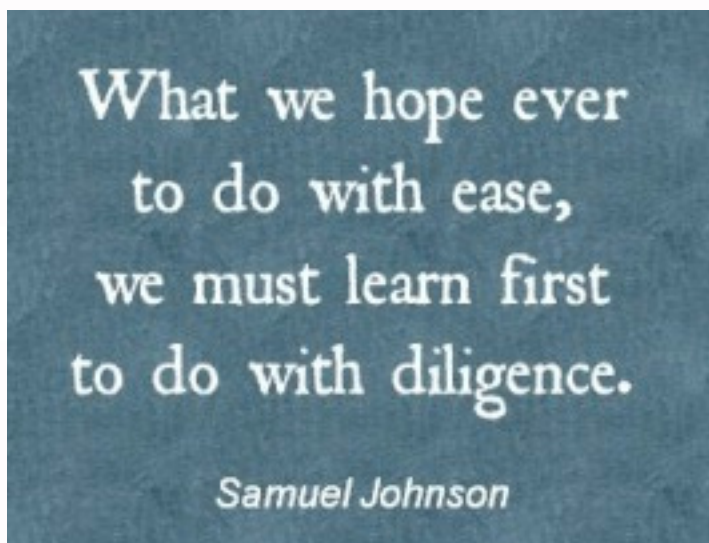


TABLE 1

| Name of Performance Task | Created By | Subject Matter Focus | Task Summary | Time Given | Rubric Used |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Nuclear Power: Friend or Foe | SBAC Released 11 th grade | ELA | <p>The Problem: Should we support the building of this nuclear plant in our state, or should we oppose the power company's plan? Be sure that your recommendation acknowledges both sides of the issue so that people know that we have considered the issue carefully.</p> <p>The Task: Write an argumentative report that recommends the position that your congressman should take on the plan to build a nuclear power plant in your state. Support your claim with evidence from the Internet sources you have read and viewed. You do not need to use all the sources, only the ones that most effectively and credibly support your position and your consideration of the opposing point of view.</p> | 4 weeks Spring 2013 | <p>Staff Created - Student Response Must Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement of purpose / focus and organization: How well did you clearly state your claim on the topic, maintain your focus, and address the alternate and opposing claims? How well did your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions? How well did you stay on topic throughout the report? 2. Elaboration of evidence: How well did you elaborate your arguments and discussion of counterarguments, citing evidence from your sources? How well did you effectively express ideas using precise language and vocabulary that were appropriate for the audience and purpose of your report? 3. Conventions: How well did you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling? |
| Fermi Mathematics | MCOE Alt Ed Staff | Math | <p>The Problem: Starting September 3, every student that is present at the end of 4th period may put one jelly belly in the jar, daily. At the end of the school day on Thursday (only), each student present COULD take out two jelly bellies. The ending day for this project would be the last day of the first quarter of school.</p> <p>The Task: How long will it take to fill the jar with Jelly Belly's?</p> | 9 weeks Fall 2013 | <p>Staff Created - Year classroom answers should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How you solved this problem. - What vocabulary did you need to know? - Supply copies of your data charts along with explanations of what the charts mean, what variables did you encounter. - A description of how a variable could lead to another solution. - Your answer should be written in paragraph form. - Posters should be professional looking. |

a nuclear power plant facility to be built within the student's local community. Students had to examine both sides of the issue using multiple sources of academic papers and data. As this was our first performance task we used only the provided source materials as whole classroom instructional items and then allowed the students to use the Internet to discover other various source materials. It became apparent to all staff that our students had a very difficult time discerning creditable vs. non-creditable materials. It was evident in the final writing products that students did not know how to properly cite source material and incorporate relevant factual data within their own narratives. These challenges were noted at our Professional Learning Community (PLC) and staff agreed that we needed to offer our students a more guided approach in the future.

Creating Our Own Performance Tasks

After conducting our first program-wide PT we decided as a staff that it might be more engaging for our students if we created a PT that had a direct relationship with our students and their environment. Our Teacher Leadership team had been discussing ways to improve student attendance in our programs. This is when staff had the idea of creating a mathematical based PT that was linked to student attendance.

The staff integrated all the CCSS Math Claims within the task and focused on the content area of Statistics, Fermi Mathematics, and Probability. Teachers decided that this PT should be a whole classroom collaboration piece where the final product was an informational classroom poster, which needed to have charts, graphs, informational paragraphs, and data rationale. Very little structure was given on how this PT would be evaluated and judged. At the end of 9 weeks not only was attendance up across programs, but students were engaged with rigorous content, applying learned content to their real life scenario, cooperatively working together to analyze data, and create their rationales for their classroom poster. Teachers and staff brought in their classroom PT posters to present at the monthly PLC.

Staff immediately noticed that everyone had taken a different approach in their methods of solving and presenting their findings. The lack of having a program-wide rubric was problematic as there was no consistency across all final products. Staff immediately made the recommendation to adopt program-wide rubrics for all formal writing assessments and PT's.

The Problem:

Starting September 3, every student that is present at the end of 4th period may put one jelly belly in the jar, daily. At the end of the school day on Thursday (only), each student present COULD take out two jelly bellies. The ending day for this project would be the last day of the first quarter of school.

The Task:

How long will it take to fill the jar with Jelly Belly's?

Elements of a Performance Task

After conducting our 1st self-created PT our realization was that we needed to include all the elements of the PT that SBAC utilized. PLC Leadership reviewed the CCSS ELA Claims, CCSS Math Claims, SBAC rubrics, and SBAC PT guides and timelines.

