

CHAPTER 5: STUDENT CULTURE

STUDENT CULTURE: AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE LEARNING GROWS

On a crisp December morning in Dallas, Texas, hundreds of students make their way through the front doors of Annie Webb Blanton Elementary School. Any child who looks less than enthusiastic about starting the school day quickly perks up when Edgar Jamarillo, Blanton's assistant principal, offers them a quick handshake or fist bump. "Good morning, Liliana," he greets one child. "Can I get a smile today, Juan?" he asks another. Then, his eyes widen at a student clutching a bag of chips. "I hope that's not your breakfast, Emilio!" he exclaims, while Emilio grins.

Emilio and his peers walk quietly down the hallway as soft music emanates from each of the classrooms. When Emilio enters his room, he he's greeted by his third grade teacher, and he joins his peers who are already there. He takes his seat where a morning meal is waiting as well as a "brain breakfast"—an engaging quiet activity for him to complete. The learning has begun even before the morning bell has rung.

A few minutes later, morning announcements begin over the loudspeaker. "Good morning, Blanton Bruins!" the warm voice of assistant principal Derek Thomas echoes across the campus. After a few announcements and a quick cheer for two students who have birthdays today, Derek shares, "The Habit of the week this week is...Sharing! Let us remember to share our things with our peers, but also to share our knowledge: help each other with whatever we are learning."

As the announcements draw to a close, teachers throughout the building launch the first lesson of the day. Every child has been welcomed and nourished, and they are ready to learn.



WATCH Clip 24 (Garza)—See it (Model)

The first time Laura Garza visited Annie Webb Blanton Elementary School, she saw children who looked deeply discouraged. "Students were putting their heads down in the middle of class, or dragging their feet during transitions," she remembers. "I wondered, 'Why do they think it's okay not to be learning?'" Laura realized that students were checking out because they were in an environment defined by low expectations. At a school where more than 80% of the students qualified for a free or reduced lunch, 80% were Latino and 58% were English Language Learners,

many adults felt that the challenges were too steep to overcome. No one was showing what was possible, and in turn, the students didn't expect to learn.

When Laura became principal of Blanton, she knew her starting point had to be changing the culture. The key for her was not long talks about having high expectations—those rarely work. Instead, she got the staff practicing—taking the actions that can change a school's culture. Every moment our students and adults practice the right things is a moment that builds habits of excellence. In contrast, every moment in which we as adults allow our students to do less than their best is when we unintentionally are the authors of their bad habits.

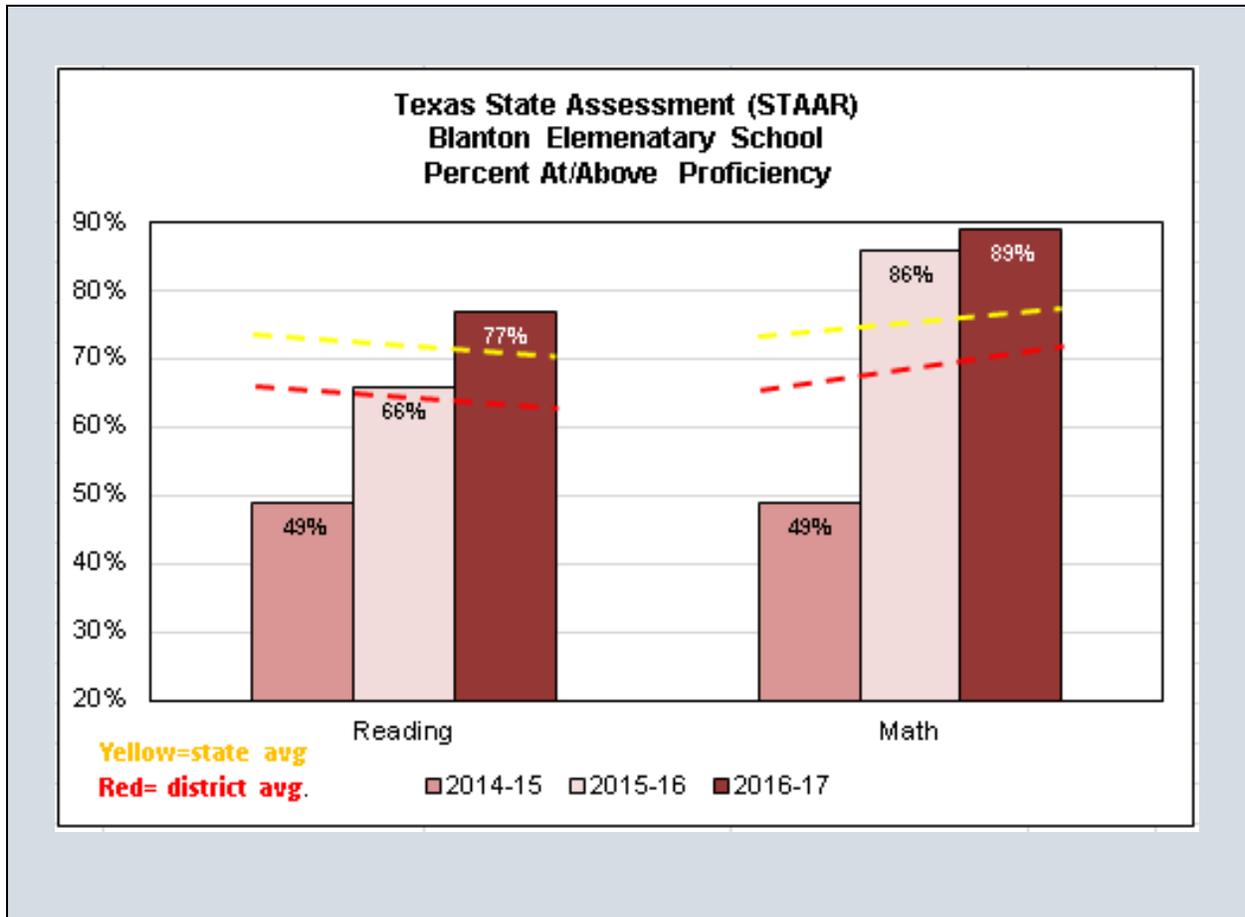
CORE IDEA

Culture is not formed by motivational speeches or statements of values.
It is formed by repeated practice—using every minute of every day to build good habits

At first, many teachers were reluctant with this idea of practicing. “Why do we need to practice breakfast? That doesn't have anything to do with the instruction.” But Laura smiled and persisted. Together, they practiced not only morning routines, but hallway transitions that took five minutes instead of fifteen, and welcoming students into class in a way that would engage them. “Not everyone was sure we could fix our culture quickly,” Laura says. “But I kept reminding them: This is why we're here. We're passionate about teaching and we want to make a difference. We're going to show children they can learn.”

You could see the difference from day one. Teachers were acting completely differently, and rather quickly students followed suit. Laura recalls watching her teachers greeting children at their classroom doors and sharing in their joy. “By a month in, our students really got it,” she says, “that we weren't going away, and we expected them to learn.”

The evidence of the importance of student culture can be seen in Laura’s results. “Culture and data-driven instruction—that’s what it took,” recalls Laura. In just a few years, she set the highest bar for what is possible—not only in Dallas but for all of us:



Laura transformed Blanton by recognizing something incredibly important: You can’t blame your students for your school’s culture—they simply follow the adults. Laura had been told—as many of us have—that her students had “behavioral problems,” that their second language gaps were too large, and that they were not really teachable. But the more important problem at Blanton was that adults weren’t giving students consistent messages about what to do or how to do it. Children will rise to the level of our expectations; it’s our job to set them—and teach them.

