

HORACE

What Good Schools Do When Their Students Don't Do Well

Some students play by the rules, pass their courses, contribute to their schools and communities, and show important learning . . . but still may fail the all-important new standardized tests. What can Essential schools do to keep them on the road to success?

BY KATHLEEN CUSHMAN

THIS STORY BELONGS TO EDDIE Santos, who showed up on the first day of Landmark High School's July session because he hadn't finished the math work he needed to move on after tenth grade. And it belongs to Keri Tielis, the young Landmark teacher who had already heard that Eddie was not, as Keri said, "an ideal student," and who confessed she groaned inwardly when his name showed up on her summer roster.

In the New York City summer, the scenario doesn't sound much like a mystery. After a year of habitual truancy, who would expect Eddie to change his ways? But something took hold, near the start of the long afternoon sessions during which Keri Tielis tried to identify some trait—anything—she could use to persuade each one of her summer students they were capable of success.

"It turned out Eddie wanted to be a professional baseball star," she said. "As soon as I found that out, I tried to use it to help him realize he could set a goal and then get to that point. I knew he could do the work in math; I told him he was on a par with everyone else in the room."

Her praise and confidence seemed to motivate Eddie, Tielis soon noticed. "He began to sit by himself on the side and crank out work; he did the extra-credit problems I gave him and kept asking for more." By the end of the four-week

session, Eddie was aceing all his quizzes and taking open-ended problems to the next level of generalization. "I see him in school every day now," Tielis reported in October, "and he's doing fine."

Like many other Essential schools in New York, Landmark still fears for students like Eddie, whose high school diploma will hang on a single mandatory state assessment. The school's extensive system in which students prepare and defend graduation portfolios in numerous subjects now risks eclipse by Regents exams in English language arts, math, science, global history, and American history.

As the stakes grow higher for students who do not fit the mold—special education students, English language learners, kids whose prowess doesn't show up on standardized tests—Essential schools in New York and around the nation are fiercely seeking ways to support their learning in constructive, not destructive ways. Under pressure to back away from the active, student-centered, "less-is-more" curriculum that the Coalition treasures, teachers are redoubling their efforts to find everything that works to help students achieve genuine progress.

From huge urban systems to small rural districts, that often means summer school. And summer sessions work best, Essential school teachers say, when they

Retention May Backfire, the Research Cautions

Should we hold back students whose performance falls short of the test scores or other measures schools use to chart achievement? The evidence shows that such a policy may actually backfire, creating schools with a depressed academic culture and low expectations, especially for poor and minority students.

But the practice is snowballing. One out of three eighth graders from low-income families has been held back at least one grade, the National Educational Longitudinal Survey found in 1988, and in 1997 American Federation of Teachers President Sandra Feldman estimated that more than half of all students in many urban districts repeat at least one grade.

In Chicago, a "get tough" retention policy has been in place since the 1996-97 school year, requiring summer school and other remediation for students who fall below a certain score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Though test scores had risen after two years, researchers from the Consortium on Chicago School Research found that retention rates did not fall. Students held back were struggling in their second time through the policy, and nearly a third of eighth graders retained in 1997 had dropped out by fall 1999. Students retained in 1997 are doing no better than students who were previously "socially promoted," the researchers found.

Those findings are backed up by a 1999 report reviewing the research on the effects of retention for the National Research Council. Its authors, Jay Heubert of Columbia University and Robert M. Hauser of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, conclude that most students who repeat a grade end up doing worse academically and socially. Discouraged, and often placed in watered-down or special education classes, they continue to perform at low levels. Not only are over-age students twice as likely as on-grade students to be held back again, but they often play hooky or drop out, concluding that school is not for them. Being over-age for grade, the Texas Education Agency found in 1996, predicts a student's dropping out better than does underachievement.

Sources: Consortium for Equity in Standards and Testing (CTEST) at Boston College (www.csteep.bc.edu/ctest); Consortium on Chicago School Research (www.consortium-chicago.org); J. Heubert and R. M. Hauser, eds., *High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion, and Graduation*, National Research Council, 1999.

have the most direct links to students' own school, teachers, and curriculum.

Filling in the Learning Gaps

In tiny Poland, Maine, where a new Essential regional high school opened last year, kids who hadn't produced classwork that met the school's explicit standards paid \$50 each to attend a summer session in which they could make it up.