Upon further investigation and analysis of the guidelines of SBAC PT the PLC Leadership Team made recommendations to the staff that we NOT take on the SBAC timelines but continue to engage in multi week direct instruction for the classroom activity, Part 1, and Part 2. Recommendations were also made to use a program-wide CCSS Writing Ru-

bric. The staff was concerned about using an at grade level rubric, as the majority of our students ELA assessment data showed that the majority were performing at a 3rd - 5th grade level. After much discussion and research the staff agreed upon using the CCSS Writing Rubric for the 7th and 8th grades created by the Elk Grove Unified School Districts (EGUSD). This would maintain rigor and allow our students to achieve steady growth within the writing CCS standards criteria on Focus/Claim, Organization/Structure, Evidence/Support, Analysis, and Language. To allow for student progression and achievement within the CCSS Frameworks, the team agreed that students performing at the highest level (a score of 4) across all criterion, would be promoted to the 9th /10th grade rubric on the next formal assessment.

SBAC Guides and Timelines

Classroom Activity (20 minutes)

Using visual stimuli (chart, multimedia, photo), the teacher invites students to share prior knowledge. By way of class discussion, and in order to contextualize the examination of stimuli in Part 1

Part 1 (50 minutes)

Students examine and take notes on the stimuli, a series of Internet sources that present both sides of the issue. Constructed-response questions call upon the students to summarize and evaluate the presented sources.

Part 2 (70 minutes)

Students refer to their notes as needed to compose a full-length argumentative report. Students are allowed access to the stimuli they examined in Part 1. Pre-writing, drafting, and revisions are involved.

Total Time: 140 min (Source: Smarter Balanced)

Creating Guided Supports for All Students

Creating supports for all students is a key piece of creating a PT that students will be able to interact and achieve with. Our students have demonstrated that they need supports with note taking, evaluating/identifying/organizing/labeling/citing source materials, effectively using the internet to discover source material, utilizing web-based tools for collaborative writing/class notes

such as Google Docs, and creating graphic organizers for the final written product. Teaching staff decided that all of these supports were important and necessary to provide direct instruction each time we conduct a PT. Students are given guided instruction on how to effectively take notes using Cornell Notes strategies. At the PLC's and optional PT Creation meetings led by the Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), teachers identify at least 8 key source materials that will be utilized across all programs which always include at least: three multi-media sources, one scientific abstract, two editorials, and one map or data table/chart. Teachers then created text dependent questions for the scientific abstract and multi-media source materials to deepen students' comprehension. Another support is creating graphic organizers that can be used to assist all students in constructing their responses for: their individual and collaborative whole classroom research, defining and evaluating multiple perspectives surrounding the scenario, and the final written product. The last support is creating the student rubric checklist. This acts as both a long-term monitoring tool for teachers and allows students to monitor their own progression through the task by marking off the objectives as they complete them.

Professional Development Happens Before the Task is Released to Students

Professional Development is conducted at both the teacher and paraprofessionals PLC's and other optional CCSS based trainings. Some teachers and staff need extra support in learning new technology based skills, which is accomplished in small groups and one on one-support sessions. Perseverance is a skill to be reflected and demonstrated by both the teacher and the student. For staff needing to hone their technology skills they can access a wide variety of independent web based tutorials that are offered on our MCOE Alt Ed Edmodo social media group. Edmodo is an educational social media site that allows educators to communicate with other professionals across the country, and to create individual virtual groups and classrooms. Our staff uses Edmodo as a tool to: store agenda's, organize meeting notes, assessments, resources, record agreements, discuss teaching strategies, collect peer feedback, and make program-wide decisions.

Technology at the Forefront

Teaching technology skills needed to achieve on the CAASPP throughout the practice PT provides opportunities for greater exposure for students on a multitude of levels and content. Our TOSA provides direct support to our classroom teachers and students by teaching a series of technology based guided lessons that support the computer skills needed within the PT. The primary

lesson in the series instructs students on how to identify and evaluate web page information using the Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose (CRAAP) worksheet. Librarians at California State University (CSU) Chico developed this worksheet. It is utilized across all CSU campuses, and prepares our students for the research-based papers required in college. Another lesson on the list is instructing students on how to conduct an effective Internet search using University California Berkley's Library effective research assignments home page. This provides suggestions for teachers on how to guide students to find relevant information, understand scholarly sources, and think critically about information.

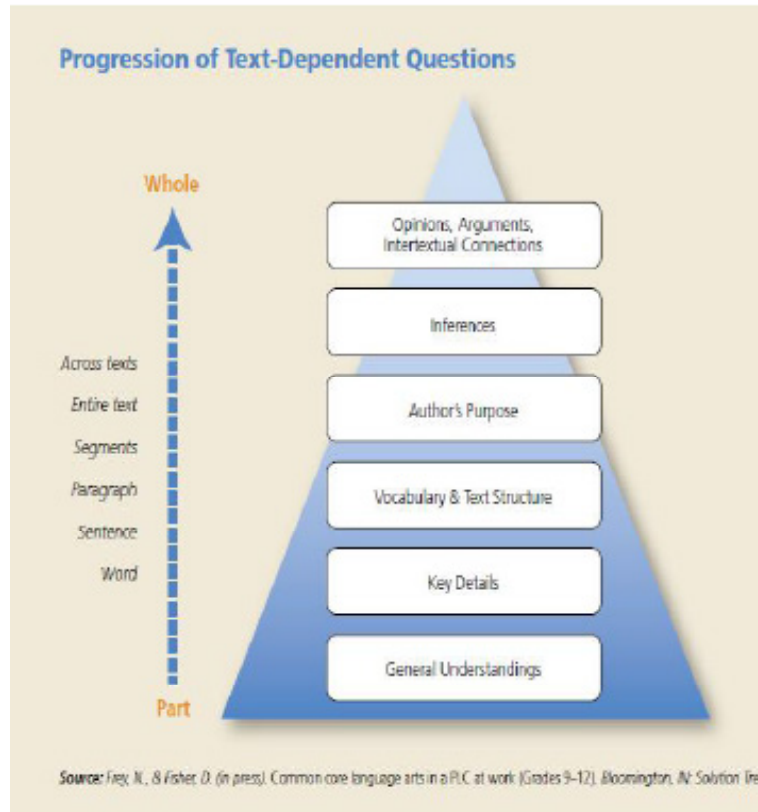
Teachers and students are encouraged to contact the experts on differing content-based topics by using email, educational social media, and video conferencing. Our students love engaging with the California State Parks PORTS Program, where state educational Park Rangers guide students through live interactive video conferences on a multitude of programs. These direct responses strengthen student's real world communication skills and meet the CCS Speaking and Listening Standards.