CORE IDEA

Children will rise to the level of our expectations.
It's our job to set them—and teach them.

Laura's success is not an isolated case. Rebecca Utton experienced the same thing in turning around her school in Denver. They replicated what Jarvis Sanford also pointed out in the first edition of Leverage Leadership¹, and every other leader highlighted in this book will affirm the same—student culture is a super-lever. But the truly good news they teach us is that as adults, we can fix student culture. You don't have to look as far away as Dallas or Denver to see the proof: you can see it in the automatic ways children adjust their behavior when they enter your local library or place of worship. They know they are expected to speak in a respectful tone of voice, to walk rather than to run, and to treat property gently in these spaces. So they do so—and whole worlds of opportunity to learn, discover, and grow open up. As adults, we can build those opportunities in our schools, too. The question is: how?

The answer lies in a single powerful idea: if you want a culture of excellence, you build it by repeated practice—performed by both children and adults. What follows is how Laura did so:

- **Set your vision.**
- **Roll it out to your staff.**
- **Roll it out to your students.**
- **Monitor & Maintain.**

Let's dive in.

SET THE VISION

You can tell a lot about student culture just by how a school feels. Imagine that you want to walk into a high school classroom and see students passionately engaged in a rigorous college-level seminar. Without a doubt, this ideal is worth working towards. But consider everything that needs to be in place in order for that seminar to happen. You could get to something that resembles what you imagined just by handpicking top students from your debate team who already thrive in these conditions. Yet that would only give those students the exciting intellectual experience rather than such a culture for *all* students. What needs to happen for that to change?

First of all, you need the seminar to be happening—a solid lesson plan that sets up a productive seminar and a unit that has provided the background material students need to participate in it. All students need to have completed any necessary pre-work, to be seated, and to listen respectfully to whomever is speaking.

Even with this groundwork for an academic seminar in place, you'll also need to have established rules for everyone in the room to follow during the seminar. The teacher needs to prompt when necessary without doing the work for the students; and the students, in turn, need to ask good questions, express disagreement—and agreement!—constructively, and hear each other out without interrupting. And finally, the teacher needs to be ready to jump in when students go off track using intervention strategies designed to halt whatever's derailing the conversation and pull it back on course.

What do all these factors have in common? *Visibility*. The seminar provides many of the greatest things we hope our students will have—intellectual rigor, a safe environment where they can learn—but those hopes alone don't make a culture. What makes a student culture is what we can see—as evidenced by this video of AP Physics teacher Emelia Pelliccio's class, in which she's successfully set the stage for rigorous discourse supported by strong student culture.



WATCH Clip 25 (Pelliccio)—See it (Model)

Student culture is what you see, not what you hope for.

CORE IDEA

Student culture is what you see,
not what you hope for.

In order to build a strong student culture that you can see every day, you first need to articulate what you want it to look like in crystal-clear terms. The best way to set that vision for a great student culture is to answer a few simple questions. At every moment in your school day (be it breakfast, classroom discussion, dismissal, etc.), what ideally would be happening:

- What are students doing?
- What are teachers and leaders doing?
- What are teachers/leaders doing when students aren't doing what you want?

These are the questions leaders like Laura ask themselves when they set out to lead student culture—not just for the first hour or the first day of school, but for every minute of every school day. Think back to the scene from Laura's school that opened this chapter. How does what you see in that video tell you about Blanton's culture?



RE-WATCH Clip 21: Garza—See the Model

STOP & JOT

Based on this video of morning procedures, what are Blanton's values? How can you tell?

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Laura wants to lead a school where students are joyful, respectful, and dedicated to learning. She doesn't just dream about it—she makes it happen by beginning their day with a warm welcome that sets them up to receive great instruction. In this context, Blanton is also able to build a strong moral formation in the application of a set of core values. The culture doesn't just use these as platitudes; they are living parts of the school's cultural systems. When students don't do what they are supposed to do, they talk about not living up to the school's core value of responsibility. However, when a student helps a peer up the stairs, that action is praised as an example of responsibility. Morning announcements and assemblies are geared toward teaching and presenting these values as essential. Time and time again, this commitment to moral values in student culture re-asserts itself.

In building from these core values, top leaders make an important insight. Ultimately, a culture of making every minute count and of constantly improving practice is not an end in itself; it matters insofar as it prepares students to be fully formed individuals. Without a school that builds culture meticulously and relentlessly, students will not have what they need to fulfill this vision. Values without cultural systems can never be put into practice. Cultural systems without values are truly meaningless. Only together can they build the schools our kids deserve: a foundation upon which students develop virtuous action.

CORE IDEA:
Cultural systems are the foundation upon which students develop virtuous action.



How can you do the same at your own school? The keys are to see and name what you're striving for: seek out and define exemplary routines, identify the gap that separates those routines from the way your school looks now, and craft minute-by-minute action plans that will make your vision a reality throughout the school day. Let's address that step by step.

FIND YOUR MODEL

When Laura set out to reshape school culture at Blanton, her first step was to identify model school routines to replicate schoolwide. "Before school started, I met with my leadership team almost every day so we could decide exactly what we were going to strive for," says Laura. Without selecting a model to follow, Laura and her team wouldn't have known how to pass on their vision for Blanton's culture to their teachers—a sure way to prevent it from ever becoming a reality.

Here are the steps Laura and her team followed to identify exemplar routines for every part of the school day.

FIND BRIGHT SPOTS IN-HOUSE. Your most successful teachers may well already have created routines that are driving their results effectively. By observing them and noting what they say and do, you can discover actions that can be replicated throughout your school, rather than having to teach everyone in your school a new routine from scratch.

FIND BRIGHT SPOTS BEYOND YOUR SCHOOL. On the other hand, any time your school doesn't already have an exemplary routine you can build into the whole campus's culture, you can look elsewhere to find one. Laura found two key strategies especially constructive: visiting high-

performing schools to record what teachers, leaders, and students say and do; and seeking out videos of school culture run well, such as those included in [Teach Like A Champion](#) or [Get Better Faster](#).

Once Laura and her team had identified the models they wanted to replicate at Blanton, their next step was to put their vision for Blanton’s culture into words. For each of the whole-school and in-class procedures that would uphold school culture every day, they wrote down the following:

DEFINE TEACHER, LEADER, AND STUDENT ACTIONS. Naming the concrete actions that will make each routine successful is how Laura and her team translate their hopes for their school not only into something they can see, but also into something they communicate. Here’s an example of what this might look like for the system that sets the tone for the remainder of the school day: the students’ arrival on campus.

A SAMPLE VISION: BLANTON SCHOOL MORNING ARRIVAL

- **What is the leader doing?**

Before doors open, school leader (SL) is doing quick school walkthrough to ensure all teachers are transitioning to their morning stations and check if there are any items for follow-up. The custodian is putting out the breakfast crates in the Commons Room and setting up the breakfast scanning stations.

SL opens door at student arrival time and stands outside of the front door. SL squares up (stands up tall) and scans for uniform compliance. SL has a bright smile to greet students and shake their hands. If a student doesn’t shake her hand or greet her in return, SL has students ‘do it again.’

