



*Investment Partner in Renaissance 2010*

2009 New Ventures in Education Seminar:  
**Understanding, Developing and Implementing an Effective  
and Supportive Culture in your School**

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*“The most important foundational element is  
the culture of the school.”*

*Allan A. Glatthorn (1992)*

Dear Workshop Participants:

Welcome to the Understanding Culture Workshop. I look forward to working with you around school culture topics and to guide you as you plan for a successful school year. In addition to the workshop goals, we are also planning to have a fun time getting to know one another.

Much of the success of the retreat depends on the active engagement and thoughtful participation of everyone. We look forward to each of you sharing your ideas, suggestions and enthusiasm as we begin this important process.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Hinton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary Hinton, Ph. D.

## **Workshop Overview**

# Workshop Agenda

<b>April 25, 2009</b>	
<b>Welcome</b>	<b>8:30a – 8:45a</b>
<b>Developing and Refining the School Mission</b>	<b>8:45a – 9:45a</b>
<b>Break: 9:45a – 10:00a</b>	
<b>Defining School Culture</b>	<b>10:00a – 11:00a</b>
<b>Determining your School Culture</b>	<b>11:00a – 12:00p</b>
<b>Lunch: 12:00p – 1:00p</b>	
<b>Action Planning, Caveats, and Cautions</b>	<b>1:00p – 1:45p</b>
<b>Break: 1:45p – 2:00p</b>	
<b>Engaging Stakeholders</b>	<b>2:00p – 3:15p</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>3:15p – 3:30P</b>

# By the end of this workshop, you will have mastered the following objectives

Picture yourself at the close of the workshop. The workshop has been fun, worthwhile and a good use of time. This is because you...

- ▶ Understand why culture is so important
- ▶ Have an understanding of what action planning means and how to use it for your school
- ▶ Understand how to make your mission statement a reality for your school
- ▶ Learned about the different types of school culture
- ▶ Generated lots of good ideas for your school
- ▶ Learned about the impact of culture on curriculum
- ▶ Have a plan for taking what was learned in this workshop back to your team at school
- ▶ Other

## **Developing and Refining the School Mission**

## **In this section, we will accomplish the following objectives**

- ▶ Understand the importance of the school mission
- ▶ Explore the most important elements of your mission
- ▶ Connect your mission statement to the daily cultural practices of your school

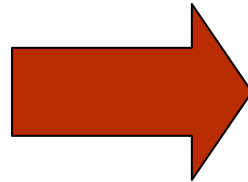
**The mission statement is an integral part of the life of a school**



# The mission and vision of your school are interrelated

**Mission Statement**

- ▶ A mission statement is the explicit goal of a group or organization



**Vision Statement**

- ▶ A vision statement identifies what will happen if the mission is achieved

## Activity # 1

**Directions:** Review, or write down, your school's projected/desired mission statement. Is it a mission or a vision statement? If it is a vision statement, rewrite it so that it is a mission statement.

# One should be able to easily identify what is important to a school through its mission statement

## Mission Statement # 1

The mission of the Academy is to insure that all children, regardless of race or economic status, have an opportunity to attending an academically rigorous, college preparatory middle school. Our academic focus is centered on interdisciplinary and experiential learning. We use technology and fine arts as cornerstones of our educational program. Our teachers are leaders and together create a professional learning community that sets the tone for all of the adults in the school.



## Critique the Mission Statement

**Directions:** Based on this mission, write what you think is important to this school.

# Critiquing Mission Statements: Based on the mission, what is important to this school?

## Mission Statement # 2

The mission of the Academy is to provide an environment which cultivates young adults who will emerge dedicated to serving their families and their communities and prepared to be informed problem-solvers and effective advocates for positive social change. We believe that the education of our students is a collaborative effort among faculty, administrators, community members, students and their families. Personal responsibility of each party is both expected and respected.



## Critique the Mission Statement

**Directions:** Based on this mission, write what you think is important to this school.

# Critiquing Mission Statements: Based on the mission, what is important to this school?

## Mission Statement # 3

Where college is not an option.....

