EQUITY CONSCIOUSNESS

Gifting

ALL Students with support to elicit and nurture innate potential critical for SELF-ACTUALIZATION & CONTRIBUTION

SELF-DETERMINATION

TO LEAD

THRIVING & FLOURISHING IN THE WORLD

Transform Self To Transform the World
RCSD NUA Goals:
Students, Faculty and Leadership will -
- Build conviction, capacity and confidence in the expectation of High Intellectual Performance (HIP) for all students.
- Demonstrate learning and growth of High Intellectual Performance (HIP) on a variety of measures. Through professional learning experiences that focus on beliefs, High Operational Practices and structures that motivate teaching toward High Intellectual Performance.
- *Informed by the Redwood City Districts’ stated Board Goals, mission and beliefs; ongoing collaboration between Redwood City School District and National Urban Alliance

Learning Outcomes:
1. Participants will institute an equity consciousness by situating their students’ learning within the Pedagogy of Confidence ®.
2. Participants will engage in self-reflective work around their own and their students’ cultural frames of reference to examine who we are as cultural beings, thereby informing an understanding of the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy for building relationships, cultivating strengths and expanding frames of reference for deeper learning.
3. Participants will engage in culturally responsive pedagogy as a conduit for equity within the context of their own practice.
4. Participants will engage in Lesson Study: co-design, teach, video-tape and debrief a lesson that captures their current understanding of High Operational Practices to elicit High Intellectual Performances, using the NUA Lesson Planning template.
5. Participants will examine their own school cultures, identifying equitable practices that promote language and cultural status in their learning communities.

Grounded in Research:
**Foundational Work:**

We began our work with RCSD, intentionally stating that all students are gifted students; as are the teachers that teach them and the administrators who support and lead them. We framed our belief systems through that lens, then we focused on our strengths and how to activate them. We provided pre-requisites through foundational knowledge around neuroscience (the brain is modifiable); High Operational Practices elicits High Intellectual Performances; Cultural Frames of Reference shapes how we see our world and how we think the world sees us.

**Leadership:**

In October 2019, Dr. John Baker and Dr. Yvette Jackson refined and agreed upon a shared memorandum of understanding (MOU) that defined the roles of all participants in this collaboration. This led to the operationalizing and formalizing our work in RCSD using the push-in model, informed by the MOU. The push-in model allows for in-classroom professional development at the three lab schools with a focus on each school’s course of action pedagogical flow maps (PFMs). Dr. Baker launched our work with the administration, shifting our focus to creating and sustaining a model that allowed for defined professional development (PD) days for all participants. This work was and is supported by a push-in model with mentors working directly with teachers in their classrooms. The leadership PD sessions have continued to provide for the neuroscience research that supports the high intellectual capacities of RCSD students, thus supporting equity consciousness. This is a shift to closing the opportunity gap rather than the deficit thinking of the achievement gap.

Yvette Jackson and Maria Sudduth worked with each school’s administration across the fall to create school course of action pedagogical flow maps. These PFMs have provided for the work schools have undertaken to embed high operational practices manifested through NUA strategies in their schools. Both RCSD NUA lab schools and schools exploring NUA in preparation for joining this work, specifically detailed their current practices for and their vision for their schools to move this work forward.

**Where we are now:**

Given the launch of our shared memorandum of understanding in October, everyone has realized the urgency of our mission. This has led to strategic conversations that have provided for a model that is embedded in each school.

NUA leadership has been visiting each school, working directly with administrators to learn each school’s culture. Administrators have created and are implementing Course of Action plans to move this work forward, given the parameters of where they are in this work. (NUA lab school or NUA preparatory school).

**Pedagogy coaches** have proven to be pivotal in this work. They successfully team-taught lessons in several classrooms that demonstrated to the students and all observers that students thrive through engaging their full cognitive capacities, achieving high intellectual performance. This has proven inspirational to us all.

At our last session, **Dr. Linda Darling Hammond** participated in our last professional development with administrators and especially the coaches. After her participation, she stated to the group at large that she is invested in our work. She has committed to helping us in this endeavor, especially in the area of creating a documentation model so that we can analyze our growth and areas for improvement. She will be team teaching with Dr. Yvette Jackson at the February 8th leadership session.