Once breakfast finishes, custodian posts the late sign and SL enters the building and does all-school clap for students’ attention. SL greets the students and promptly begins morning meeting. SL quickly transitions students to classrooms or morning circle.

- **What are the teachers doing?**

Lead teachers transition to the cafeteria tables before doors open and set out “bright work” (engaging mental math activities and challenges) and pencils. Assistant teachers transition to homework check-in station and set out homework bins and check-in binder.

Once students arrive, the lead teacher greets each student with a bright face and circulates to ensure they are either eating their breakfast or working on bright work. Lead teacher ensures all breakfast is thrown out when students finish. The assistant teacher ensures all students place their belongings in their cubby, deposit any snacks or lunch, and hands in their homework. Assistant teacher checks student homework. Performing arts teachers play CD of soft background music.

- **What are the students doing?**

Students greet SL upon arrival at the door. Students shake hand with a smile and wear compliant uniform. Students then walk to cafeteria if they are eating school breakfast. Then they walk straight to their cubby to greet assistant teacher and deposit their book bag and any snack and lunch from home. Students hand their homework to assistant teacher and then walk to their cafeteria table and greet teacher. Student eats breakfast or begins working on their bright work. Student signals hand on head when finished eating.

If student is late, he/she goes to the main office with parent to sign in then report to cafeteria or classroom depending on time.

DEFINE ACTIONS TO TAKE WHEN A STUDENT DOESN'T FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. Even the schools that have established the most excellent student cultures have students that don't follow directions. What sustains their success is that they've planned responses that are effective—and immediate. Laura plans those responses from the beginning, knowing they're an integral component of a school culture that runs smoothly. Again, see how this looks for morning arrival.

PLAN YOUR VISION: MORNING ARRIVAL

- **What will happen immediately when a student doesn't follow instructions?**

Teacher will first try least-invasive redirect first (proximity, non-verbal, modeling what to do). If student is still non-responsive, teacher repeats direction and has student do it again, provides a countdown. If student is still non-responsive, teacher pulls student aside to re-redirect or sends student to another teacher. If student still refuses to follow instructions, teacher refers student to the assistant principal and the assistant principal will follow-up.

CREATE A TOOL TO EVALUATE SUCCESS. Finally, Laura defines what each routine in her school will look like when it's implemented at an advanced level, a proficient level, a working-towards level, or a level that needs improvement. She compiles those parameters for success in a single school culture rubric that will make it significantly easier for her to evaluate Blanton's culture as a whole once the year is underway. Here's how the morning circle section of the rubric looks.

PLAN YOUR VISION: MORNING CIRCLE

| SCHOOL-WIDE SYSTEMS | Advanced | Proficient | Working Towards | Needs Improvement |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Morning Circle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Circle is organized such that all students can see and actively participate in circle activities. ○ All circle topics address core values, college, or community needs. ○ All students are silent and tracking the speaker. ○ Students are engaged and participate enthusiastically. ○ Leader encourages student participation through relevant questions and/or student presentation. ○ Leader provides opportunity for teachers to present or give input. ○ All transitions within circles are silent, smooth, and efficient. ○ Leader always models taxonomy techniques (cold call, CFU, positive framing) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Circle is organized such that almost all students can see and actively participate in circle activities. ○ Almost all circle topics address core values, college, or community needs. ○ 95% of students are silent and tracking the speaker. ○ Students are engaged and participate. ○ Leader encourages student participation through relevant questions and/or student presentation. ○ Leader provides opportunity for teachers to present or give input. ○ Transitions within circles are mostly silent, smooth, and efficient. ○ Leader consistently models taxonomy techniques (cold call, CFU, positive framing) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Circle is somewhat disorganized such that some students are unable to see and participate in circle activities. ○ Circle topics may not be connected to core values, college, or community needs. ○ There are some side conversations and not all students are tracking the speaker. ○ Students participate begrudgingly. ○ Leader does not encourage student participation with questions or student presentation. ○ Leader infrequently opens the floor for other adult voices. ○ Transitions within circle can be noisy or take too long. ○ Leader occasionally models taxonomy techniques (cold call, CFU, positive framing) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Circle is poorly organized, limiting students' ability to see and participate in circle activities. ○ Circle topics are not connected to core values, college, or community needs. ○ Side conversations disrupt the flow of Circle ○ Students do not participate. ○ Other adults do not participate. ○ Transitions within circle are almost always noisy and take too long. ○ Leader does not model taxonomy techniques (cold call, CFU, positive framing) |

A complete sample school culture rubric is available on the DVD that accompanies this book, as well as templates you can use to complete each of the steps above!

FIND THE GAP

Once Laura has set the bar for culture at Blanton, her next step is to see the gap between the vision she's defined and the way each routine looks currently. Evaluating the gap looks slightly different depending on whether Laura is introducing a new system, or relaunching an existing one. If the routine has never been implemented at Blanton before, Laura has to anticipate what the gap might hypothetically look like when she rolls it out, asking herself these questions:

- **What would the students be doing that would indicate the system was being implemented poorly?**
- **What would ineffective leaders and/or teachers be doing?**

If, on the other hand, Laura is revising or relaunching an existing system, her goal is to pin down the actions that are currently causing the system to break down:

- **What student actions or inactions are indicators of the problem?**
- **What teacher actions or inactions are causing the problem?**
- **What leader actions or inactions are causing the problem?**

Identifying the actions that would define ineffective implementation of school routines, as well as those that would show it had been implemented successfully, leaves Laura prepared for the final phase of setting her vision for culture at Blanton: crafting a minute-by-minute system for each of these routines.

MOVE BEYOND SUPERMAN—CRAFT MINUTE-BY-MINUTE SYSTEMS

Too often when we think of transforming student culture we envision Superman or Superwoman: a charismatic, show-stopping leader who gets all students to be invested. Yet everywhere I travel, the school leaders who drive strong culture are not superheroes in the stereotypical way (although they certainly should be admired!). Rather than lead culture by sheer

force of nature, they build systems that make culture a habit. Your vision won't become a reality until you have a system to lock it in.

CORE IDEA:

You don't make your vision a reality by sheer force of nature;
you build systems to lock it in.

FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD: LOCK IN CULTURE WITH SYSTEMS, NOT SUPERHEROES

“We used to manage student culture by trying to be being magical, but there aren't that many magicians. We used to tell the superman story, but how many superheroes are there? Having minute-by-minute systems has given us the ability to systemize culture. This way, I don't need to be standing right there every moment to make sure it gets done.”

—Mary Ann Stinson, principal, Truesdell Education Campus, Washington, D.C.
(See Mary Ann's more complete story in Chapter 1)

Laura epitomizes this mantra. Quiet and unassuming, Laura leads by example, and by building systems that allow everyone to do the same. Her work in setting Blanton's culture isn't complete until she's named what leaders, students, and teachers will do during each school routine in a comprehensive, sequential, and minute-by-minute plan, including materials she'll need and actions that will be taken when students do not follow directions. If she's revising or relaunching a procedure, she makes sure to account for the breakdowns identified. To give you a sense of how detailed this plan needs to be, here is a sample. A template is available on the DVD.

