Chapter 8
How the Three R's Model (Relationships, Rigor, and Relevance) Addresses School Dropout Issues

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ABSTRACT

Struggling schools are nothing new, nor are the efforts of the many local and state efforts to improve them. However, the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act demanded dramatic and sustainable change with the implementation date of this change to take impact date in 2009. President Obama knew that most underperforming schools could not meet this deadline, so his administration extended the date. This chapter explores how the three R's model addresses school dropout issues.

INTRODUCTION

The framework that we have recreated around the country's "priority" and "focus" schools on a daily basis has reached a new low point of mediocrity. A "priority" school list consists of the lowest 5 percent of high poverty schools in terms of academic achievement, as measured in multiple-year averages on state test and high school graduation rates. A "focus" school are the lowest 10 percent of high-poverty schools based on progress closing the gap between the schools highest-and lowest-scoring students on state tests. Nearly half of most urban schools are on this list. Being mediocre means the best of the worst and worst of the best! If you have spent any amount of time in these schools you have witness such an interaction. The idea of schools using measures of success based on the status quo for this subset or that group is scary. We must take note of what a mediocre culture conveys to our children, teachers, schools, parents, and our communities. In order to redirect the American p-12 system of education, we must focus on the issues of leadership, climate, equity, assessment, high quality teachers and their pay, and excellence with the intent of removing barriers to access and achievement. It must be led by someone with a disposition about them that others immediately recognize and sometimes want to emulate. When a principal/leader draw people in and make them want to be around you, they are leaders. School climate/structure/culture is a group of activities that are a reflection of the norms, rules, procedures that guide the day-to-day functions of the schools teaching and learning environment (Arletig, 2019). School climate, or the interpersonal relationships between administrators, teachers, and students, is of utmost importance to the educational process. Not only is climate crucial to how students feel about themselves and learning, it helps determine whether a school is "healthy" or "sick" (Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006). A healthy school is one where nearly everyone is committed to promoting student achievement, and this commitment is evident. A "sick" school, in contrast, has succumb to destructive forces (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). In order to create these effective healthy schools and districts, the author stressed an

According to Lunenburg & Ornstein (1996), the "emphasis on intangibles… (strong leaders) must be conscious of vision, values, and motivation and understand intuitively the factors involved in the leader-constituent interaction. An essential factor is the capacity to inspire others, to organize members of the organization into a team and to make them feel like winners (Green 2010, p. 38).

This chapter examines the interplay between organizational structure and culture and principals abilities to communicate with their stakeholders, in the use of this 3R Model. Though teamwork is important for success, the school administration, chiefly the principal, is responsible for leadership (Walberg, 2010). In the Turnaround Leadership domain of the Four Domains (CST, 2017), the principal/IL is advised to, Develop leadership teams and, within the school staff, build leadership capacity for turnaround. Increasingly distribute leadership responsibility among faculty and staff with new challenges to keep them meaningfully engaged in the turnaround effort" (CST, 2017, p.5). The A-Team is not only a necessary ally to the transformational leader, it and other teams provide opportunities for leadership among the faculty.

The school may already operate with a system of teams (or PLCs), including, for example, Grandparents Council, Instructional Teams (teacher working groups), and Parent Involvement Councils. If such teams are yet created, they can be put in place on at a later date in the process. They can be used to strengthen the instructional system, but Meyer's 90-Day jump-start will focus on the principal/IL, the A-Team, and the whole faculty. The principal/IL's relationship with individual teachers, as well as teams is key, and practice-focused collaboration is as much person-to-person as group activity.

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