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Shifting Systems and Mindsets: Transforming School Structures for Equity and Student Success

Objectives

By the end of this workshop you will:

- Create racially just relationship centered spaces.
- Reflect on mindsets that are barriers to student success.
- Develop a continuous improvement model that engages all educational partners.



Take a moment to read this story.

Consider, how it connects to the work that you do for community schools?

How can we create a school community that feeds the traits of the good wolf?



California Community Schools Framework

Four Cornerstone Commitments

Assets-Driven and Strength-Based Practice: Community schools view students, their families and their community through the lens of their assets and strengths and value the collective wisdom derived from experience, family, history and culture and language.

Racially-Just and Restorative School Climates: Community schools commit to creating, nourishing and sustaining school climates that are centered in the embrace of and support for all students in the totality of school interactions.

Powerful, Culturally Proficient and Relevant Instruction: Community schools commit to be driven by teaching and learning that is relevant to, inclusive of and centered in the wisdom, history, culture and experience of students, families and communities.

Shared Decision Making and Participatory Practices: Community schools all share a commitment to authentic and dynamic shared leadership in all aspects of school governance and operations.

The Overarching Values of Community Schools

Value 1: Racially-Just, Relationship-Centered Spaces



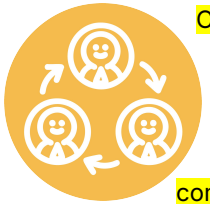
Community schools aim to build trust by bringing people together and authentically valuing diverse cultures, perspectives and strengths. A focus on relationships builds a positive school climate and culture that is racially-just, caring, identity safe and nurtures a sense of belonging. Racially-just, relationship- centered spaces also focus on establishing and sustaining positive and trusting relationships among students, families, educators, and community partners to build collaborative, supportive and sustainable spaces where everyone learns and grows together.

Value 2: Shared Power



Community schools are grounded in the belief that schools belong to all of us—students, families, school staff and the community. They are democratic spaces. Recognizing and building towards shared ownership and deep engagement, through shared decision-making and collaborative strategies, is vital to building a democratic, inclusive and empowering environment where all interest-holders feel that their expertise and commitment to the community is recognized and valued.

Value 3: Classroom-Community Connections



Community schools are continuously linking classroom instruction to the broader community. Instruction is engaging, providing real-world and project-based learning opportunities. It is interdisciplinary in nature and rooted in the assets of students, families, educators, and local community members. Curriculum is responsive to local history, knowledge, values, language, literature, institutions, culture, and environments. Community schools ground student learning in civic engagement and address real-world issues.

Value 4: A Focus on Continuous Improvement



Working together, community schools participate in an ongoing cycle of reflection, analysis, shared learning, and revision with a focus on student learning conditions, well-being and outcomes, and to ensure students, families, school staff and the community are valued, engaged and empowered. Community schools think beyond traditional metrics of educational success to reinvent systems of measurement rooted in asset-based, community-driven, and actionable data. Data becomes a tool for improvement that students, staff, families and community members can access, an instrument for reflection instead of an instrument of accountability – a flashlight, not a hammer.

The following slides dive deeply into Transforming or Step Four.

Read the article *"The Pony Express: Lessons for Modern Day Restructerers"* and then discuss the following in your group:

a. How are the ideas and information presented **connected** to what you already knew?
b. What new ideas did you get that **extended** or broadened your thinking in new directions?
c. What **challenges** or puzzles have come up in your mind from the ideas and information presented?





As the impacts from steps one through three become visible, you can begin to focus on the mindset shifts and the systemic work that create results for students and changes adult behaviors and schoolwide structures. This allows for changes to any inequitable system and structures, and directly addressing barriers to success in the school.

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STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Collaborative Leadership	Shared Vision for Readiness	Universal Practices (Me to We)	School Performance Framework	Additional Supports
Shared Identity	Family & Community Engagement	Student Empowerment	Continuous Improvement Practices	Intentional Professional Learning
Shared Purpose	Effective Communication Process	Elevated Student Voice	Equitable Access (Individual)	Evaluation Processes
			Equitable Access (Programmatic)	Onboarding Practices
			Relationship Supporting Structures	Quality Hiring Practices
			Shared Mental Models	

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Reflect on the statements of the ideal on the following slide.

Consider how you would rate your school community on a scale of 1-4 (1= low, 4= high).

What is going well? Where can you improve?

Shared Mental Models

The set of beliefs and expectations that influence how we make sense of the world and guide our behavior and decision-making.

Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **The school community shares a common understanding of equity, including how it informs systems, structures, and practices.**
- **The school's mental models reflect shared values and beliefs, influencing both individual and systemic actions and behaviors.**
- **The school community shares a commitment to social justice, culturally proficient and relevant learning, restorative school climate, and asset-based practices in order to effectively serve each and every student.**

Relationship Supporting Structures

Rituals and routines that foster and sustain strong relationships.

Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **The school implements structures that foster familiarity with students' names, faces, and stories.**
- **Structured staff time is intentionally designed to build and sustain community.**
- **Routines promote knowing and caring for one another.**
- **Structures, rituals, and routines are in place to strengthen partnerships with families and the community.**

Equitable Access (Individual)

Each and every student gets what they need when and how they need it.

Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **Opportunities for support are clearly identified and aligned with the school's shared vision for readiness.**
- **A clear and consistent process to identify students requiring support is well documented and widely known.**
- **Student strengths, interests, aspirations, and needs are all considered when decisions are made for that student.**
- **Decision rules for student placement, progress, and exit are firmly established, widely known, and consistently applied.**

Equitable Access (Programmatic)

The range of programs provided to students cater to their identities, interests, aspirations, and needs.

Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **Programs are carefully selected and designed based on student interests, aspirations, needs, and identities.**
- **Sustaining a diverse range of program options is a schoolwide commitment.**
- **Student outcomes and opportunities to engage and learn are regularly monitored throughout the year.**
- **Barriers to access are identified and mitigated to ensure equitable opportunities**

Continuous Improvement Process

Diverse insights are used to make ongoing effective improvements for systemic sustainability.
Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **A wide range of quantitative and qualitative data aligned with the school's shared vision is collected, including street data, empathy interviews, and measures of belonging, connection, and engagement.**
- **Disaggregated data is regularly employed to drive improvement efforts aimed at supporting students facing opportunity disparities.**
- **Diverse perspectives are embraced in sense-making processes to gain a deep understanding of the issues.**
- **A structured, iterative, process is in place to support growth.**

School Performance Framework

A structured way to articulate and measure what it means to be an effective school.
Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

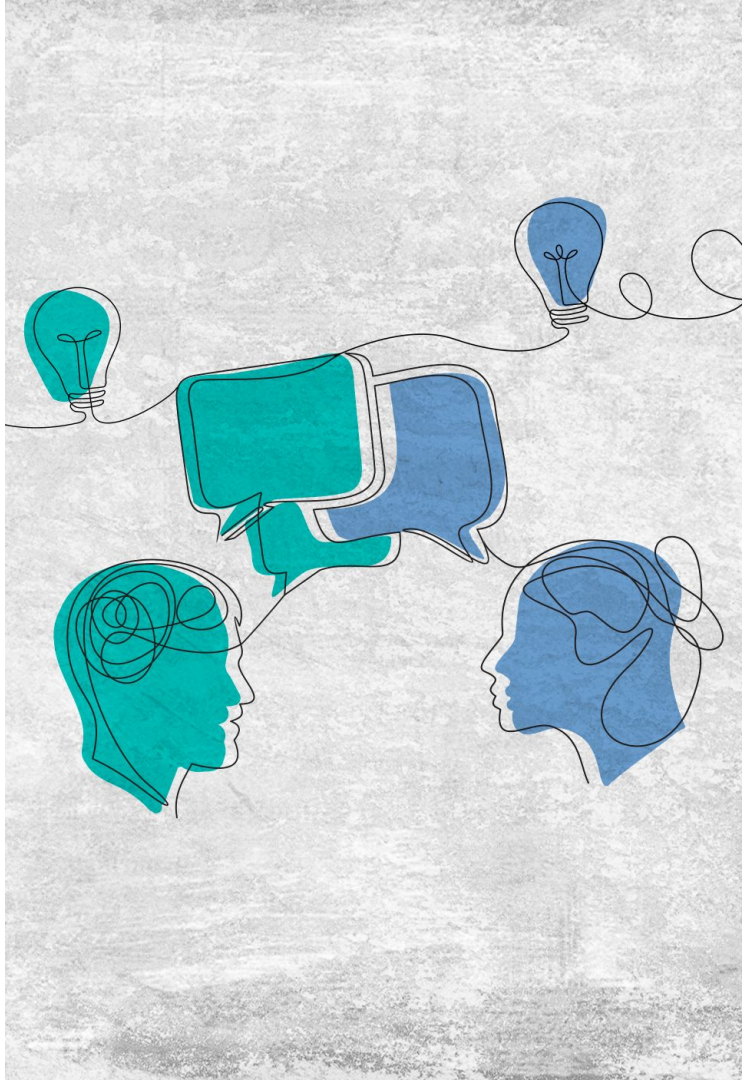
- **The school collects data on systemic responsibility linked to the student experience, including student belonging, connection, and engagement aligned with the shared vision for readiness.**
- **Measures of responsibility are systematically gathered at multiple points throughout the school year, driving focused inquiry cycles.**
- **The framework incorporates both leading and lagging indicators, and the school is dedicated to acting upon leading indicators.**
- **The framework is aligned with the district governance structure, encompassing district, school, and leadership goals.**

The following slides dive deeply into Sustainability or Step Five.