SAMPLE MINUTE-BY-MINUTE PLAN: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MORNING ARRIVAL

Prior to doors opening:

7:15 am

- Custodian puts out breakfast crates & computers for breakfast sign in
- School leader (SL) does a walkthrough of the building making sure to stop by the teacher work room, copy room, and commons room (with notebook in hand to record anything that requires follow-up)

Materials: Crates with breakfast already in them (pick up from walk in refrigerator), notebook, and the breakfast computer stations

7:25 am

- SL goes to front door for morning arrival
- All lead teachers report to their breakfast tables and set out bright work on stools and pencils on table tops
- SL greets scholars as they arrive. All teachers make sure scholars pick up their breakfast
- All assistant teachers report to their morning homework check in station
 - Prepare to greet students as they arrive
 - Prepare to collect homework

Materials: bright work bins with bright work folders and pencils, empty homework bins for collection of homework, check in binder, and notebook (each teacher)

Doors open & Students Enter:

7:30 am

- SL opens the door begin to greet students and parents
- Performing Arts teacher puts on music (calming) and gets out materials for circle

Materials: CD with calming music

- Scholars square up/stand still and greet SL by shaking their hand with a bright face and saying good morning
- SL does a quick scan of each student's uniform to ensure compliance and has any non-compliant students 'do it again'. SL gives 5 second pep talk for certain students to set them up for success.
- Scholars enter the building and walk quietly down the steps (holding on to the railing)
- When scholars reach the bottom landing they are greeted by a teacher
- Scholars stop by the computer station to scan their hand for breakfast or keep going if they are not eating breakfast
- Scholars enter the commons room and go to their cubby
- Scholars greet assistant teacher
- Scholars put their belongings in their cubby, submit homework binder, and put snack in yellow bin and lunch in red bin (if they brought their snack or lunch)
- Scholars then walk to their table with hands by their side and greet the lead teacher
- Scholars sits down and begin to eat their breakfast (if they already ate they begin their morning bright work)

- Lead teachers are circulating, monitoring and interacting with students (low tone of voice)
- After eating breakfast the scholar gives the non-verbal signal (hand on top of head) to signal he/she is finished eating and ready for clean up
- Teacher will respond to the scholar by doing one of the following:
 - Go to the scholar and pick up the finished breakfast and throw it in the trash
 - Give the scholar a non-verbal signal (head nod) to throw the breakfast away
 - Assign student helpers (2) who circulate during breakfast and respond when they see the non-verbal cue signaling a scholar has finished their breakfast

Materials: Yellow snack bins, red lunch bins, morning bright work, and pencils

7:55am- SL enters the building

- SL goes to the commons room in preparation for morning meeting
- Custodian puts out the late sign, closes the door, and reports to the commons room for morning

Materials: Late sign stand

8:00 am- Performing Arts teacher gives the signal (clean up song) for teachers and scholars to begin final clean up and prepare for morning meeting or dismissal

8:05 am- SL greets student body

- SL does the all school clap and scholars respond (if SL does not get 100% they “do it again”)
- SL verbally greets the student body and circulates
- SL gives signal for scholars & teachers to begin transition for morning circle

Late Arrivals:

- Any scholar who arrives after 7:55 must report to the main office with an adult to be signed in
- Office Manager gives the scholar a pass and the scholar reports to the commons room (if it is prior to 8:20am) and to the classroom (if it is after 8:20am)

All adults should use the most least invasive form of redirects

- Non-verbal redirects
- Use of proximity-stand beside or behind a student
- Modeling what to do

Scholars who do not follow directions during arrival/breakfast:

Step 1:

- Teacher goes through the set of non-responsiveness strategies (ex: give the direction again using a strong but low voice, provide students with a countdown to do what is asked, give a consequence-pull to the side for a discussion, send to another teacher)

Step 2:

- Scholar is sent to the assistant principal and that person will do the follow up
- If assistant principal is out of the building, the scholar goes to the Instructional Leader for that grade level

MEASURE IT

Only once she's planned the system at this level can Laura define how to measure whether or not she is successful:

- **What is the outcome?** Laura always sets a concrete, measurable goal that she'll use to determine when the system has been successfully implemented—for example, “hallways transitions will reduce to one minute,” or “one hundred percent of students will turn their full attention to whomever is speaking in every classroom.”
- **How will we measure it?** There are a number of different tools to measure student culture. Either you can create a student culture rubric (see the DVD that accompanies this book for an example), or you can create a checklist of actions you are looking for when observing (Get Better Faster is a fruitful tool for observing in-class student culture. Make this tool transparent for the leadership team and the staff will make it clear the goal the school is setting for culture.

It's one thing to set your vision as a leader, and another thing to get everyone else in your school to follow it. Leaders like Laura translate their cultural systems from paper to practice in two steps: roll it out to your staff, and then later to your students. Let's see what a staff-facing rollout looks like first.

ROLL IT OUT TO YOUR STAFF

For most marathon runners, preparing for a race follows a fairly simple course: doing practice runs of a certain prescribed length each week, getting enough sleep, eating right. Through these efforts, the runners will get in shape, improve their form, and earn good times. For the elite marathoners, however, training looks very different. In the months before race day, elite marathoners plan *obsessively*: creating strategies for each hill, each turn, and each drink station. In the hours before the race, they don plastic bags to reflect sunlight, working to save single calories for competition. These runners aren't training to participate; they're preparing to win. And when the goal is victory, it's the details that separate contenders from weekend warriors.

CORE IDEA:

It's the details that separate contenders from weekend warriors.

How does this apply to school leadership? Enter Tera Carr. As principal of Hamilton Elementary School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, from 2014 to 2016 Tera led the school to 16 point gains in Math and 11 point gains in Readingⁱⁱ. A lot of that was about resetting the student culture. Let's consider how Tera Carr's rollout of student culture differs from a traditional school leader, who we will call Ms. Smith. Both Tera and Ms. Smith want to put strong school culture into place. To prepare, both lead a professional development session for their staff. Yet the similarities end there:

CASE STUDY:

A Tale of Two Leaders Launching Student Culture

LEADER 1: MS. SMITH

Ms. Smith begins her staff professional development with a presentation on the general principles of the culture she wants. The slideshow is elaborate, containing instructions on a variety of classroom and school-wide norms. In pairs, Smith has her teachers read a recent article on the “achievement gap” in America before partner groups discuss how this work connects to the school’s overall mission. After narrating what each procedure might look like, Smith leaves her teachers to determine how each procedure will be applied to their individual classrooms. During the two weeks that follow, leaders create templates of their student rules and make them available to the school leader for feedback and suggestions.

STOP & JOT

What pitfalls might keep Ms. Smith’s culture launch from succeeding?

LEADER 2: TERA CARR

Here’s what it looks like when Tera Carr rolls out culture with her staff. How does her rollout differ from Ms. Smith’s? What makes it effective?



WATCH Clip 26 (Carr)—Do it: Roll Out to Staff

STOP & JOT

How does Tera’s rollout differ from Ms. Smith’s? What makes it more effective?

Tera's talking was brief, but the change was real: they practiced the vision, and in doing so made it a reality. In the marathon that is building strong student culture, Ms. Smith is a weekend warrior. She has good ideas, works hard, and may make a positive impact. But she will not build an extraordinary school.

Tera, on the other hand, is a champion. She has built an exceptional school like Laura Garza's, and this video makes it clear how. Like an elite marathon runner, she trains her staff down to the smallest details. They set a meticulous vision and work relentlessly to achieve it. In short, leaders like Tera and Laura do not leave learning to chance. Let's break down how they do this.