"Some kids may have just one standard to meet; they don't have to retake a whole course in science, math, or the humanities," said

Derek Pierce, the principal. "They might need to show that they can 'use common units of the metric systems' for measurements and calculations' for a science class. Or they might have to interpret and discuss a complex text for a literature class." Some of the missing pieces require only a single assessment; others need multiple and varied assessments to demonstrate that students have met expectations.

"Your grade in a course could go from not having met all its standards to advanced standing," said Pierce. "Some kids just need more

time, to develop either the work or the motivation."

In Poland, five teachers and a few support people worked with 50 students every morning for four to six weeks. "Each student made a contract to work on certain things," Pierce explained. "They would check in, then get together with a teacher and work on it. They definitely benefited from the chance to focus on a few things, one-on-one."

By the end of the summer, almost every student had made up the work they needed, Pierce said, and some made up several courses. "The atmosphere was positive," he noted. "Some kids had that 'aha'—that was all I needed to do?"

Many students needed intensive instruction before they could go on to fill in the gaps in their learning. "We worked on literacy in my room, but the kids could move to the rooms for science and for math when they needed to," said Marie Rossiter, the summer session's lead teacher. "A science teacher could



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send me a student to write up a lab report, or someone might need a mini-lesson on paragraph construction or developing their ideas. Four kids could be working on separate assignments."

Stay Back, or Drop Out?

Poland Regional is unusual among schools these days, because at Poland those closest to the students have the most to say about whether they get promoted. Maine's assessment system asks schools to present an array of evidence that students are meeting the state's Learning Results, rather than relying on one test for high-stakes decisions.

But in other states, Essential school teachers often find themselves required to hold back students on the basis of a test score alone. And at certain key points like eighth grade, many believe, policies like this put students at great risk of dropping out of school altogether.

"So many of our eighth-grade students are already over-age for their class," said Anne Wheelock, who has extensively documented grade retention patterns and interviewed students in urban Massachusetts schools. "At every stage they are weighing the possibility of dropping out. When they face a boring or repetitive ninth-grade transition program, and they think they won't pass the tenth-grade state test required for graduation anyway, more and more of them choose to drop out and take jobs."

The transition year model—two summer school sessions and the year between—can turn into a dumping ground with inferior curriculum, Wheelock cautioned. "It may center more on the tests than on engaging and motivating over-age students," she said.

But when students get support in a focused program aimed at returning them to their peer age group in school, Wheelock said, they work hard to do that.

"In past years many Boston schools contracted with kids to meet a set of requirements concerning attendance, behavior, and academic progress," she said. "They had someone closely monitoring them on an individual level, and they moved steadily up until they were back with their peer group."

An Adult Who Cares

In an all-out push to keep from retaining students, Essential schools in the North Kansas City, Missouri district assign a special teacher team to support any student who falls behind. Teachers work with kids on

both the academic and the personal level, calling on student tutors, childcare workers, parent volunteers, business partners, church groups, and retired people for additional help before and after school.

Often the crucial factor in building adolescents' confidence and motivation to succeed in school comes from such interactions. "The two things middle and high school students tell us they want most are more adult role models and someone to listen to them," said Pam Polson, who coordinates the district's YouthFriends initiative. "That's true no matter what kind of background they come from."

At This Summer School, Teachers Learn Too

Summer school doesn't have to mean tedious test preparation and remediation. At Brown University, where Theodore R. Sizer founded the Coalition and where he is now Professor Emeritus, the department of education has for 32 years sponsored a stimulating laboratory summer high school that benefits teachers and schools as much as it interests students.

About 350 students from Providence, Rhode Island and the surrounding area come to the four-week day school, paying a \$75 fee if they can afford it. Their faculty consists of teams of teacher education students from Brown, and their courses center around classic Coalition-style "essential questions" (like "How do our genes make us human?" or "What's really fair, and who decides?"). For four hours every morning, students in ungraded groups with widely varying backgrounds take on the same demanding work in biology, English, social studies, and the arts. For most, it is the first time school has treated them as people whose thinking and learning has value and power.

For the beginning teachers, the experience is equally intensive. Supervised both by Brown education professors and by exemplary mentor teachers from local schools, the newcomers to the profession receive continual coaching. In debriefing sessions after each morning's classes, teams get the veterans' help on everything from instructional strategies to classroom management, then plan the next day's lessons.