## Critique the Mission Statement

**Directions:** Based on this mission, write what you think is important to this school.



# Critiquing Mission Statements: Based on the mission, what is important to this school?

## Mission Statement # 4

The vision of the Academy is to use a broad spectrum of studies in the liberal arts to help its graduates develop skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that will prepare them for successful participation in colleges, universities, post secondary employment and educational opportunities.



## Critique the Mission Statement

**Directions:** Based on this mission, write what you think is important to this school.

# When creating your school mission you must determine the key words in your mission statement

Mission Statement Activity	
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ To understand what is most important in your mission and how to make these salient features come alive</li></ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Write your mission statement</li><li>▶ Determine which words are most important in your mission statement and why</li><li>▶ Next to each key word, write how it is represented in your school and/or in your plans for your new school</li><li>▶ If a key word is not represented in your plans, indicate how it can be represented</li><li>▶ If a key word is represented in your plans, determine at what percent implementation and how it can be strengthened</li></ul>

# Begin building your culture using mission key words

Key Word	How is it represented	How to implement/Strengthen	Roadblocks

**A strong mission statement is composed of several key components**

**Key Components of a Mission Statement**

## **Defining School Culture**

## **In this section, we will accomplish the following objectives:**

- ▶ Understand the impact and importance of school culture
- ▶ Develop a clear understanding of school culture
- ▶ Deconstruct a school culture
- ▶ Distinguish between a positive and a negative school culture
- ▶ Create belief statements that delineate the actions to be taken to develop your school culture

# Exploring the personal level of school culture

Exploring School Culture Activity	
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To uncover the important of culture in school experiences</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>Step 1:</b> Recall a moment in your academic life – in a school building – when you felt successful. This moment can be from kindergarten to college. Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What was it that made you feel successful?</li> <li>▶ What was happening in the immediate environment around you when you felt like a success?</li> <li>▶ How did others recognize (or not recognize) your success?</li> <li>▶ Make note of this moment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Step 2:</b> Recall a moment in your academic life – in a school building – when you felt unsuccessful. This moment can be from kindergarten to college. Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What was it that made you feel unsuccessful?</li> <li>▶ Why was this important in your life at the time?</li> <li>▶ What was happening in the immediate environment around you when you felt unsuccessful?</li> <li>▶ How did others recognize (or not recognize) your challenge?</li> <li>▶ Make note of this moment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Step 3:</b> In both instances, certain things contributed to your feelings of success or lack thereof</p> <p>Please note key words that come to mind in both instances:</p> <p>_____ , _____ , _____ ,</p> <p>_____ , _____ , _____</p>

# School Culture is composed of the artifacts, underlying assumptions, and the values and beliefs of the school

School Culture is the system of beliefs, values, norms, and expectations that governs the feelings and subsequent behaviors of all school constituents <sup>(1)</sup>

Element	Definition	How Expressed
<b>Artifacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Visual Aspects of Culture               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rituals</li> <li>– Ceremonies</li> <li>– Traditions</li> <li>– Symbols</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ritual and ceremony allow us to act out what otherwise is hard to touch and comprehend. In doing so, we touch base with our core values and bond with each other</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying Assumptions/ Unspoken Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Invisible Aspects of the Organizational Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The symbols, values, and beliefs that are not clearly recognizable but continue to shape the behavior of the organization's members</li> </ul>
<b>Values and Beliefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organizational Character of the School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Through shared values and beliefs, members of the organization develop a sense of direction that guides their day-to-day behavior</li> </ul>

Note (1): Fiore, D. *Creating Connections for Better Schools*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, 2001.