SEE IT & NAME IT

Take a look at this video of Eric Diamon, the principal of Vailsburg Middle School in Newark, NJ (whom you'll see again in Chapter 8!), and another leader who has built a strong student culture that has led to strong results. He is introducing a new routine to his staff. As you watch, try to note as many as possible of the actions Eric takes to introduce the routine effectively.



WATCH Clip 27 (Diamon)—Do it: Roll Out to Staff

STOP & JOT

What did Eric say and do to lead an effective See It when he rolled out his cultural routine to his staff?



The actions of Laura, Tera and Eric are strikingly similar, and they follow the principle we saw in previous chapters: if you want them to get it, get them to see it. Here's how:

HOOK: Eric inspired and empowered his staff to learn this routine by letting them know up front why it mattered, and what it looked like. As you can see, there is a place for motivational speeches! He just keeps it short and sweet to allow him to focus most of his time on the model.

FRAME: Before transitioning to a live model, Eric took an important step to ensure his staff was prepared to master the routine: he named what would happen sequentially during the model his teacher was about to perform. He told them what to look for, which allowed them to see it more clearly.

MODEL: For her part, Eric's teacher Julia didn't model the routine halfway: she dove in completely. She took on the full actions as if students were in front of her, and she exaggerated the actions she wanted to see teachers replicate so that they couldn't possibly be missed.

DEBRIEF: Finally, Eric stamped his staff's understanding of the model by asking them to unpack what they had seen. (Verbal cues leaders can use to complete this step include: "What did you notice? What actions did I take and what did I say?") Just as importantly, he pushed them to name why those actions had been part of the model. In short, the modeling is the method by which your vision comes alive.

CORE IDEA:

Modeling is the method by which your vision comes alive

Do It

Just as with leading PD, the value of a student culture rollout comes with the practice. The first step is to let your staff know exactly what actions they'll be practicing. Take a look at this video to see how Tera introduces practice.



WATCH Clip 28 (Carr)—Do it: Roll Out to Staff

STOP & JOT

What does Tera say and do to lead an effective practice of the routine?

PLAN: To set practice up for success, Tera delivered clear What-to-Do directions to her staff that let them know the following:

- **What the main participant will do.** Tera made sure to delineate the tasks of the key person in each group who was taking on the main practice role during the role play. She also gave

them time to plan and script their actions, which would make them far more successful during the practice than if they went off the cuff.

- **What the audience will do.** Tera also set clear roles in place for the members of her staff who would be playing the role of students while someone else practiced the teacher role in the routine. Having pre-prepared student roles for them to emulate made the practice that much more relevant to what it would be like for teachers to roll out this routine on the ground.

PRACTICE: All of the planning sets the teachers up for effective practice:

- **Round 1: Build Muscle Memory—Start Simple.** Tera started by having participants rehearse the routine at its simplest from start to finish. To ensure her staff spent this time building the muscle memories of what it felt like to rehearse the routine correctly, Tera delivered feedback in real time when staff made an error and had them try again, starting at the point where they had stumbled. Remember, you need to know how to lift a bar before you add the weight.

CORE IDEA:

Keep the first practice simple to build muscle memory:
you need to know how to lift a bar before you add the weight.

- **Round 2: Add complexity.** Once the basics are mastered, Tera can add complications like student misbehavior to the practice. This is the heart of the most effective practice: add the complexity once a participant is ready for it.

Practice is so simple in its concept; all it requires is a commitment to make it happen with your staff.

A WORD ON...THE DAY ONE DRESS REHEARSAL

When you participate in a play, most of your practices leading up to it focus on one scene, one act, or even just an individual song. But as you get closer, it becomes essential to put it all together for a dress rehearsal. As any actor or actress would tell you, it's one thing to know each individual part, it's another to string them altogether in a full performance!

Many of the most successful school leaders imitate this by engaging in a full "dress rehearsal" a few days before school begins. The dress rehearsal is a minute-by-minute walkthrough of the school's entire day, from morning breakfast to detention dismissal. Teachers and leaders walk through what they will be doing in each part of the day, finishing the exercise by rehearsing their systems in pairs, offering critiques and suggestions as they refine their systems. For example, they stand in the hall outside their classrooms "watching" students enter, teaching students to sharpen pencils and how to put away books.

Don't underestimate the power of a rehearsal. Even if some will protest at the beginning, by the time the real students finally arrive two days later, every teacher knows exactly where he or she is supposed to be and exactly what he or she is supposed to be doing at all times. All the students see is a fully coordinated, united front: the first strong message of what to expect for the rest of the year.

ROLL IT OUT TO YOUR STUDENTS

After the staff is prepared to roll out culture as a team, it's the students' turn to learn the routines. What works for adults works for children as well: hook, frame, model—and then get them to practice. The two structures for rolling out student culture, then, are nearly identical.

CORE IDEA:

What works for adults works for children:
hook, frame, model, debrief, practice.

Here are the key nuances Laura applies when she leads a student-facing rollout.

- **Challenge and affirm:** The magic of Laura's rollout to students is how she challenges them into doing a task that could otherwise be menial (i.e., raising your hand). She makes it an

exciting opportunity for them to show leadership. To do so, she speaks with urgency and importance that makes it hard for the students not to follow suit.

- **Lightning quick correction:** Laura doesn't wait until multiple students are off-task: she corrects the very first instance. The reason for Laura is simple: all the other students redirect themselves when they see a peer redirected. She's sending a message to all about what is the standard for engagement.
- **Leaders and teachers together:** Laura knows that if she asks the students to do something and the teachers don't make the same request, the culture will not work. As such, Laura and her teachers work together to give feedback to students as they learn each part of a routine.

MONITOR & MAINTAIN

Imagine you can tell a child to brush their teeth every night before bed and monitor them only the very first evening after you give them these instructions. That first night, the child will go to bed with clean teeth. Tell any parent that the child now automatically brushes their teeth every night, however, and you'll be met with justifiable laughter. The reality is that people of any age need to be monitored and supported in the process of making routines into habits.

By the same token, the rollout of student culture will only be as successful as you maintain it. The steps in this section will show you how. They'll prevent you from having merely a "honeymoon period," to keeping the celebration of strong culture yearlong.

LEAD PUBLICLY

Whenever I visit a school that has a strong student culture, I immediately am left with the impression that the school leader seems to be everywhere. This is not by accident. School leaders

like Laura make sure they're visible at key times and places during the school day—like lunch, troubled classrooms, or hallways—after her staff- and student-facing rollouts. “When our first day of school went well, I thought, ‘Okay, let’s not jinx this!’” Laura remembers, laughing. “I kept up the success by making sure my leadership team and I were very visible.”

How can Laura do that and still stay on top of all of her work? She is relentless intentional about how she manages her time. She knows when she'll be walking around, when she'll be observing/leading meetings, and when she'll do other things. And she coordinates with her leadership team to make sure someone is present when she is not. (More about that in the chapter on Finding the Time).

A WORD ON... THE THIRTY-DAY PLAYBOOK

Bill Walsh was one of the most successful professional football coaches of all time. One of his many legacies was the way he called plays for his offense.

At the time Walsh was coaching in 1980, every coach made a decision in the moment of which play their offense should run. This would happen roughly 65 times a game. Each team had hundreds of plays to choose from, and each coach needed to decide within a few seconds.

At one point, Walsh realized that he wasn't at his best when trying to make decisions this way. So one night he decided to script the first 7 plays of the game. No matter what the defense did, he told himself, he would stick with those plays.