Providence teachers who take part in Brown Summer High School say it is an exceptional form of professional development and university partnership. In a new arrangement in summer 2000, six teachers from the city's Classical High School brought in 100 rising ninth graders they had identified as needing help with the transition to their school's demanding academic work. Taking several workshops with Brown faculty, the teaching team taught their own group for one of the morning's two-hour courses, then turned the students over to the novice teachers for the second.

Occasionally a Providence student who enrolled in the summer program during high school comes back to it as a Brown student who wants to be a teacher. "It gave me hope," one such student said, and in a time of teacher shortage perhaps it also offered hope to her profession.

Polson has watched Youth-Friends grow over six years to include 75 districts in Kansas, Missouri, and Michigan. "It changes the adult volunteers' lives as much as the kids'," she said. "They can be lunch or recess buddies, reading partners, computer helpers, tutors — and 96 percent of them tell us they love it."

Associate superintendent Kendra Johnson credits the partnership of school and community with the district's rising student scores on the "very rigorous" state tests. "Our position is to look at other solutions than retention when kids don't do well on tests," she says. "We ask instead what we can do for individual kids."

Learning Through Work

"Kids have to feel an adult is with them on their journey," agrees Michele Blatt, an assistant principal at City As School, which enrolls about 1,000 juniors and seniors who have not succeeded elsewhere in its four New York City locations.

Like many other Essential schools in New York, City As School uses portfolios to demonstrate student learning; but it goes even further in personalizing the academic program. Some teachers act as full-time advisers, available to students as they interweave academic work with substantial nine-to-five internships in the workplace. Others teach regular subject-area courses, or coach students in writ-

ing and math at the school's all-day drop-in centers.

In some areas (such as science or social studies), academic projects grow directly from the student's work at the "external learning" site. "If a student is working in a council member's office, for example, a teacher meets with the adult resource person at the site," Blatt said. "For the student to earn social studies credit from the experience, we have to be able to create a project that closely reflects some part of New York's curriculum standards."

The push for rigor has made placements more interesting, Blatt said; once students might have spent more time stuffing envelopes than thinking through problems. And the benefits of working in the "real world" remain considerable. "Lateness isn't just a demerit any more," she noted. "It's critical to the student's success in the world."

Founded in 1972, City As School consistently graduates students who arrive without a history of success. Dropout and truancy rates are 5 percent and 3 percent respectively, and daily attendance averages 86 percent. "When our students graduate, they go on to a wide range of other things—including college, but also including opening some of the best four-star restaurants in New York City," said principal Bob Lubetsky.

But since New York began requiring Regents examinations for graduation, Lubetsky worries about a dramatic increase in the number of his students who have started leaving for "general educational development" (GED) programs rather than finishing high school.

"Their options have narrowed," he said. "What's fallen by the wayside are the experiences that enable kids to grow into productive future citizens, happy and healthy human beings." The connection between academic and social growth is complicated, he added, "but they are

A Network to Help Out Mentor Programs

Adult mentors who work with young people in or out of school can powerfully affect their success in learning, much research has shown. But getting a mentoring program off the ground often proves difficult for schools already swamped with academic demands. The National Mentoring Partnership addresses this problem by providing training and other resources to organizations that want to initiate a mentoring program. It has created formal partnerships with at least twelve states and eighteen cities around the country in an active network that includes many Essential schools.

A strong infrastructure linking school and community gives a mentoring program tremendous power, the organization says. But many falter either because they lack coherence across a community or because they lack standards for what mentors do and how they do it. The Partnership offers ways for corporations, civic organizations, communities of faith, and other institutions to create cooperative networks, working together with state and local educators to pair young people with mentors who have received preparation for their role.

The organization's website (www.mentoring.org) lists extensive suggestions for mentoring activities, and trouble-shooting for these common problems, among others:

- Falling short of the number of mentors needed for the youth in a program.
- Mentoring relationships that prove inappropriate or potentially harmful to the young person.
- Failure of mentors to follow through on their commitments.
- Failure of mentoring relationships to continue beyond a short period.
- Difficulty maintaining contact with mentors and youth after they are matched.
- Undermining of mentors' efforts by parents or guardians.
- Uncertainty about the impact on the young people served by mentors.

intimately and inextricably bound together."