The Results – Practice Gains Precision and Builds Expertise

As the Task itself draws to a close, students prepare their final products. If the task has addressed a current issue such as fracking, or the CA drought, some teachers have their students send their findings to their local congressmen, Board of Supervisors, Water Boards, and City Councils. This direct engagement in civic participation models for students how to effectively use their voice in their local government.

At the end of the PT teachers review and score the final products using the agreed upon rubric. Scores are then uploaded to Illuminate, our web-based student data system. At the PLC teachers present and share out student products, their learning experiences, strengths, and challenges. As a staff we review students overall scores and look deeper into which criterion models students achieved and still need greater support on. Teachers brainstorm teaching practices and lessons that can be used back in the classroom to increase student achievement. The data system also allows teachers to monitor and identify students that are struggling across multiple assessments and offer them afterschool intervention services.

The process of creating, delivering, and analyzing the Performance Task is a long and rigorous process, but hard work and perseverance provides our students with the opportunity to learn from these real life scenarios. The data continues to support that practice gains precision, which builds our students and staff expertise



Citations

- 1 <http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/educators/ela/rubrics-k-12/>
- 2 <http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>
- 3 http://www.nassp.org/Content/158/fisher_fig1.jpg
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“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think”
-Albert Einstein

“Education is such an important component in maximizing the likelihood of a youth’s future success in life. Working in collaboration with the court, probation and county office of education to encourage and support best practices to facilitate learning for our youth leads to better outcomes.”

-Judge Carolyn Caietti

“We turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones.” The student speaker at San Diego County Office of Education’s (SDCOE) Juvenile Court and Community School (JCCS) graduation made clear that while personal choices and life circumstances might have brought them into our classrooms and schools, they leave prepared for college, career and community.

Turning obstacles into opportunities is a strategy many of our students use to achieve personal success. They build individual networks of support to cheer them on, push them, and keep them focused on their goals. JCCS also establishes organizational networks of support to better serve all of our students and staff.

JCCS serves over 12,000 students in two different programs during the course of the school year from 42 schools districts across 4,700 square miles in San Diego County. The Court School Program serves approximately 670 students on a daily basis; our Community School Program approximately 1,800 students. Community Schools are operated on both classroom-based and blended learning models (formerly known as Independent Study). We provide educational services to minors incarcerated in the Detention facilities/camps operated by the San Diego County Juvenile Justice System and in our SDCOE Community Schools we enroll students in grades K-12. Students enrolled in our Community Schools are considered high-risk and referred based on their current status with their home school district, and/or probation. Reasons for referrals typically include expulsion, chronic truancy, severe behavioral issues, or terms

of probationary status. However, we are also beginning to enroll a significant number of students who have self-selected JCCS due to our much smaller class size, highly-personalized learning plans for each student including UC a-g approved courses, differentiation for students with special needs and second language learners, Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) and Career Technical Education (CTE) options, flexible scheduling, and strong relationships with adults who know them well. JCCS also strongly believes in honoring the whole student so we also offer extensive social, emotional and behavioral support through trauma informed care, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PSBIS) and Restorative Justice practices.

Providing these services and supports is a relentless process made with the best interests of students at the core of every decision. Author Shaena Fazal writes in *Safely Home: Reducing youth incarceration and achieving positive outcomes for high and complex need youth through effective community-based programs*, “Youth experience and voice should be an integral part of policymaking and service delivery. When asked the question “If you could talk to adults who make decisions about kids in the juvenile justice system, what do you think is most important for them to know about what kids need and how to help them (for example, what works and what doesn’t work and why),” the youth clearly show in their responses that they want to feel as though those making the decisions hear what they have to say and that they are judged and treated fairly. The most common answer

treated fairly. The most common answer to the question about what they would say to an administrator: "Listen to us" (2014).

About eighteen months ago we started asking students the questions "How is your learning working for you? and "How would it look different if it was working better for you?" and we listened. For many students they wanted more career and elective offerings, less repetition of content, more understanding and control over their course of study, and greater opportunities for 'voice and choice' in their learning. We knew that in order to provide an even stronger learning program for every student we serve we needed to change. This meant building upon our strengths in personal relationships and developing expansive networks and allies who could help us get smarter in our practice, our systems and service delivery model, and the ways in which we assess and monitor student learning while providing for their emotional and behavioral needs.

We needed networks and allies that could provide models of simplicity that demonstrated:

1. Relentless belief-and demonstrated behaviors towards- a growth mindset for students
2. Proof of impact on improved student learning and achievement
3. Nimble and flexible systems that would enhance program development

In JCCS, high student mobility, open enrollment, fluctuating student exits, lack of consistency in instruction across the organization, significant gaps in students' learning histories, multiple partner agencies with different priorities, and changing federal, state, and local policies all contributed to a culture where sometimes students' needs were the last to be met even with the best of intentions by adults. Historically, collaboration revolved around a particular project, used the same small group of people, and was timely rather than regular and on-going. We have expanded this definition of collaboration to now focus more on networks that are regular, fluid and evolving groups of people who have similar beliefs and values with the knowledge, expertise, and experience we can leverage to improve our organization's capacity to better serve students. These networks include groups of teachers, staff, and administrator experts who already work within JCCS, staff from our trusted partners in SD-

COE divisions, parents, families and guardians, members of business, non-profit and community organizations, probation and County, state and federal departments, education including post-secondary public and private sectors, and national and international education, policy, research and think-tank organizations.

