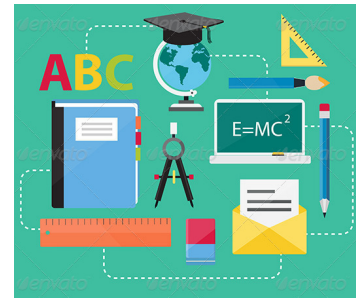


Education

How might we increase life opportunity and equity by helping all students succeed educationally?



Why Communities Value Education

1. **EDUCATION AS HOPE:** Communities want youth to not just be successful now, but to set long-term goals and hopes. As one Somali community leader shared, “Aspirations are the key to everything in life.” Youth need to believe they have a future, that they can open doors, and that they can start building it now.
2. **EDUCATION AS FREEDOM:** Communities see education as the great equalizer and want youth to take advantage of educational opportunities. Better education means more freedom in the future in all parts of your life.
3. **EDUCATION AS STRENGTHS:** Communities want schools to help students to identify and grow their unique strengths and talents (their superpowers).

Building Internal Capacity: Encouraging an Educational Growth Mindshift

| From | To |
|--|--|
| Intelligence is a fixed trait. | I can grow my intelligence. |
| I avoid or fear challenges. | I look forward and embrace challenges. |
| I give up when things are tough. | I persist in tough times. |
| I make excuses and blame others. | I take responsibility. |
| I don't try so I won't fail. | I value learning from mistakes. |
| I feel threatened by the success of my classmates. | I feel inspired by the success of my classmates. |
| I see talent as more important than effort. | I see effort as more important than talent. |
| Failure means “I am a failure.” (an identity) | Failure means “I failed” (a one time action) |

Knowledge & Skills Supporting the Mindshift

Adapted from James Toole, 2002

Building External Capacity: Addressing Access, Quality and Purpose

1. **ACCESS:** Do all youth have access to participate?
2. **QUALITY:** Do all youth participate in high quality programs?
3. **PURPOSE:** Do existing programs focus on the authentic needs of all youth?

ACCESS EQUITY: *What is needed for all youth to be able to succeed educationally?*

| Issue | What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity? |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Communication | Lack of effective school-parent communication. |
| Safety | Not all students feel welcome and safe in school. One extra specific issue is that undocumented students face confusing policies. |
| Policy | Interrupted education of immigrant students create barriers that are not adequately addressed by current policies. |
| Peer Relationships | Need to build more positive relationships between diverse groups for a healthy school atmosphere. |
| Higher Education Access | Many access issues (need to understand admission, scholarships, finances, purpose, mindset, relation to employability). More work with high school youth to get them college-ready (e.g. academic support, bridge to summer camps and tutoring). Need parent education about college too. |
| Communication | Find more ways to communicate educational news and updates that don't involve text. Literacy is an issue in some communities where word of mouth is the best communication tool. |
| Mentoring | Multiple communities emphasized the importance of connecting educated role models from diverse fields to help guide and support youth education. Mentors from the same culture provide greatest power. |
| Child Care | Find a way to have child care costs covered while youth are in school. (Child care can be subsidized while parents work but not while in school). |
| Independent Status | Change policy so youth accessing Homeless Youth Act funded programs can qualify for independent status. The barriers for homeless and highly mobile youth to access independent status and get financial aid are significant. |
| Criminal Histories | Criminal histories can prevent youth getting into certain school programs. Need to coordinate juvenile justice and correctional system to remove criminal history rules that prohibit working in human/ social services and law enforcement if you prove yourself. |
| After School Activities | Parents mentioned lack of availability or knowledge of extra curricular activities. Also, logistics like transportation can be an obstacle to access. |
| Fear of Failure | Students fear of failure leads them to take easy classes. Leads to self-fulfilling prophecy that students not feel prepared. |
| Driver's License | Remove barriers to getting driver's license to get to school and job. |