Attitudes Are Important

Adam Seidel had the same insight when he found himself, the summer after his freshman year at Oberlin College, teaching math for four weeks in an intervention program for Boston middle-schoolers who had failed the city's math test for promotion to eighth grade.

"Teaching just math was not the trick, I discovered," he said afterward. "We needed to be helping the students take personal responsibility for all their actions—so they know the consequences of behavior and choose to do the right thing." The program put too little focus on such affective matters, he said, so the positive attitudes and norms that would sustain high-quality work were not strongly established.

Now he worries that without such a personal commitment to their own development, his summer students will continue to have academic trouble in eighth grade despite their improved math skills. "They are prepared to do the work now," he said, "but they might just as easily choose not to."

The Summerbridge program, which pairs high school and college students with younger students for intensive summer academics in 40 sites around the nation, deliberately focuses on rallying students' spirits as a way of boosting academic motivation. To its participants, the approach seems to work. After teaching with the program this past summer, Reed College student Gregory Cluster recalled a frustrating day on which his morning students in language arts and math had been singularly resistant in class. "I felt my kids losing faith that I was taking them somewhere important," he said.

Despondent, Cluster hurried off to an all-school assembly in which teachers and students vied for the

title of "most spirited group" with cheers and dancing. When he called his class together afterward to give them an assignment, their mood was "ready and eager" to work, he said. "It had given us all a shared experience, forming us into more of a loving community." For kids used to "the oh-so-lonely space of middle school," he reflected, it may have been more effective than a whole afternoon of his laboring over class preparations.

Research backs up that hunch.

At the Consortium on Chicago School Research, researchers Valerie Lee, Julia Smith, Tamara Perry, and Mark Smylie analyzed citywide survey data and achievement test scores to find that sixth and eighth grade students learned most when they experienced *both* a strong press for academic achievement in their schools *and* strong social support from people in and out of school. If one of these conditions was strong and the other weak, students learned less; if both were weak, so

Boosting Achievement by Reporting It Better

Because students read their own report cards, the way teachers report student progress could have far more impact on student achievement than we commonly assume, according to some researchers and educators. In fact, the format and limited content of most "progress reports" may be sending a disheartening message of "no progress" and freezing a student into negative self-assessments that impair their academic improvement. Ross Abels of Iowa's Solon Community School District recently suggested to his colleagues in an electronic discussion group that teachers substitute narrative comments for the usual report-card checklist approach.

A narrative comment expands on the cryptic symbols of the report card to provide extra information on what the student does and does not do well. It can also offer specific suggestions for help, such as home activities or games. And it can frame a student's progress in realistic and encouraging terms, letting parents know that academic and social development takes place at a different rate for every child. Narrative explanations are particularly important when reporting children's standardized test scores and percentile rankings, which can sear negative judgments into a student's self-perception without any suggestion of positive traits or constructive next steps.

"Written in a positive and informative manner, comments can address a variety of issues while still maintaining the dignity of the child," wrote Amy Brualdi in a 1998 digest of research in the online journal *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*. Especially if a student has had difficulty with a particular subject area or controlling his or her behavior, she said, teachers can avoid shaming them by framing their comments in a context of improvement.

For example, to convey that a student needs help, a teacher might use phrases like "could profit by," "requires," "finds it difficult at times to," "needs reinforcement in," or "has trouble with," according to S. Shafer in her 1997 book *Writing Effective Report Card Comments* (Scholastic). Students are likely to see their report cards, so words like *unable*, *can't*, *won't*, *always*, and *never* prove counterproductive. A more positive view results when teachers can emphasize the positive through phrases like "improved," or "shows commitment."

Calling on varied sources of evidence enriches a narrative comment. Not just test results but examples of student work, formal and informal observations, and student portfolios can provide good evidence for a report card comment.

was academic achievement.

Learning Outside the Lines

Sometimes such social support grows from a situation in which adults hand over responsibility for a serious project to the students

and coach them to its completion. When older teenage students at the West Hollywood Opportunity Center decided that the lack of a school library posed a significant obstacle to their learning success, the CES regional Center in Los Angeles worked with them to

resolve the problem.