**Teachers** are now engaged in lesson study with their colleagues in their classrooms. We have just completed our first cycle in which teachers planned an NUA lesson, team taught the lesson in their classrooms, then debriefed their lessons with those who observed the lesson. All of this work was supported by NUA mentors in the schools, NUA and RCSD leadership, and administrators. A debrief was held with the coaches and leadership to unpack what we all learned from this first experience.

**Where we go from here:**

**RCSD and NUA Leadership** are collaborating so that a visit can be coordinated to learn from other districts that have implemented NUA.
Maria has continued to meet with administration in all 12 schools during her site visits to support the leadership PD.

**Pedagogy Coaches:**
Realizing the pivotal and integral role staff development has in the successful sustainability of this collaborative; it was decided to provide direct professional development for the coaches. The sessions have focused on providing coaches with the research, pedagogy (instructional NUA strategies and protocols, lesson planning tools) and depth of understanding so that they can directly support their teachers. We have moved to a co-teaching model in which coaches are planning, teaching, and debriefing with their teachers they support. We have now gone through two cycles. In the first cycle, the coaches team taught lessons in both NUA lab schools and in preparatory schools (those exploring and implementing what they are learning in their sessions, in preparation for NUA). These lessons were well received and further informed the next phase with the teachers.

**Teachers:**
- The professional development has further informed teachers around the cultural wealth of their students; seeing students lived experiences in their community as strengths. Teachers have further unpacked their own positionality within their communities; delving deeper into the individual stories of both their students and themselves.

**NUA Mentors:**
- Dale Allender has provided much of our PD around Social Justice and Equity Consciousness; he has been instrumental in laying foundation understanding for this work. He will continue to work with Garfield as their mentor. He has developed a close relationship with that school.

NUA President, Dr. Eric Cooper and RCSD Superintendent Dr. John Baker are coordinating this effort. The visit will explore what has worked in other districts, what has proven to be challenges. The team will gain information and explore how we best move forward with a sustainable model that directly supports the RCSD Graduate journey so that all students close the opportunity gap, fully activating their full intellectual capacities as high intellectual performers.

**Teachers,** with the direct support of their coaches and NUA mentors, will continue to engage with lesson study further refining their practice and learning.

**NUA Mentors:**
- We have further invested in RCSD by creating a team of five mentors to directly support the schools in our push-in model; NUA leadership has committed to monthly visits to keep a close pulse on the work. Maria Sudduth is working with the district leadership and administrators, keeping communication channels open on a consistent basis.
- In addition to Dale Allender and Lhisa Ahmasy, we have brought in two more NUA mentors to further support this effort. Robert Price (in addition to Lhisa Ahmasy) is the mentor for Roosevelt. They both will be working closely with the teachers there. Robert is also starting an after school voluntary workshop sessions that will be extended to all three lab schools to attend. He also has in mind starting workshops for school personnel and parents. In addition, Robert is starting Amplifying Student Voice projects across all three lab schools. He is working with a group of students at each school who will be investigative reporters with a direct voice that informs our work. Stefanie Rome starts with us in February, she will be working with Hoover Elementary. She is a regional director for NUA working on the East Coast with adolescents, brings a wealth of NUA leadership to our district and is working in several projects with NUA. She will bring a skillset that will directly support Hoover’s administration and teachers.
- Dale Allender has provided much of our PD around Social Justice and Equity Consciousness; he has been instrumental in laying foundation understanding for this work. He will continue to work with Garfield as their mentor. He has developed a close relationship with that school.
Finally:

The expectation is that all teachers are moving forward with lesson study: planning lessons together; co-teaching; debriefing and refining (most participants really valued this first experience). Many are teaching lessons they observed in their own classrooms. Peer to peer coaching is being introduced; in which teachers can visit each other's classrooms.

I see the focus on refining understandings around Pedagogy of Confidence lesson planning, especially delineating the purposeful role of thinking maps; cognitive processes grounded in the brain research we use to guide our work.

Our essential question moving forward is:

How does belief in the learner to achieve and thrive in high intellectual performance manifest itself in our instructional practice and our school culture?

Specifically, the operational question from the teachers is:

How is leadership going to provide us the time, place and space to continue our learning through the RCSD NUA lesson study cycle of planning together, co-teaching and debriefing?