# Artifacts either make schools meaningful sanctuaries for students and celebrations of accomplishments, or dead and empty vessels of bureaucratic control

Types of Artifacts	
<b>Rituals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Daily interactions infused with meaning</li> <li>▶ Greeting and goodbye rituals</li> <li>▶ Transition rituals</li> <li>▶ Initiation rituals</li> <li>▶ Closing rituals</li> </ul>
<b>Ceremonies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Periodic events that bind people to each other</li> <li>▶ Moving Up Ceremony</li> </ul>
<b>Traditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Significant events with a special history</li> <li>▶ Grandparent's Day</li> </ul>
<b>Symbols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Mission Statements</li> <li>▶ Displays of student work</li> <li>▶ Banners</li> <li>▶ Displays of past achievements</li> <li>▶ Halls of honor awards, trophies, plaques</li> <li>▶ Mascots</li> <li>▶ Historical collections</li> <li>▶ Architectural elements</li> </ul>

## Determine two rituals of your school

1. Directions: Identify two rituals that will reinforce the key words of your mission

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# Both student and professional culture create the underlying assumptions and the values and beliefs that drive your school culture

## Identify the positive aspects of your student or kid culture

- ▶ How will students respond to each other?
- ▶ How will students respond to teachers?
- ▶ What will reflect students in the school?
- ▶ What will students say about the school when describing it to others?
- ▶ How will students treat the school property?

## Identify the positive aspects of your professional culture

- ▶ How will teachers respond to each other?
- ▶ How will teachers work together?
- ▶ What will reflect teachers' work in the school?
- ▶ How will teachers talk about their school, students, and principal?
- ▶ How will teachers treat school property?

“What schools and the people in them do and believe makes a difference in student outcomes. . . [teacher climate] is related to the achievement variables, disciplinary actions, and percentage of students passing even when the effects of socioeconomic status are held constant”

# We will now conduct a deconstructing school culture exercise

<b>Deconstruct School Culture Exercise</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	To deconstruct the cultures of a school
<b>Process</b>	For each video, please note the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Artifacts</li><li>2. Underlying Assumptions/Unspoken Culture</li><li>3. Values and Beliefs</li></ol>

# Deconstructing School Culture #1: A Worksheet

School Name:

Culture		Culture Deconstructed	
Component	Definition/ Example	Professional	Student
Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Visual Aspects of Culture               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rituals</li> <li>– Ceremonies</li> <li>– Traditions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Underlying Assumptions/ Unspoken Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Invisible Aspects of the Organizational Culture</li> </ul>		
Values and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organizational Character of the School</li> </ul>		

# Deconstructing School Culture #2: A Worksheet

School Name:

Culture		Culture Deconstructed	
Component	Definition/ Example	Professional	Student
Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Visual Aspects of Culture               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rituals</li> <li>– Ceremonies</li> <li>– Traditions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Underlying Assumptions/ Unspoken Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Invisible Aspects of the Organizational Culture</li> </ul>		
Values and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organizational Character of the School</li> </ul>		

# There are both positive and negative cultural characteristics of a school

## Positive School Culture Characteristics

- ▶ Orderly environment
- ▶ Stated/unstated high expectations that are met
- ▶ Commitment/belief/universal agreement about mission
- ▶ Entire staff is committed to model
- ▶ Bottom lines
- ▶ Strong sense of school community
- ▶ Planning to support mission
- ▶ Implementation of mission
- ▶ Proactive planning
- ▶ Continual improvement
- ▶ Pushing for excellence
- ▶ Dissatisfied w/status quo
- ▶ Solve/address problems
- ▶ Teachers are excited and energetic about teaching
- ▶ Kids are engaged in learning
- ▶ Look for opportunities to show successes

## Negative School Culture Characteristics

- ▶ Low or unmet expectations
- ▶ Willingness to accept not meeting expectations
- ▶ No bottom lines
- ▶ Individual success is of primary importance
- ▶ Lack of planning
- ▶ Reactive planning
- ▶ Stagnant/treading water
- ▶ “Passable” student performance
- ▶ Satisfied with status quo
- ▶ Rationalize problems
- ▶ Kids become enemies
- ▶ Hide from “outsiders” or protect from external forces
- ▶ Islands of success

# Now that you have defined school culture, develop belief statements that will become the foundation of your school culture

Writing Belief Statement Activities	
Purpose	To understand how school cultures are created and successfully implemented, you will build a school culture
Process	<p><b>Step 1:</b> As a team, determine what your underlying assumptions are regarding children, students, schools, and learning</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Write a series of statements that say:</p> <p><b>Because we believe _____, our school will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ For every belief there needs to be an actions</li> <li>▶ Your school culture should be informed by your mission</li> <li>▶ Compile you actions and pack your school culture</li> </ul>

## **Determining Your School Culture**

## **In this section, we will accomplish the following objectives:**

- ▶ Reflect on what works and what does not work
- ▶ Determine your school's culture elements

How do you determine what your culture will be?