With the support of the faculty, CES helped the students to design the library they desired, create a budget, write and present a grant application, acquire the funding, select and order books, and design a system for themselves to main-

How Do Kids See Their Own Achievement? Just Ask Them

Educators might increase their own effectiveness by simply finding out what kids say about their own learning, in order to better understand their students' strengths and aspirations, learning histories and accomplishments. In a project sponsored by the national organization Fairtest, Massachusetts researcher Anne Wheelock is collecting information on how students regard their own learning and achievement in a number of contexts, including state standardized tests. Although most students entered ninth grade with the intention of graduating and going on to post-secondary education, she has learned, even students who passed their courses and contributed to their schools and communities begin to question their academic identity when faced with failing test scores. Among her questions, from which teachers might select to fit their own context:

- Do you plan to graduate/have you graduated from high school: _____ When? _____
- At this point, do you have any plans for what you will be doing after high school? (Talk about more than one if relevant, with details.)

Work:	Parenting:	Travel:
School:	Military:	Other/no plans:

- When you think about life after high school, would you say you will feel:
Prepared? If so, in what way?
Unprepared? If so, in what way?
What you are looking forward to?
- People are smart in a lot of different ways. Outside of school, what things are you good at and do you like to do in your own time?

Sports	Working at a paid job
Playing music or singing	Speaking a language besides English
Religious activities	Helping out in the family
Drawing or painting	Building things
Cooking	Explaining things to others
Martial arts	Helping people in trouble
Babysitting	Working on computers
Helping out in community or religious center	Other

- Is there something you do well that your teachers don't know about?
- Where have you lived in your life until now?
- How many schools did you go to before this?
- If you ever went to school in another country or city or state, how does your current school compare?
- Tell me about the best learning experience you've ever had in school (anywhere):
- Best teacher (say why):
- Something you are happy you learned:
- Best book you read recently:
- Best year you have had in school:
- Best subject you have had in school:
- What is the work you've done that you're most proud of?
- What inspires you to work hard in school?
- Do you participate in any extra or after-school activities in school? Clubs? Sports? Other?
- Circling *all* that apply, what kind of student would you say you are?

Great	Lazy	Creative
Pretty good	Bored	Teachers like me
Hard-working	Better than some	Bad
Not so bad	Worse than some	I get by
Serious	Interested	School's not for me
- What is the average grade you get on your report card?
- Best-ever grade? Best semester average?
- Have your grades improved since ninth grade?
- How often do you go to the library in your school?
- How often do you use calculators in math class?
- What kind of work do you do on computers?
- Before taking the state test, did anyone offer you and other students extra help? (If yes, details?)
- Have you ever had to repeat a grade? (If yes, what grade? What was that like?)
- Have you ever been in bilingual or ESL classes?
- Have you ever been part of a resource room?
- Have there ever been any things you wanted to do in school but didn't get to do or weren't allowed to do?
- Have you ever thought about dropping out of school? If so, why? What stopped you?

tain and staff the library.

"Students learned leadership and organizing skills," said Hannah MacLaren, who directs the Los Angeles Center. "They also learned to present themselves in writing and in person to an adult audience, and they applied their skills in math and language for a real-world outcome." Faculty at WHOC, which serves disadvantaged students who have not succeeded in other schools, were also struck anew, MacLaren said, by "the tremendous motivation and ability students can summon when they contribute work of real value."

To Prep or Not to Prep?

Will emphasizing high quality in all academic tasks result in high scores regardless of the curriculum? Or must teachers "teach to the test" in order for students to do well?

In Federal Way, Washington, a diverse district south of Seattle, teacher Jessie Towbin has noticed

how many of her colleagues at Illahee Junior High School now orient their teaching toward the state's new high-stakes tests. "It's not enough just to have biology before the tenth-grade test in the spring," she said. "You have to cram a lot more high school curriculum into that time."

The Washington tests contain extensive writing and reading, though Towbin worries about the temptation to design classroom writing prompts that mimic test questions. Still, the test's emphasis has provoked more Illahee teachers to use Socratic Seminars, even in courses like math, she has noticed.

And even drills can prompt Essential school pedagogy, points out veteran Coalition history teacher Bil Johnson, now a clinical professor of education at Brown University. For years he asked heterogeneous classes of high school students to drill for the content-heavy Advanced Placement history test in a weekly exercise that made

them think critically as well.

"I would put them in small groups with various history textbooks," he said. "Assuming the test is reasonable, I told them, they should decide which facts from a particular historical period they'd have to know to do well on it. Then they would teach those to each other." Every Friday all year the class did the exercise for a different era; and every May, said Johnson, "they all did fine on the test."