Our first strategy developing such networks created a bias towards action. As an organization we determined our theory of change and instructional focus as the basis for our networks of collaboration and problem solving. This work was co-constructed with teachers, staff, and administrators through a series of facilitated classroom learning walks over the last two years. Even this work occurred through an alliance with mentors and coaches from the County's Learning and Leadership Services division. As a result of our networked practices we developed the following core instructional focus and strategies:

Instructional Focus:

Students can demonstrate deep understanding by making and defending a claim with evidence:

- During discussion using examples from...
 - In English Language Arts and in writing, citing text dependent evidence
 - As a mathematician justifying a solution by...
 - As a scientist testing a hypothesis by...
- Instructional Focus Marker:
- Tangible Models: e.g. teacher developed examples of expected writing, sentence stems to scaffold students making meaning and defending claims orally and in writing, co-constructed examples of quality work over time, industry and academia created exemplars

Instructional Strategy

Teachers will use intentional and effective questioning strategies to facilitate academically rigorous talk, writing and thinking within their content area.

Instructional Strategy Markers:

- Teachers and students use questions that are relevant to content and disciplinary practices
- Teachers and students are using probing

questions/statements to elicit thinking and understanding e.g. say more, what is your thinking, what is your evidence, how did you derive, what makes you say that?

Essential Questions: All students and adults know and are able to respond to these questions in relation to their learning and planning:

- What are we learning? (knowledge)
- How are we learning it? (understanding)
- Why are we learning it/Why does it matter? (reflection and relevance)
- How do we know we have learned it? (assessment)

Where and when will we use this learning again? (application and transfer)

Essential Questions Markers:

- Teachers are planning with the Essential Questions and answers to the Essential Questions in mind
- Students are provided multiple opportunities and ways to articulate their thinking in relation to the Essential Questions

Learning Conditions:

1. Clear learning target(s) understood and known by students for each lesson(s) each and every day that lead to accomplishing a rigorous standard
2. Classroom culture and environment co-constructed to support student interdependence for learning
3. Evidence of scaffolds and resources for students to access and receive differentiated support for their learning needs including digital literacy

Our instructional focus is the foundational component for all of our partnerships. Ensuring such consistency of teaching and learning in all classrooms includes allies from a network of like-minded organizations. Chrissy Califf, Words Alive Teen Services Program Manager states, "As a literacy non-profit providing an integrated curriculum within the classroom, a partnership of which there is a shared vision, purpose and end goal is critical for the success of the pro-

gram. Additionally, consistent communication, mutual consideration and flexibility within the implementation of the program are vital to ensure both parties provide an effective, dynamic and impactful product."

Cultivating networks means relying on the skills, knowledge, expertise, and perspectives of others. "There's a diversity of strong allies supporting the gardening program and this will help sustain it over time. But there's also an intergeneration component that's really wonderful and I think enhances it for the youth involved. Master Gardeners who volunteer for the program, for example, bring not only their gardening expertise and a connection to the University of California Cooperative Extension but also their years of working in an array of professions and their experiences as parents and grandparents. They offer a perspective on the world and a type of relationship the youth may not have experienced before. Plus, they bring fresh ideas to the program that will help it evolve and adapt as it grows," shares Joni Gabriel, UC Master Gardener and JCCS Career Technical Education (CTE) teacher about the benefits of our networks.

Depending on the particular need of our students, staff and organization we have networks that provide technical expertise in areas such as program logic models and case studies, operations and organizational systems, instructional strategy, coaching, curriculum development and leadership capacity. Each network provides resources, materials, opportunities for consultation with an expert or mentor, data analysis support, and people who have a common and shared experience. Knowing that we can tap into and also provide such support to colleagues ourselves enriches JCCS and strengthens our program to benefit our students' success and replicate our models. We employ intentional strategies to ensure the greatest likelihood that our networks serve to improve teaching and learning:

Network Strategies:

- Communicate it: Use the cycle of inquiry and program-monitoring feedback loops embedded in already existing structures. Processes such as the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) provide multiple opportunities to over communicate and check for understanding that people are using the same language to describe and mes-

- sage the purpose, process and outcomes of the network and student learning goals
- Codify it: Formalize partnerships to elevate the importance and value of the networks and their purpose. We actually create Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that specifically name the roles, responsibilities, success criteria, and impact we expect all parties to demonstrate as a result of the partnership
- Celebrate it: Name and share the specific practices and behaviors that result in success from, between and across the networks. We post pictures of students, staff and their work, create videos of “voices from the field”, ensure that students and staff lead the conversation and develop presentations, and have teachers and staff share appreciations of one another, highlight growth and not just results, and use social media to herald the work.

“Education is such an important component in maximizing the likelihood of a youth’s future success in life. Working in collaboration with the court, probation and county office of education to encourage and support best practices to facilitate learning for our youth leads to better outcomes. We share a common goal to provide our youth with the educational opportunities they need to recognize their potential for success. Creative thinking and willingness to explore both evidence based and promising practices in a learning environment offered by the San Diego County Office of Education with the support by the court and probation is a partnership that is invaluable,” states Presiding Judge Carolyn Caietti, San Diego Juvenile Court Division. With such strong allies in our work JCCS will continue placing stepping-stones for all of our students on their path to success.

References:

Fazal, Shaena M. Safely Home: Reducing youth incarceration and achieving positive outcomes for high and complex need youth through effective community-based programs. Youth Advocate Programs Inc., June 2014.

On why she returned to school to get a high school diploma, “it’s very difficult to find a job without a high school diploma.”

-CBK
Student
Elizabeth

The San Joaquin Valley has a dropout problem. It is true that local statistics mirror statewide averages, but in Stanislaus County alone over 1100 students drop out of high school each year. There are a variety of reasons why students drop out including teenage pregnancies, volatile home environments and boredom. Regardless of the reasons why students drop out, the consequences are always the same: higher rates of unemployment; higher rates of poverty; higher rates of crime and incarceration; higher rates of single parents.