His strategy worked. The team looked better, advanced the ball further, and had more success in those first plays than later. Walsh kept expanding the number of scripted plays until he reached 25, or the equivalent of nearly the entire first half. And his teams were wildly successful on offense.ⁱⁱⁱ

In many ways leading student culture is like coaching a football team. There are at least 60 moments in a day when a leader has to decide rapidly what they are going to do: what to say during breakfast, how to talk to a student who's upset or angry in the hallway, whether to restart a routine or not, etc.

To help leaders who weren't instinctually good at leading culture, we have experimented with our own version of Walsh's success—rather than a 30-play script, we established a 30-day playbook. Given that the first 30 days are essential to establishing culture, leaders made a minute-by-minute script of what they would do throughout those first 30 days to set in place the right habits.

- 7:00: Arrive at school & quickly check emails—anyone sick? Any emergencies?
- 7:15: Walk around to greet the early-arriving teachers: how are they? Any concerns?
- 7:20: Go to stand outside to greet students and parents. Look for the 15 students who need extra “love” to start the day strong—make sure to give them a particularly positive message.

And so on.

What was the impact? Here it from Christine Algozo, principal of Uncommon Preparatory High School, who admitted to having struggled with student culture in the past:

“Sustaining strong student culture has been a key area of my own growth as a principal, and the 30-day playbook was a significant game changer for me. For the first time, I had a game plan for everything I and my leadership team needed to do. It freed my mind from overthinking and allowed me to focus on simply acting: taking the steps that would build the culture, one action at a time. By the end of 30 days, we had in place the strongest culture we’ve ever had, despite being larger than ever and with new leadership team members. It built habits that made it easy to sustain what we had worked so hard to establish.”

For any principal who is working on changing or improving their student culture and building new habits, a playbook frees your mind to look at the big picture while your playbook moves your feet in the right direction. We have a sample of a 30-day playbook here and a complete version on the DVD. You have to adjust the playbook to how your school runs and to your own vision:

The 30-Day Playbook: High School Version

Between 7:40am and 7:58am: Student Breakfast

Student Culture Observation – Breakfast:

- Observe student behavior at breakfast and note gaps in teacher presence or teacher actions
- If needed, pull aside a student who is not following the norms: model for teachers a quiet correction

What to Scan for and Fix:

- Staff not present in the lunchroom, not seen looking
- Students too loud or shouting
- Students blocking the entrance to the cafeteria, or going to different rooms without approval
- Students standing, wandering
- Students leaving without permission or pass

Real-Time Coaching:

- Note any teachers not coaching students for 100% behavior. Real-time coach using whisper prompts and/or modeling if necessary
- Debrief quickly: “What did you notice me do? Why did I do that? What was the impact?”

Public Leadership Moment:

- With 5 minutes remaining in breakfast, model the hand raise procedure with all students: expect 100% of hands raised and silent within 3 seconds. Use Do It Again technique until success is achieved
- Give public, precise praise to key students to build positive culture. Clearly state the expectations

Cue the Transition:

- Restate the expectations for hallway transitions and let students know that staff will be watching them to ensure success:
 - Moving with purpose, not lingering in the hallway

- Talking quietly, no shouting
- Lining up at classroom doors (grades 9/10) or entering quietly (grades 11/12)

While on the ground, Laura takes the following actions to make the most of her presence:

COMMUNICATE URGENCY. A leader can communicate so much about what matters to the school just in the way they stand and talk. When Laura is on the scene, she makes to stand up straight, walk calmly and with purpose, and smile. She tries to make others feel at ease while also establishing that her school is a cathedral of learning.

PROVIDE IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK. When Laura sees something not working (a student or teacher who is struggling) she doesn't simply observe and wait for later to address it—she jumps in right away. Sometimes, non-verbal cues are all it takes, such as looking at a student who need re-directing, or gesturing to a teacher to notice the students in the back of the line. Other times, Laura will whisper something to a teacher or student. Or she might communicate verbally by having students do a routine over that they aren't performing correctly, or issuing a challenge like: "The fourth graders already learned this. Can you do it too?" All of these actions communicate a singular message: I care about you and your learning, and I'm not going to let you fail.

MANAGE INDIVIDUALLY

No organization runs perfectly, and that is the same for schools. Regardless of how well Laura rehearses, occasionally she needs to have a conversation with an individual teacher or student who is struggling to meet cultural expectations. During these conversations, Laura makes it clear not

only what concrete actions the individual needs to begin performing, but also what the constructive impact is on the community when everyone works to perform these actions consistently. (We dive more deeply into these types of conversations in Chapter 6 on Staff Culture: accountability conversations.) She closes the loop on implementation by working with the individual to set a prompt timeline for them to begin performing those actions themselves.

EVALUATE PROGRESS

The power of the school culture rubric we showed how to design in the first section of this chapter is that it makes it a straightforward matter to conduct a student culture-specific walkthrough. Laura and her staff can simply monitor each cultural system in action, give their school a score on the rubric, and make an action plan to close the gaps. We'll cover the process of conducting walkthroughs in greater detail in Chapter 7 on Managing School Leadership Teams!

WHOLE-SCHOOL RESET

Occasionally, monitoring student culture leads Laura to discover that a school routine needs to be reset—the habits have slipped and the routine is no longer functioning effectively. A “reset” has much in common with a rollout; these small adjustments will make the steps we covered in the rollout sections of this chapter applicable to a reset!

Here's how Nikki Bridges approaches the process of resetting a routine.



WATCH Clip 29 (Bridges)—See it

Let's break down how Nikki made her reset effective.

- **Execute a walkthrough to monitor the targeted action steps.** After revisiting the routine, monitor its implementation daily until it has been met. Look specifically for the actions that you targeted during the reset to ensure they are being performed. As you can see in Nikki’s model, she had all the staff participate in evaluating the culture: that is a powerful investment strategy that makes everyone feel like leaders of culture. Don’t be afraid to do this: teachers are wonderful self-reflective and often will be even more critical than leaders themselves!
- **Revisit the model.** If members of the school community are repeatedly not following a system, that indicates the community needs to revisit the exemplar that shows what the routine should look like. Start there, either by showing a video of the model or by performing it yourself!

After they have seen the model and the gap, give them time to practice:



WATCH Clip 30 & 31 (Bridges)—Do it (Plan & Practice)

- **Re-practice the broken routine:** After just a few minutes, Nikki then has the staff spend the rest of their session re-practicing the techniques need to reset the routine. Teachers walk away not only with a sense of the gap but actions to close it—and they know everyone else will be doing the same thing in their classrooms. That creates collegiality as well as results.
- **Communicate to staff the progress until the goal is met.** As you monitor progress, keep your staff in the loop. Celebrate progress and stamp next steps each day until the routine looks in your school the way it does in the model!

TURNAROUND—FIXING A BROKEN CULTURE

Sometimes, culture faces more serious problems. If normal “wear and tear” in culture can reduce performance, sometimes the culture frays so completely that it breaks down. Whether you come into a new situation where the culture is completely broken or it has deteriorated to that point, major repairs are needed just to get the culture up and running. In short, you have to re-set the culture.