# Now, we will need to explore and critique our existing or proposed school culture model

What We Know Works	What we need to Question

# You must plan your school culture using all of the elements

Planning School Culture	
<b>Purpose</b>	To begin developing an action plan that allows you to build your culture
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>Step 1:</b> Pull out the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Mission statement key words</li> <li>b) Your belief statements</li> <li>c) What works/what will change</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Step 2:</b> Using the information you have learned during this workshop, begin to develop a list of cultural elements that are more important to your school</p>
	<p><b>Step 3:</b> Each table should reconvene &amp; compose a list of 10 cultural elements that will be implemented</p>

***If your list is primarily artifacts, take the time to go back and attach your artifacts to your mission, theme, or underlying beliefs***

## **Action Planning, Caveats, and Cautions**

*“A carelessly planned project takes three times longer to complete than expected; a carefully planned project will only take twice as long .”*

*Anonymous*

## **In this section, we will accomplish the following objectives:**

- ▶ Understand action planning
- ▶ Know how action planning can be used
- ▶ Conduct action planning

# Action plans should be created to guide the work of the school

- ▶ **Definition:** A plan that identifies specific action steps, benchmarks and responsibilities.
- ▶ **Purpose:** The action plan will show *who will do what by when to implement the plan*. Because implementation is rarely a one-step process, within the action plan we have asked you to identify benchmarks.
- ▶ Key Components:
  - ▶ **Tasks (Cultural Elements):** List out each major item that must be accomplished
  - ▶ **Benchmarks:** Measure the degree to which a task has been implemented and provide an implementation timeline
  - ▶ **Completion Dates:** When the task will be completed
  - ▶ **Assignments:** Name of the person responsible for completing the task
  - ▶ **Pitfall Analysis:** Determining a back-up plan if all of the benchmarks are not met
- ▶ Action plans do not need to be complicated, however, they do need to be detailed and contain realistic completion dates.

# Let's review the key components of a cultural action plan

- ▶ Cultural Elements
- ▶ Steps to Implementation/benchmarks
- ▶ Completion Dates
- ▶ Assignments
- ▶ Pitfall Analysis

*"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."  
-John Wooden*

## Recommended caveats & cautions

- ▶ Make sure consequences are outlined if benchmarks are not being met
- ▶ Implement consequences
- ▶ Be certain to have a back-up plan (i.e. pitfall analysis)
- ▶ Make sure there is someone on your staff who will be held accountable for benchmarks being met

# An example of an action plan

## Action Plan Format

Example Plan:

Task (Cultural Element)	Implementation Benchmarks	Timeline	Assigned to	Pitfall Analysis
Determine a new model	Lit Review			
	Contact leaders of successful schools			
	Visit 5 schools			
	Distill list of best practices			
	Determine if you want whole or parts			
	Determine which practices resonate with leader			
	Determine which practices resonate with community			

## Determining your key benchmarks

You have listed your priorities for the school in the first column of your action plan. For each cultural element, please detail the benchmarks or steps necessary to achieve the task in the second column.

## Now we must determine your key benchmarks

- ▶ You have listed your priorities for the school in the first column of your action plan
- ▶ For each cultural element, please detail the benchmarks or steps necessary to achieve the task in the second column
- ▶ In the third column, please assign the name of the person responsible for carrying out the benchmark-team is not acceptable. Each benchmark must have a name assigned to it
- ▶ In the fourth column, please indicate the date by which the benchmark will be met

### *Example:*

Cultural Element	Benchmarks	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Comments

# Ready, Set, Go!

## Using what we've learned to build your action plan

Using your mission, belief statements, change ideas, and plans for engaging your stakeholders, please begin to develop your action plan.