Who are these students dropping out? Recent data show that in Stanislaus County Hispanics make up nearly 60% of the annual dropouts. The data also show that there is an alarming trend of boys - regardless of ethnicity - not completing high school. Boys are more than twice as likely as girls to drop out. So, to answer the question of who is dropping out in Stanislaus County: boys, and at a disproportionate rate, Hispanic boys.

Last year the Stanislaus County Office of Education, as part of its’ Destination Graduation Initiative, created a new charter school to address this issue. In August 2013, Come Back Kids began enrolling students (recent dropouts 18 years and older) into its high school diploma program. Initially it was hoped that 25 students would be interested in coming back and earning a diploma. After only three months, 150 students were enrolled and by December over 75 had earned their high school diploma and participated in the graduation ceremony. Currently, there are more than 330 students enrolled in Come Back Kids and that

number increases daily.

The student demographic of Come Back Kids is very encouraging. The students who are enrolling are the same students we need to target. Overall CBK is comprised of 64% Hispanic students, the majority of those are men. What this program very clearly demonstrates is this: Throughout the San Joaquin Valley there is a very real need to provide adults a second chance at earning a high school diploma. In only a short time there been a number of success stories. Here are just two.

Robert Gonzalez moved a lot. He attended three high schools in three years while moving between Modesto and Stockton. By his junior year Robert was behind credits and transferred to an alternative education high school. In his senior year he was still behind credits and not on track to graduate. Then tragedy struck: his father passed away. Not long after his mother told him about CBK. Robert enrolled in March. While attending, his teachers helped him enroll at Modesto Junior College and assisted with completing paperwork, searching for classes and applying for financial aid. “My teachers were very helpful and did everything possible to help me out.” Robert graduated in May and is currently working and taking an anthropology course at MJC. He plans to study kinesiology and become a physical therapist.

At 17, Elizabeth Hernandez dropped out of school when her son was born. Several years later she found out about CBK while looking for a GED program. As a mom, Elizabeth liked the idea of a flexible schedule. A year ago she needed to complete 90

credits. By working hard Elizabeth now needs only 13 credits to graduate with a high school diploma. Her teachers are helping her to enroll in a local cosmetology program. Asked why she returned to school to get a high school diploma she stated, "it's very difficult to find a job without a high school diploma."

Come Back Kids was established for two reasons. First, to give students a second chance at earning a high school diploma. Second, to assist them in pursuing their education and-or career. Students select either online coursework, traditional textbook instruction, or a combination of the two. Students meet with their instructors weekly to go over completed coursework and receive new assignments. A variety of workshops are offered on a regular basis to help students prepare for the California High School Exit Exam. Qualifying students wishing to find employment can take advantage of job internships and placements as well as ap-

prenticeship programs. Weekly career readiness seminars are offered that build career skills. Students learn about interview tips, resume writing, filling out applications, and creating a portfolio. Local business partners participate in these weekly presentations and provide insight about what they look for in the workplace.

Enrollment is ongoing and new students can start at any time. A copy of the student's high school transcript is reviewed to create an individual graduation plan. Students pick up where they left off and complete only those requirements needed to graduate

Come Back Kids has experienced a large amount of success in a very short amount of time. The program continues to grow rapidly and new locations are being added. CBK currently serves students in Modesto, Turlock, Patterson, Oakdale, and Ceres.



About the Authors
 Gabriella Grant, has a B.A. from Amherst College; a Latin teaching certificate from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy; and a M.A. in Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins University. She has taught at the primary, secondary and university levels and currently teaches at a local community college. Ms. Grant directs the California Center of Excellence for Trauma Informed Care, located in Santa Cruz, Ca, overseeing the Center's research, program and professional development as well as policy analysis activities. She also conducts Seeking Safety, an evidence-based treatment for PTSD/substance abuse.

Michael Paynter is a manager, teacher and licensed family therapist at the Santa Cruz COE. He is the Foster Youth Services Coordinator for Santa Cruz County, teaches psychology in Alt Ed as a CTE instructor, and helps manage programs dealing with gang prevention, student mental health, foster youth and Alternative Education.

Daniel Stonebloom teaches for an Alt Ed Program of the Santa Cruz COE. He is also a Graduate Student in the Department of Educational Leadership at San José State.

A New Framework for an Old Issue

Schools, administrators and teachers are bringing trauma-informed practices into the school campus and the classroom in order to address the often unrecognized impact of complex trauma in our students, to respond to demonstrated deficiencies in disciplinary policy, and to create both the physical and emotional safety required for the nervous system, including the brain, to respond successfully to instruction and information. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education recognized the potential effectiveness of such approaches for students enrolled in Alternative Education Programs. Along with the California Center of Excellence for Trauma Informed Care, Alternative Education Programs launched a yearlong (2014-2015) initiative to study the effectiveness and impact of bringing together the trauma-informed and neurosequential models within court and community schools. Called Teaching Neurosequentially: A year-long experiment to integrate didactics and neurobiology, the initiative, focused on training teachers and school staff to be able to both understand and teach students the impact of trauma on the brain, integrate trauma-informed practices into the school campus, classroom and within individual interventions and focus on safety as the most pressing need of students struggling academically. The initiative's goal is to give teachers foundational information about the impact of toxic stress on the brain to be able to help students feel safer in the classroom, understand their own nervous systems' messages, safely interact with other students and adults, and find more enjoy-

ment in the learning and studying processes.

Around the country, public K-12 schools have started to respond to the ever-growing research that toxic stress or trauma affects the brain development and function of children (see the Harvard Center on the Developing Child). Research has clearly demonstrated high rates of complex trauma among children and families involved in publicly funded child welfare, juvenile justice, and substance abuse treatment systems (Finkelhor, 2011).