When I first wrote Leverage Leadership in 2012, I thought that the actions taken to fix a broken school culture were notably different from those taken by school leaders who have established incredibly strong culture. As I have had the opportunity to study even more leaders who implemented successful culture turnarounds and compare them to leaders with steadily solid cultures, I am struck that the leader actions are nearly identical. Laura had to fix the culture when she first arrived at Blanton Elementary School. Yet she followed the same actions as Eric Diamon, who inherited a solid culture: the both set their vision, rolled it out to staff and students and then monitored and maintained—every part of the chapter we just highlighted. (That is why the actions of leaders who turned around culture are mixed in throughout the chapter with the same actions taken by leaders with stronger cultures.)

If the actions you need to take to turnaround around a culture are the same as to set one, what is the difference? How you get your staff invested in the turnaround—and manage the initial pushback from those who aren’t.

CORE IDEA:

The biggest difference between setting or fixing student culture is getting your staff invested and managing the pushback from those who aren’t.

FACE THE BRUTAL FACTS—OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

In *Good to Great*, management guru Jim Collins famously says that we must face the “brutal facts” of our situation before we can improve it. In a broken culture, the facts are two-fold: what this will look like for your students and staff.

In many schools, the brutal facts of broken student culture look like one of these:

- Mass student apathy
- Students violent or completely off task
- Students not engaged

These are easy to spot: they overwhelm the senses when you walk through the school.

The even more important “brutal facts” are the actions or inactions that adults are taking that are contributing to this culture. If students rise to the level of expectations placed in front of them, they can lower their expectations just as easily.

Laura described these actions when she first arrived at Blanton: a passivity from adults that communicated that they did not think there was anything that could be done. Stacey Shells, who leads ReGeneration Schools in Chicago, describes something similar, this time where adults—even the principal—felt it was someone else’s responsibility to deal with the culture:

“It was an environment no one would want for their child. In more than half the classrooms, we couldn’t find more than one or two students on task. Children were running around, screaming, kicking, hitting, getting up, walking away from adults. No one was paying attention to the teacher. I watched as a six-year old child blatantly defied a teacher and walked away right in front of the principal. The principal didn’t do anything because she considered discipline the job of her Assistant Principal (“I am the instructional leader, she said. “He manages the discipline.”).”

Identifying the adults' ineffective actions is the first step towards rebuilding the culture.

MODEL CONSTANTLY—WITH CONSTANCY:

The Rollout section of this chapter highlighted the importance of modeling: showing staff and students exactly what you want them to do. In a broken culture, the modeling doesn't stop during the PD: your staff will be looking to you as a model at all times. Are you consistently following the model you set in the rollout? They are watching you not only to see what to do—but also to see if your actions match your words.

In too many schools, teachers have received messages about some initiative that will supposedly improve their school, and it always involves more work. And more often than not, those initiatives don't work out, and they are often abandoned before taken to completion. Understandably, then, your staff could be jaded towards a new idea, and they will be reticent to your desire to fix the culture. That reluctance goes deeper.

At our core, we humans are pretty resistant to change. (As I like to quip at workshops, if you don't believe me, just asked your loved ones!) School leaders like Mary Ann Stinson (see more of her in chapter 1) recognize this, so instead of trying to deny it, they enter their re-set with eyes wide open. "I knew that many staff members were not going to be open initially to the change—they needed to see first if it would work," recalls Mary Ann. "So I didn't spend too much energy trying to convince all of them, but to remain constant: unwavering in the setting of a new vision. I didn't expect to be liked; but if I could remain consistent and fair, I hoped at least earn their respect."

Laura and Mary Ann did so in the following ways:

1. **SET THE NORM WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR "ALL HANDS ON DECK."** A root problem in most schools with failed cultures is a lack of support from one staff member to

another. To start, the leadership team of the school has to make a commitment to address this equally. If an assistant principal walks down the hall and ignores the culture issues, it sends a message to the students that school culture is dependent on the individual. The leadership team needs to commit to all taking the same actions if they ever want the teachers to do the same. Note, too, that all hands on deck means that people are paying close attention to culture at critical times of the day, and have key look-fors to ground the work in a common set of things they are looking at.

2. **START WITH THE STAFF WHO ARE MOST INVESTED IN CHANGE.** It is next to impossible to address the issues going on in every classroom at once. Stacey sat down with the school leader and went staff member by staff member. They identified those faculty who would be most invested in making a change, and that's where they devoted their energy in the first days. They sat down with those teachers and talked through what routines and procedures they would re-set in the classroom.
3. **FOLLOW THE ROLLOUT PLAN: HOOK, FRAME, MODEL, DEBRIEF, PRACTICE.** Once you've invested those that you can, follow the process for rollout laid out earlier in the chapter.
4. **PUT ASIDE INSTRUCTION FOR 1-2 DAYS AND RESET.** Acknowledge that a re-set takes time, and give teachers a few days to re-train all of the routines & procedures established in the PD session without the need to cover material. Most importantly, spend all your time in their classrooms, observing and support wherever necessary. Note that in some cases this is essential, even though it is not a decision to be taken lightly.
5. **REMAIN EMOTIONALLY CONSTANT.** Turning around a culture is not easy—but it is eminently doable. For your staff and students, you want to be the calm within the storm. No matter what students still push back at the beginning or no matter what teacher will have

a resistant comment, your best action is calm, consistent, repetitive action. Even if you don't always feel it inside, remaining unflappable on the outside sends a message: we can do this—and I will be there with you.

CORE IDEA:

Culture leaders don't succeed because of charisma but because of constancy: always being there, repeatedly, as the calm within the storm.

A WORD ON... BUY-IN TO A CULTURE CHANGE

Building a strong culture is hard work, especially if you are changing a broken one. One of the most challenging issues is dealing with the backlash that can occur with a significant change in school practices. Should you take it slowly, one thing at a time? Not so, say leaders who have had consistent success at turnaround.

Jarvis Sanford is the Managing Director for the Academy of Urban School Leadership, one of the most successful organizations in the country at urban school turnaround. Located in Chicago, they have successfully turned around the culture in dozens of public elementary and high schools. What are their lessons learned on this issue?

When a culture is dysfunctional, you need a marked change, not gradual release. Sanford insisted that getting elementary students to line up and enter the school building quietly on Day 1 of school cannot be done halfway. "If you don't start to change habits completely, you won't be successful later on." This is the number one error they see in leaders who don't make turnaround stick. "They remain content with the students acting 'better' than before, but because they didn't push for 100% compliance, it slowly unraveled later."

There is a consequence to this approach: leaders will get tons of challenging pushback from students, parents and even some staff members. Weathering this storm, however, is what will make October far more successful.

Brian Sims, former Managing Director of AUSL who repeated his success at Ark, a system of public schools in London, comments: "Leaders and staff have to prepare themselves for the challenge of the initial shift. If they stay the course, the rest of the year will be significantly better."

CONCLUSION

When Laura took over Blanton Elementary School, she thought that building a new culture would take time. What astonished her was how little time it took for her work on culture to start paying off. “We had an open house before the first day of school,” she recalls, “and even then, we had parents telling us that they felt the difference. They immediately felt, ‘Wow, this is for our children.’” And what happened when the students arrived? “It just kept getting better,” says Laura. The practices she had set in motion during summer PD continued to give students what they needed to learn—on Day 1, on Day 30, and throughout the year.

Student culture matters not only because it gives our students a solid foundation on which to learn, but because it’s our opportunity to communicate to our students how much we believe in them, and that we will support them in becoming their best self. Isn’t that what we want from all our mentors?