Worrying About Students

The story is not so rosy in most parts, though, as testing fever escalates the anxiety among the nation's parents, students, and teachers that poor test results will imperil children's futures. At his Essential middle school this fall in suburban Croton-on Hudson, New York, social studies teacher Rick Casey said, "I spent my meaningful twelve-minute presentation at back-to-school night talking primarily

On an Urban River, Intensive Learning During Vacation Time

Students with the advantage of learning during periods when they are not in school—such as summer vacations—typically reinforce and build on their academic skills.

Recognizing this, the CES Center in Los Angeles saw a unique learning opportunity for high school students in the two-month "off-track" intervals created by the city's year-round schooling policy. They designed and piloted an ongoing field-based project called the River School, which uses the Los Angeles River to offer low-income students an intensive experience in river stewardship and scientific watershed protocols.

Collaborating with Friends of the Los Angeles River and the University of California at Los Angeles, CES piloted the student research project with over 150 students from Canoga Park High School. Guided by environmental professionals, teachers, and college interns, student teams spent four days monitoring water quality and assessing and restoring riparian habitats in their industrialized neighborhood.

As part of the pilot project, CES coaches developed a curriculum and River Guide suitable for use from kindergarten through grade twelve, which meshes neatly with

the science protocols of GLOBE, the Federal program for student environmental science, and with national and state mathematics and science standards.

"We saw students begin developing the confidence, knowledge, and connections necessary to aspire to higher learning and professional careers in science and environmental studies," said Sarah Starr, who directs the initiative. "They thrived on the individual instruction, and they learned to collaborate in small groups to solve problems, think critically, and make decisions." The Center is currently seeking funds to establish the program as four six-week courses offered to Los Angeles high school students during their staggered vacation times.

When the field course is launched, Starr said, it will also increase these students' role in their city's future. "They tell us environmental sustainability is one of their major concerns for their future," she noted, pointing out that the Los Angeles River is the center of a 625-square-mile urban watershed, including the city's storm-drain system. With California's new watershed protection mandate, she said, "kids can participate at the design and decision-making stage of renewing a vital natural resource."

about the state assessments that current eighth graders will endure over the next few years."

And everywhere Coalition teachers are facing the clash between their conviction that all students can succeed and the new push to measure student success solely through standardized tests. They worry that students with much to contribute will lose heart and drop out, and evidence backs up their concern. Nine of the ten states with the highest dropout rates in the country tie decisions about graduation to test scores; none of the ten states with the lowest dropout rates do so.

"In small schools maybe there are solutions—kid by kid—to these issues," said Deborah Meier, co-principal of Boston's Mission Hill School and vice-chair of CES. This year's Massachusetts tenth graders must pass state exit exams to graduate, and urban schools in particular are worried that this will slam the door in the face of students whom they know could otherwise thrive in college and life.

Such schools are exploring all the alternatives, Meier said, "including students leaving the state and getting a diploma elsewhere for

their thirteenth year." Private colleges and universities may well accept students on the basis of work demonstrated in high school even without the state's seal of approval. But it is not yet clear whether state-subsidized colleges could substitute such evidence or the GED diploma for success on the state's tests.

Educating the Community

So what else can schools do to keep learning alive for all their students, including those whose genuine merit is not reflected in the mirror of these tests? Most research suggests an answer that sounds a great deal like Essential schooling:

- An intensive and personalized program to engage students in well-crafted curriculum connecting to their own lives and interests as well as to academics.
- Cooperative learning and additional coaching in heterogeneous groups, without pulling out or labeling some as "problem students."
- Summer programs that reinforce academic learning and also open up new opportunities for students to explore their communities and themselves. Eighty percent of

the achievement difference between advantaged and disadvantaged children from year to year is a result of what occurs during the summer, research shows.

• Building the community's will to support all its children, with teachers who have the preparation and working conditions of other respected professionals.

The first big wave is cresting now, as many thousands of students begin to suffer under policies put in place over the past few years. And whereas policymakers believe that failure will wake up schools to the need for higher standards, Essential school people are speaking privately of how to hold on to the standards they already cherish through the coming storm.

More than ever, they realize, their case will hang on public documentation and demonstration of student accomplishment, and on gathering the support they need to support learning as they should. Educating the community will take on equal importance to educating its children—and the closer they can draw their community in to the schools, the more likely they are to survive the current crisis. □



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