Few teachers are surprised by the fact that nearly all students at court and community schools have experienced some level trauma. Many grew up in dangerous families where their caregivers are involved in drug abuse, weapon use, violence, and incarceration. Many students regularly experience the negative effects of extreme poverty, tenuous housing, and violence in their home and on the streets. Personal physical, emotional, and/or sexual victimization are also pervasive. Most alternative education students have experienced multiple traumas or what is now called poly-victimization. Several researchers have clearly linked these traumatic experiences with negative health outcomes including early violent death, involvement in the criminal justice system and academic failure (Jung, Herrenkohl, Klika, Lee & Brown, 2014; Van der Kolk, 2014).

On the school policy level, activists, educational reformers, and research-driven policy analysts have called the "zero tolerance" and other punitive disciplinary policies approach into question, particularly in

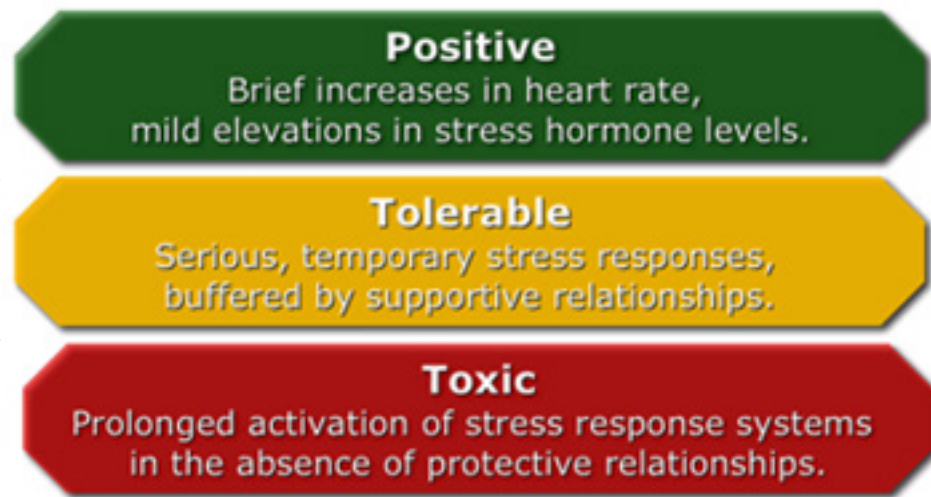
terms of disparity and disproportionality (Losen, 2011). On a personal level, many alternative education teachers and staff found disciplinary practices that rely on suspension and expulsion to be counterproductive to the mission of working with students who struggle in mainstream education. There was a growing need to explore proven models of alternative discipline.

Trauma-informed frameworks and strategies address one of the core contributors to the unequal outcomes related to school discipline as well as focus on supporting struggling students, youth of color, teen parents, court-involved youth, LGBTQ identifying youth, and students who use alcohol and other drugs, all of whom are at high risk for high school drop-out (Fabelo, 2011; Skiba, 2011; Suarez, 2010).

tions without a safe, supportive adult, their nervous systems try to protect them by reacting (fight/flight) or in more extreme cases not reacting (freeze). Without sustained relief, over time the child's dysregulated nervous system becomes chronically over or under-reactive. This dysregulated nervous system ends up making the child feel bad, exhausted, depressed, worried or hopeless. Children, desperate to feel better and lacking safe relationships, often turn to unproductive behaviors and unsafe relationships to modulate their dysregulated nervous systems. What was meant to be a short-term protective response (fight/flight/freeze) ends up becoming a self-destructive cycle that may result in unsafe actions that the child engages in habitually in order to feel better, safer or more connected, even if only in the short term.

Trauma: Unsafe, Unsupported and Unsuccessful

Children need safe relationships to help them through the unavoidably stressful challenges of growing up, going to school, doing difficult assignments, and negotiating social interactions. In the graphic below, there are both positive and tolerable stresses; when an appropriately supported child successfully overcomes real challenges positive outcomes are likely. On the other hand, toxic stress affects the nervous system (the body and brain) and impairs relationships with careers, teachers and peers.



To conceptualize trauma and its impact on the brain, toxic stress is an interaction between an overwhelming event that the individual experiences as harmful or threatening and that has a lasting negative effect on that person (SAMHSA, 2014).

When children experience overwhelming or scary situa-

The Neurosequential Model

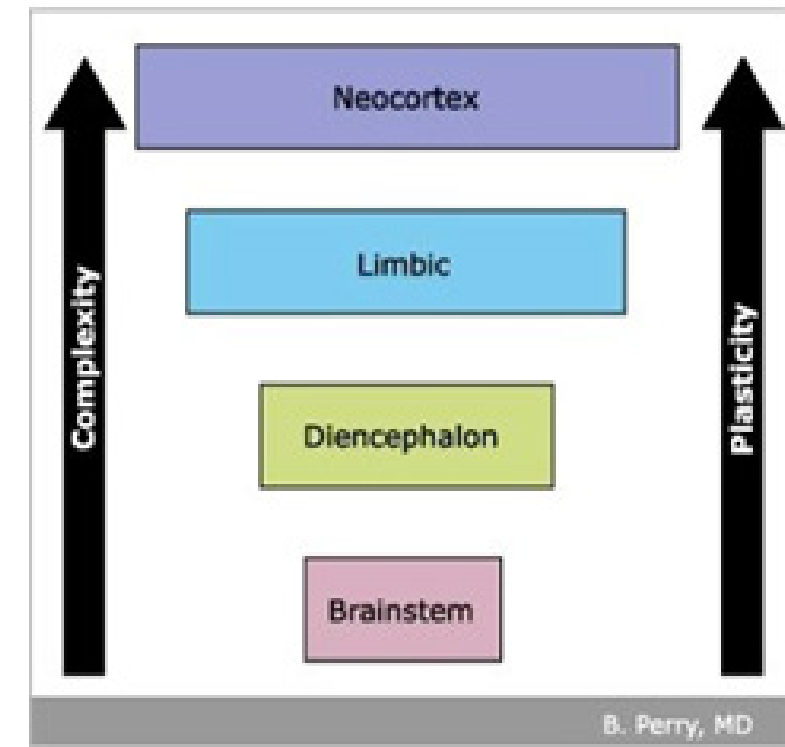
The emphasis on the neurosequential model, developed by Dr. Bruce Perry of the Child Trauma Academy (childtrauma.org) provides a neuro-scientific model of working with children who have experienced serious, chronic or extreme forms of trauma. The model is "bottom up," meaning that interventions, including instruction, start with the sensory processing aspects of the nervous system first, before moving onto interpersonal and then cognitive skills.