When you stand before your staff and then your students to teach them your cultural routines, remember the “why” behind those actions: we build great school cultures so our students never forget they are capable of greatness.

| ACTION STEPS FOR PRINCIPALS: LEADING STUDENT CULTURE | |
|---|--|
| LEVER | KEY ACTIONS IN SEQUENCE |
| STUDENT CULTURE | PLAN |
| | <p>SET THE VISION:</p> <p>1. Define your vision for student culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See a model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review videos of implementation (e.g., Get Better Faster, Leverage Leadership, Teach Like A Champion) and/or visit high performing schools or classrooms ○ Record what teachers, leaders, and students say and do. • Define the model for your own school’s routines and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write what the leaders/teachers/students should be doing. ○ Enumerate what will happen if a student doesn’t follow directions. ○ Create a school-wide culture rubric that defines the following: |

- Common language that teachers and leaders will use
 - Vision for all schoolwide and classroom routines & systems
- Anticipate the gap:
 - Determine what it would look like if student culture was executed poorly.
 - What would ineffective leaders/teachers be doing?
 - What would the students be doing if it was implemented poorly?
- 2. **Name it—build a minute-by-minute plan for every routine, procedure and all-school culture moment:**
 - Craft minute-by-minute systems for routines and procedures:
 - Name what leaders, students, and teachers will do in a comprehensive, sequential, and minute-by-minute plan.
 - Describe every part of the day: arrival/breakfast, hallway transitions, in-class routines (including first and last 5 min of class), lunch, dismissal
 - Include what will happen when students do not follow directions.
 - Set goals and deadlines:
 - Set a concrete, measurable goal.
 - E.g., hallway transitions will reduce to 1 minute; increase all hands raised to 100%
 - Identify when the system will be introduced and when the goal will be met.
 - Determine the tool for measurement (e.g., student culture rubric)
- 3. **Name it—build systems to manage student discipline (asst. principal, dean of students, etc.)**
 - Set up effective systems and routines for the leader who will drive student culture.
 - Set weekly/daily schedule for that leader
 - Create a clear protocol for responding to specific student discipline situations.
 - Build a standing agenda for principal-culture leader check-ins that include:
 - Data review of student discipline issues and most pressing student issues.
 - Feedback to the leader & to teachers that need support.
 - Review send-out or suspension data to problem solve ways to prevent the behavior.

ROLL OUT

- 4. **Plan the Roll Out/Rehearsal**
 - Plan the roll out:
 - Script a hook:
 - Frontload school values/mission: short and sweet speech that states rationale and purpose
 - Script the model
 - Using clear and concise language, tell them the procedure and the sequence of the procedure. Everyone needs to know what it will look like.
 - Script what you will narrate as you model to highlight key takeaways.
 - Plan the staff practice of the routine/procedure.
 - Script what you will say and do and script what teachers will say and do (roles, etc.).
 - Script what real-time feedback you will give during practice with associated prompts.
- 5. **Roll Out/Rehearse**
 - See It—Model the routine/procedure:
 - Hook: deliver a hook (short and sweet) that gives them the “why”

- Frame: name what you want them to observe: “As you watch the model of [routine/procedure], I want you to be thinking about...”
- Model: exaggerate the model to reinforce every action you want to see.
- Name It—Debrief the model:
 - “What did you notice? Teacher actions? Student actions?”
 - Narrate the why: “Why is that [action] important?”
 - Reflect: “Jot down your key takeaways before we jump into practice...”
- Do It—Practice the routine/procedure:
 - Give clear what-to-do directions:
 - What main participant will do (time for them to plan/script their actions).
 - What the audience will do (cue cards, pre-prepared student roles).
 - Round 1—Practice the basic routine and procedure from start to finish
 - Give feedback at the point of error and have them do it again.
 - Round 2 (after teachers have built muscle memory)—Add complexity (e.g., student misbehavior, student learning errors)
 - Lock-it in and re-name the action plan:
 - “How did what we practice meet or enhance the action plan we named?”

EXECUTE

6. Lead publicly:

- Be present and be seen in key areas (lunch, hallways, struggling classrooms, etc.)
- Communicate urgency (verbal and non-verbal):
 - Non-verbal: point to students who need re-directing, move students along.
 - Verbal: Do it Again until 100%; Challenge (“MSU did this. Can you do it, too?”)
- Provide immediate feedback:
 - Model concrete phrases and actions that teachers should use (keep it succinct).
 - Address student noncompliance on spot; follow up face-to-face with teacher.
 - Use precise praise & celebrate success (individual & team) verbally & via email.

7. Manage individually:

- Teachers—have “course correction” conversations when they are struggling:
 - Identify the challenge
 - State the impact
 - Make bite-sized action plan with prompt implementation on a set timeline.
- Leaders—implement check-in with leader in charge of student discipline issues (Dean/AP)
 - Model effective student de-escalation/reflection techniques for the AP/Dean and have AP/Dean execute
 - Monitor & give AP/Dean real-time feedback to ensure AP/Dean meets current action step
- Students—lead effective discipline conversations by following the model:
 - Listen: ask them to explain their version of what happened
 - Name the problem & then the consequence.
 - Share why this is important (back to shared mission & long-term dreams for the child)
 - End with shared commitment to work together.

- Families—lead effective discipline conversations with families:
 - Name the problem & then the consequence.
 - Listen: acknowledge their feelings and their concerns (“open face,” eye contact, emotional constancy)
 - Economy of language: keep language concise and precise/stick to the script

MONITOR & “COURSE CORRECT”

8. Measure Student Culture & ID the Gaps

- Via a school walkthrough, identify students/teachers not implementing routines effectively and identify the action steps:
 - With student culture rubric in hand, identify where the breakdown occurs:
 - What student actions or inactions are indicators of the problem?
 - What teacher actions or inactions are causing the problem?
 - What leader actions or inactions are causing the problem?
 - Bring people outside your leadership team to observe your school and identify the big rocks to move your school culture forward.
- Targeted improvements: Choose one row on the student culture rubric and set a specific goal for a score by a specific date. Develop clear action steps and implement. Re-score that row on a regular basis.

9. Lead a Whole School Reset of a specific, high leverage routine/procedure

- Revisit the model: what should the routine look like
- See the gap: have teachers/leaders identify the gaps
- Model the reset (follow the actions in the roll out section).
- Execute a daily walkthrough to monitor the targeted action steps.
 - Communicate to staff the progress and next steps on a daily basis until the goal is met.

PULLING THE LEVER: Action Planning Worksheet for STUDENT CULTURE

Self-Assessment

- Look at the Student Culture Rubric (located on the DVD that accompanies this book). Select the sections you think are valuable for evaluating your school. For those that you selected, on what percentage of them is your school proficient? ____ %

- What items on the Student Culture Rubric are your biggest areas for improvement?

- What actions on the above list of key action steps around culture for school leaders would you want to implement right away in your school? Choose your top two or three.

Planning for Action

- What tools from this book will you use to lead student culture at your school? Check all that you will use (you can find all on the DVD):

- Student Culture Rubric**
- Student Culture Action Planning**
- Videos of Effective PD**
- PD Materials for leading student culture**

- What are your next steps for improving your student culture?

| Action: | Date: |
|---------|-------|
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ⁱ Cite the page number of the work of Jarvis Sanford from LL.

ⁱⁱ Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) assessment results 2014-2016.

ⁱⁱⁱ Brown, Chris B. "Bill Walsh: A Method for Game Planning." Smart Football. 2007.