Read the article **Willing to be Disturbed** by Margaret Wheatley and identify what passages you feel have implications for your work.

Here is a protocol you can use with your team::

- **Each person will do one round of the following (5 min per person):**
  - **Level 1:** Read aloud the passage you have selected. If another participant has previously read one of your passages, select another to read.
  - **Level 2:** Say what you think about the passage (interpretation, connection to past experiences, etc.)
  - **Level 3:** Say what you see as the implications for your work.
  - The group will respond (for a total of up to 2 minutes) to what has been said. After all rounds have been completed, debrief the process.





In order to maintain a strong school culture and continue to welcome and embrace the school community, the ways that new individuals are folded into the organization are critical to continue to have success. Healthy systems do not happen by accident, and constant attention is required to support the system. The makeup of the school, the professional learning needs of educators, and the support needs of students change over time and we can't plan for every potential scenario. In order for the school culture to stand the test of time it is critical that the identity of the organization is central to all decisions, and all new additions to the school community are brought into the shared identity.

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What is going well? Where can you improve?

Student Supports

Targeted learning opportunities and resources.
Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **The providers of student supports prioritize the distinct needs, interests, and identities of students.**
- **Student opportunities and supports are aligned with the vision for readiness and linked with universal practices.**
- **Expansive opportunities accelerate learning and complement universal practices.**
- **Student opportunities and supports, both during and outside of school hours, are intentionally connected to the school's shared purpose and shared vision for readiness and collectively provide students with large group, small group, and individual experiences.**

Professional Learning

Professional development opportunities that help staff fulfill the school's vision for readiness.
Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **Professional learning is aligned with the school's holistic vision for readiness and reflects the school's shared identity.**
- **Adult learning theory is used to build adult capacity to deliver for students.**
- **Professional learning is intentionally focused on best practices for serving students who are systematically disadvantaged.**
- **Professional learning is designed to maximize use of time and to be creatively embedded throughout the day, week, month, and year.**
- **Professional learning is focused on creating environments where students have a sense of belonging, connection, and engagement.**

Evaluation

Process for assessing staff performance in alignment with a school's shared vision, identity, and purpose.
Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **Evaluation incorporates and aligns to the shared vision for readiness, shared purpose, and shared identity.**
- **Evaluation measures implementation of key schoolwide instructional rituals and routines that align with the shared identity.**
- **Evaluation processes reinforce the power of the collective.**

Hiring

Recruitment and selection of candidates who align with the school's shared identity and purpose.

Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **The hiring process is deliberately designed to recruit candidates who align with the school's shared identity and shared mental models, and have a commitment to supporting the shared vision for readiness.**
- **The interview process includes behavior-based scenarios that elicit values, beliefs, and actionable approaches.**
- **The hiring process elevates candidates who help the school reinforce the power of the collective.**
- **Multiple perspectives, including student, staff, and community voices, are engaged in the hiring process.**

Onboarding

Structured activities and supports to integrate new staff into the school.

Scale: 1- 4 (1= low, 4= high)

- **Onboarding aligns with and reinforces the shared vision for readiness, shared purpose, and shared identity, incorporating a focus on equitable practices.**
- **New staff receive technical and social-emotional support from a mentor, including both formal coaching and informal support.**
- **Onboarding explicitly focuses on the universal practices as well as the nuances, rituals, and routines that align with the shared identity.**
- **A multi-year progression of support both within and between years is established, communicated, and provided to new staff.**



Ultimately, it doesn't matter how great an educational idea or intervention is on paper...

What really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day lived reality of schools.

-Sir Kevan Collins

What are we trying to accomplish?

"The long-term measure of success for the CCSPP is the establishment and expansion of learning supports, learning opportunities, community-rooted and culturally relevant instructional practices, positive and nurturing school climates, and strong partnerships that better serve the needs of students and families, resulting in improved student outcomes."

2023-24 California Community Schools Partnership program: Implementation Grant