Applying the neurosequential model typically requires consistent and reparative practice so that teachers and school staff start with the sensory and motor skills of all students – not just very young children – to help the student self-regulate before using interpersonal ("trust me") or cognitive ("consider the consequences") approaches.

Within the Teaching Neurosequentially initiative, we

consider toxic stress to be traumatic: it is overwhelming, individual and lasting. This process explains why a teacher may see a student "blow up," "glaze-over," or "inappropriately react" to seemingly normal situations or dynamics. The student's nervous system is triggered to disproportionately respond as though s/he is under threat and thus engage in unconscious fight, flight, or freeze primitive brain defenses. Since toxic stress (trauma) overwhelms the child's capacity to cope and has lasting adverse effects on the child's sense of safety, relationships, and learning, the Alternative Education teacher's and administrator's ability to understand this process can help them develop and evaluate school policies and classroom management strategies.

Plasticity of the Brain



Safety, Support, Success

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (nctsn.org), Dr. Bruce Perry, and numerous researchers and treatment providers recommend physical and emotional safety and self-regulation as the key to recovering from the impact of chronic toxic stress. Similarly, the unsafe and unproduc-

tive behaviors of struggling students, whether substance abuse, truancy, or failing grades, are attempts to behavior-



ally communicate their perception of physical or emotional threat. In other words, unsafe actions—like cutting school or smoking pot—are a way that children try to tell adults that they do not feel neurobiologically safe. Therefore, an effective and humane way to address those behaviors is to increase physical and emotional safety as well as self-regulatory skills.

Nuts and Bolts in the School and Classroom

The trauma-informed, neurosequential model helps school staff and teachers to develop the ability of students of all ages to prioritize safety, self-regulate, reduce intense negative emotions, decrease reliance on unsafe actions, and improve



their ability to inter-relate, communicate, and make safe decisions. Bringing these processes into awareness and crafting new responses for both adults and students can transform maladaptive patterns and prepare even a traumatized brain for learning and exploration.

The Process: Vision, Skills, Practice, and Results

Throughout the 2014-15 school year, Alternative Education teachers participated in a series of training, coaching and feedback processes on the trauma-informed neurosequential model. The process started with a strategic visioning process that prioritized 1) skills building and practicing, 2) classroom management and instructional strategies, 3) program-wide and school-based policies to increase the schools' and teachers' ability to work with a wide range of challenging student behaviors.

The first third of the school year focused on developing trauma-informed neurosequential skills and practice among the teachers and school staff. Data from teachers was easily gathered by passing out index cards after a skills session. Teachers were encouraged to commit to a skill (and write it down on the index card), experiment with the skill (noting what was specifically done on the index card), and focus on the result (noting the result on the index card). Teachers then returned the index cards. With few exceptions, teachers noted positive results after trying the skill. Teachers reported being more aware and attentive to the emotional needs of their students. One teacher remarked, "Without question the most productive, effective, and interesting professional development series in my career." These Teacher-approved skills were reinforced and encouraged.

Some of the skills tested and approved by teachers include:

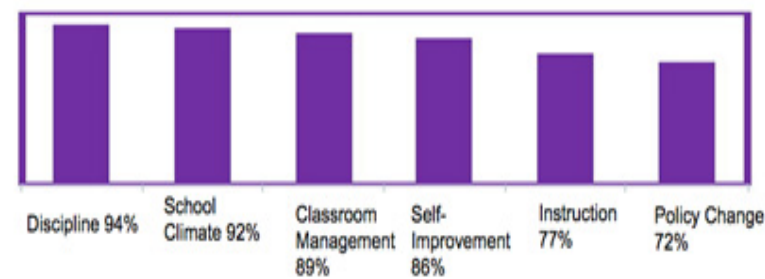
- Brief starting ritual before beginning lesson (a minute of silence, music, or a joke).
- Scaling (having students silently rate the level of their negative feelings)
- Grounding (using their five senses to become aware

of their surroundings to assess actual safety)

- Safe coping skills (84 ways to cope safely with any situation from Seeking Safety),
- "It Makes Sense" (acknowledging the underlying need of the student who is engaging in unproductive behaviors in order to create an agreement to try something more productive.

Based on the first part of the initiative, Alternative Education staff completed an anonymous survey related to the skills and the process. The consensus was that the skills were helpful and that most teachers and staff had tried at least one skill and had at least informally discussed the initiative with colleagues. One result noted where teachers and staff found the Trauma-Informed Neurosequential tools and concepts most useful.

TI/NS is most useful / useful for:



The survey also asked teachers to identify common themes among students who do not graduate. Of the over 30 themes identified by teachers, they could be gathered into four key themes. Interestingly, the four themes represented the four central trauma roles discussed as a part of understanding complex trauma: victim, perpetrator, bystander and fantasy rescuer.

1. Giving up, not trying, low self-esteem, negative self-talk (victim);
2. Lack of family support, no role models, disconnected, unable to disconnect (perpetrator);
3. School a waste of time and energy; I don't want to do what I don't want to do and no one can make me

do what I don't want to do and no one can make me (bystander); and

4. Drug use - Make it stop; Now is intolerable and tomorrow doesn't matter (fantasy rescuer)

The themes were discussed and integrated into classroom interventions as well as lesson plans. For example, in an English class, students can read *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison in order to identify these very themes in the book. Students can be asked to re-write the ending where Pecola is a student today in class; how can you speak to her today to help her?