QUALITY EQUITY: *What quality issues might influence students' education outcomes?*

| Issue | What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity? |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Motivation | Some youth don't see the value of education; need to reframe and make real how education can empower, give confidence, lead to a fuller life in all ways. |
| Student Passions | Help students find areas of passion, strength, and interest. |
| Educational Relevance | Make education more relevant, interesting, and practical for students (e.g. internships, service-learning, project-based learning, career experiences). |
| Cultural Connection | Some students and communities don't feel connected (e.g. schools are not active in the community; have limited knowledge of students' background; policy of openness but don't feel welcome when door is open; high drop-out rate). |
| Policy Changes | Need policy, systems and environmental changes. Need dialogue between educators and the community. Examine systems that adversely affect youth. |
| Career Education | Fund more school programs for vocational education where students can get certificates in areas that will help them start a career path. |
| Achievement Gap | Erase large gap in educational achievement based on race or ethnicity. |
| Parent Academies | Parents need academies that teach them how to navigate the educational system and support their child's education. Past participants in existing parent academies wanted more help than they received. |
| Education Staff Diversity | School workforce is not diverse enough. Students need to see others like themselves as sources of knowledge and success. |
| Discipline | Need to find better solution for students that are disengaged and disruptive to themselves and others. |
| Higher Education Quality | Many diverse students get to college but do not feel there is a supportive structure. May fail and owe loans which discourages parents from sending others. |
| Support Services | Families need broad supports for their children to succeed (e.g. food, mental health, tutors, physical health, homework, etc.). Children arrive at school with multiple unmet needs that can interfere with education. |
| Parent Voice | Find more ways for parents to be educated, empowered and advocate. May not be a custom for some groups. Need more ways than PTO to engage. Sometimes need help on how to better support their children. |
| College Credit | Offer more PSEO (Post Secondary Enrollment Options) at all schools. Will help some youth to be able to earn tuition-free college credit while still in high school. |
| Life Skills | Teach more life skills such as money management, dress for success, etc. |
| Navigators | Hire outreach person to educate youth and families about their rights and advocate where needed. It's not enough to have resources available. |
| Relationships | Many of the youth felt strongly that more and better personal relationships with faculty are vital, can help prevent dropping-out and help them succeed. |

PURPOSE EQUITY: *Do the purposes of existing schools address youth’s most important needs and hopes?*

| Gaps | What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity? |
|--|---|
| Innovation | Need more innovation throughout the educational system (e.g. hire grandmother to be in halls for discipline—build on family culture). |
| Disaggregated Data | Educational data needs to be disaggregated so it’s possible to identify progress and problems of each group. Data now merges multiple Asian or African groups from different backgrounds (e.g. Somalis and African-Americans, or Hmong and all Asians) |
| Partnerships | Need more partnerships between youth, family, schools, and faith centers for success. (Define family in broad sense; not just by blood). |
| Monocultural Charter Schools | Monocultural charter schools provide a safe space for learning, but leaders want more avenues for their students to explore the world outside (including other cultures). |
| Civic Learning | Not enough opportunities for civic engagement and education. Need to raise the next generation of leaders. |
| Service-Learning | Need more schools to implement quality service-learning programs rather than piecemeal service projects without any real learning |
| Global Education | Need more global education that sees second languages and cultural knowledge as assets. Help diverse students value & use as a strength. |
| Cultural Sensitivity | Bridge gap between mainstream educational institutions and ethnic communities. Assumptions can interfere with educational success (e.g. he must need ESL or because he is quiet he must be understanding). |
| Generational Conflict | Generational conflict. Some youth experience strong parental pressure for school, college, and career success. Youth themselves also want more leadership, sports, service-learning and other enrichment opportunities outside the classroom (which parents may not value). |
| Civic Learning | More classes needed about leadership, ethics, and being a citizen. Make for ALL students and can include after school opportunities too. |
| Faith Centers | For some, tying education to the Faith Centers is very important. |
| Bridge Education and Employment | Build stronger connections between high schools and the world of work. Need more support in transition from K-12 into college and/or work. Great programs exist but serve small percentage of the youth. |
| Entrepreneurship | Provide training on how to be an entrepreneur. Some youth that don’t thrive in school are entrepreneurial by nature and would use training. |
| Systems Thinkers | More leadership preparation for youth to not only make a difference but to change systems that aren’t working for them. |
| Social-Emotional Learning | Give more support to the non-cognitive skill development (e.g. empathy, perseverance, curiosity, etc.) that is critical to life success. |