Your cultural elements will comprise the left hand column. Benchmarks are the steps necessary to implement the benchmarks.



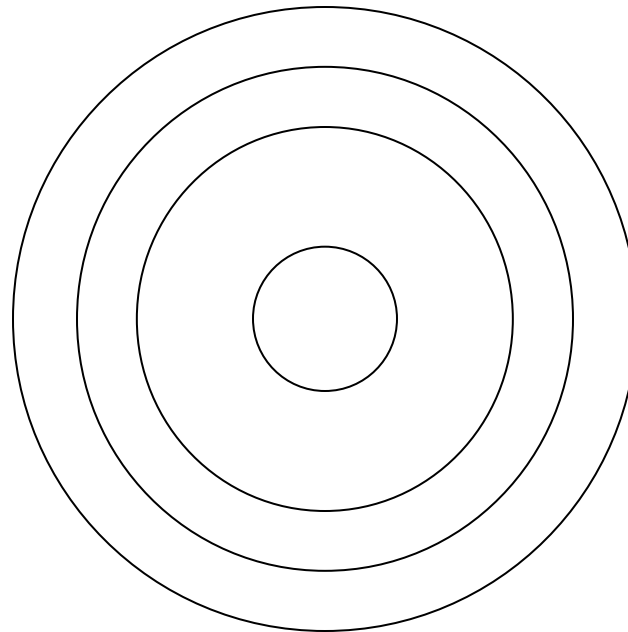
## **Engaging Stakeholders**

## **In this section, we will accomplish the following objective**

- ▶ Develop a strategy for taking what was learned in this workshop back to your leadership team at your school
- ▶ Determine how to engage stakeholders
- ▶ Making your cultural action plan a reality

# Once you have your school culture planned, you must get adequate buy-in from all stakeholders involved

- ▶ Develop a plan for how you will implement your cultural elements
- ▶ Pay special attention to the following:
  - Everyone must buy-in to the school culture
  - The key to your success is openly sharing your cultural goals



# A key element in progressing along the roadmap is identifying and enlisting the support of stakeholders

- ▶ Principal
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Students
- ▶ Local Community
- ▶ Design Team
- ▶ Funders
- ▶ CPS

# Understanding why you need to engage stakeholders

You will spend the next fifteen minutes identifying your key stakeholders and how to engage them:

- ▶ First, brainstorm a list of stakeholders. Everyone on your team should participate in identifying stakeholders
- ▶ Second, identify why someone is a stakeholder (or why someone should not be considered a stakeholder)
- ▶ Finally, rank to what degree a person or group is a stakeholder
- ▶ You may use the chart below to complete this section

Stakeholder	Why	To what degree

# Once you have developed your stakeholder list, determine what it will take to get the buy-in of your stakeholder

**Directions:** For each person or group determine the buy-in benefits

**Stakeholder name:**

This stakeholder will personally benefit by participating in our diversity initiative because:

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It will benefit our organization if this stakeholder participates because:

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# Once you have developed your stakeholder list, determine what will happen if you are unable to get the buy-in of a stakeholder

**Directions:** For each person or group, complete the following analysis:

**Stakeholder name:**

This stakeholder may expect the following consequences if they do not participate in our diversity initiative:

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The consequences for our organization if this stakeholder does not participate are:

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# No matter how well you plan, there will always be challenges to making your plan a reality

## Tips for Making Your Plan A Reality

1. Identify barriers likely to occur
  - a. Think about the work environment and build a list of possible obstacles
2. For each barrier, list indicators that exist
  - a. Determine how you will know that a barrier exists
  - b. Determine who or what might present the obstacle
  - c. List the warning signs
3. List possible strategies to overcome each barrier
  - a. Determine the resources needed to overcome the barriers
  - b. Identify people to go to when a barrier appears

# Relapse Prevention Worksheet

Obstacles to Implementation	Strategies to Overcome Obstacles