Still in process at the time of writing, the last part of the initiative looks at specific school policies that can both support and be supported by trauma-informed neurosequential approaches. For example, the County Office of Education decided to reduce reliance on suspension. Teachers can be supported and coached to use the strategies developed to improve students' capacity to safely cope with school challenges, interpersonal conflict and academic difficulties. Clear administrative support and expectation allows for teachers and staff to experiment with new techniques and strategies without either feeling fearful of failure or unmotivated to try. Internal trauma champions have volunteered to train to become coaches and supporters of the next round of learners; administration's support and recognition of the trauma champions will also reinforce skills throughout the workforce.

Those teachers that have been active and responsive to the process demonstrated and documented immediate benefits in the form of new skills and knowledge. However, for the entire countywide program to integrate the broader changes, reinforce training and professional development taken and bring in new teachers to the model, the process will take several years, consistent application of tools and concepts and more formal supervision of the initiative via clear expectations aligned with policies and practices. The Teaching Neurosequentially initiative has brought back to the fore the essential message that all teachers know: each student is an

individual who has needs including physical, psychological and emotional safety. By helping teachers bring safety into the one-on-one, group and didactic processes, safety can be achieved more quickly, leaving more time for inter-relationship and cognitive skills building.

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Links

To see a video from the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/three_core_concepts/toxic_stress/
 Schools promoting 'trauma-informed' teaching to reach troubled students EdSource <http://edsources.org/2013/schools-focus-on-trauma-informed-to-reach-troubled-students/51619>
 SafePlace's Expect Respect® Program <http://www.expectrespectaustin.org>
 Trauma Smart www.traumasmart.org & www.saintlukeshalthsystem.org/head-start-trauma-smart
 Learning to Be a Safe Harbor for Kids, Podcast with Margaret Blausten, PhD www.traumacenter.org/research/learning-safe-harbor-kids.html
 Calmer Classrooms: A guide to working with traumatized children www.education/qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/pdfs/calmer-classrooms-guide.pdf
 UCSF HEARTS Program: Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools www.coe/ucsf.edu/coe/spotlight/ucsf_hearts.html
 Principles of Working with Traumatized Children by Dr. Bruce Perry www.teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/working_children.htm
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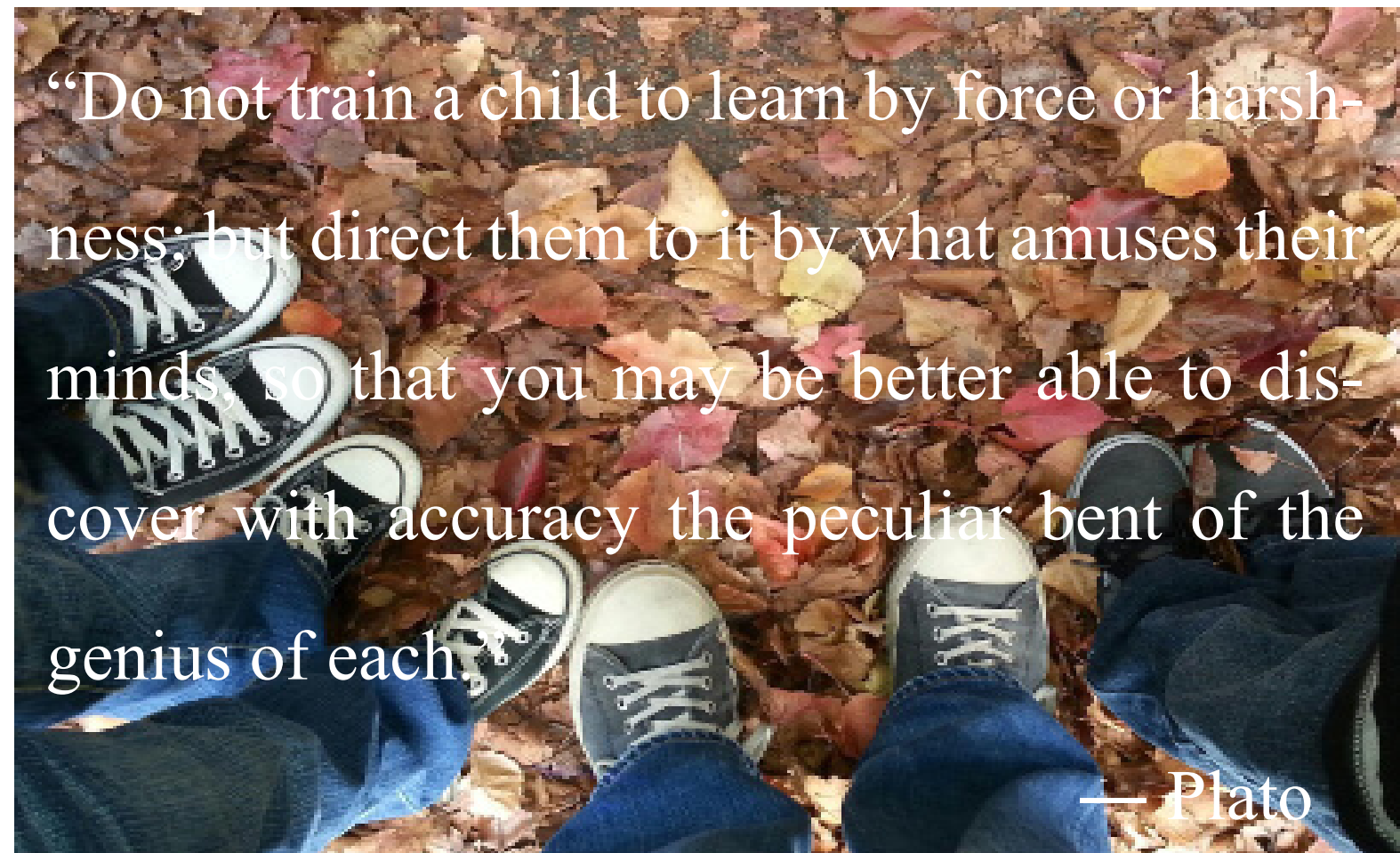
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