

Breaking Ranks II

Core Recommendations

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Collaborative Leadership and Professional Learning Communities

1. The principal will provide leadership in the high school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
2. Each high school will establish a site council and accord other meaningful roles in decision making to students, parents, and members of the staff in order to promote student learning and an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
3. A high school will regard itself as a community in which members of the staff collaborate to develop and implement the school's learning goals.
4. Teachers will provide the leadership essential to the success of reform, collaborating with others in the educational community to redefine the role of the teacher and to identify sources of support for that redefined role.
5. Every school will be a learning community for the entire community. As such, the school will promote the use of Personal Learning Plans for each educator and provide the resources to ensure that the principal, teachers, and other staff members can address their own learning and professional development needs as they relate to improved student learning.
6. The school community will promote policies and practices that recognize diversity in accord with the core values of a democratic and civil society and will offer substantive ongoing professional development to help educators appreciate issues of diversity and expose students to a rich array of viewpoints, perspectives, and experiences.
7. High schools will build partnerships with institutions of higher education to provide teachers and administrators at both levels with ideas and opportunities to enhance the education, performance, and evaluation of educators.
8. High schools will develop political and financial relationships with individuals, organizations, and businesses to support and supplement educational programs and policies.
9. At least once every five years, each high school will convene a broadly based external panel to offer a public description of the school, a requirement that could be met in conjunction with the evaluations by state, regional, and other accrediting groups.

Personalization and the School Environment

10. High schools will create small units in which anonymity is banished.
11. Each high school teacher involved in the instructional program on a full-time basis will be responsible for contact time with no more than 90 students during a given term so that the teacher can give greater attention to the needs of every student.
12. Each student will have a Personal Plan for Progress that will be reviewed often to ensure that the high school takes individual needs into consideration and to allow students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods for learning in an effort to meet high standards.
13. Every high school student will have a Personal Adult Advocate to help him or her personalize the educational experience.
14. Teachers will convey a sense of caring so that students feel that their teachers share a stake in student learning.
15. High schools will develop flexible scheduling and student grouping patterns that allow better use of time in order to meet the individual needs of students and to ensure academic success.
16. The high school will engage students' families as partners in the students' education.
17. The high school community, which cannot be values-neutral, will advocate and model a set of core values essential in a democratic and civil society.
18. High schools, in conjunction with agencies in the community, will help coordinate the delivery of physical and mental health and social services for youth.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

19. Each high school will identify a set of essential learnings—in literature and language, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts—in which students must demonstrate achievement in order to graduate.
20. Each high school will present alternatives to tracking and to ability grouping.
21. The high school will reorganize the traditional department structure in order to integrate the school's curriculum to the extent possible and emphasize depth over breadth of coverage.
22. The content of the curriculum, where practical, should connect to real-life applications of knowledge and skills to help students link their education to the future.
23. The high school will promote service programs and student activities as integral to an education, providing opportunities for all students that support and extend academic learning.
24. The academic program will extend beyond the high school campus to take advantage of learning opportunities outside the four walls of the building.
25. Teachers will design high-quality work and teach in ways that engage students, encourage them to persist, and, when the work is successfully completed, result in student satisfaction and their acquisition of knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, and other abilities valued by society.
26. Teachers will know and be able to use a variety of strategies and settings that identify and accommodate individual learning styles and engage students.
27. Each high school teacher will have a broad base of academic knowledge with depth in at least one subject area.
28. Teachers will be adept at acting as coaches and facilitators to promote more active involvement of students in their own learning.
29. Teachers will integrate assessment into instruction so that assessment is accomplished using a variety of methods and does not only measure students, but becomes part of the learning process.
30. Recognizing that education is a continuum, high schools will reach out to elementary and middle level schools as well as institutions of higher education to better serve the articulation of student learning and to ensure that at each stage of the continuum, stakeholders understand what will be required of students at the succeeding stage.
31. Schools will develop a strategic plan to make technology integral to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, accommodating different learning styles and helping teachers to individualize and improve the learning process.