TRUE GRIT

The game-changing factors
and people elevating school climates
and learning outcomes in LAUSD

DECEMBER 2017

**EDUCATORS
FOR EXCELLENCE
LOS ANGELES**

A special thank you to the team of teachers and students who helped author this report:

Acknowledgments

This report was made possible because of the teachers and administrators at the following schools who opened their doors and shared their strategies:

116th Street Elementary School

24th Street Elementary School

61st Street Elementary School

Academies of Education and Empowerment at Carson High School

Animo Watts College Preparatory Academy

Arroyo Seco Museum Science Magnet School

Arts & Media Academy (Orchard 2B)

Avalon Gardens Elementary School

Chapman Elementary School

Charnock Road Elementary School

Cohasset Street Elementary School

Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts

Diego Rivera Learning Complex: Public Service Community School

Downtown Magnets High School

Eagle Rock High School

East Valley Senior High School

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

Benjamin Franklin High School

Gardena High School

George Ellery Hale Charter Academy

Global Studies & Technology Academy (Orchard 2C)

Henry T. Gage Middle School

International Studies Learning Center at Legacy High School Complex

Jack London Community Day School

John F. Kennedy High School

Magnolia Science Academy 8: Bell

Linda Esperanza Marquez High School

Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez High School

Middle College High School

Narbonne SH-Humanities & Arts (HArts) Academy of Los Angeles

Northridge Middle School

Paul Revere Charter Middle School

Porter Ranch Community School

San Pascual Avenue Elementary School

San Pedro High School

Sonia Sotomayor School of History and Dramatic Arts

Sun Valley High School

Sunrise Elementary School

Virgil Middle School

Westminster Avenue Elementary School

Windsor Hills Math/Science/Aerospace Magnet School

Youth Opportunities Unlimited Alternative High School

"I love that E4E's True Grit Report uplifts the people, ideas, and practices that are helping our students grow and achieve. This report is practical and actionable for all stakeholders—from parents to teachers, and even policymakers like me."

Mónica García LAUSD Board of Education Vice President and former guidance counselor

Contents

**View the interactive report
online at E4E.org/LATrueGrit**

Methodology

Phase I: Gathering Information

Our team at Educators for Excellence–Los Angeles (E4E-LA) set out to learn from the best ideas and practices used at diverse district and public charter schools in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). They focused on schools that made measurable progress in improving school climates and college readiness.

To gather this data, we targeted schools that showed growth in two key areas. First, we examined schools that showed a significant increase in the number of students enrolling in A–G courses and graduating with all A–G requirements complete. Additionally, we explored schools that showed a considerable decrease in suspension rates, as well as a marked improvement in staff and community perception of the school. During our focus group conversations with teachers, administrators, and support staff at these schools, we unearthed the successful strategies behind their data.

We intentionally reached out to a variety of schools—including those that are struggling in some areas and growing in others—as a way of celebrating and learning from all types of schools making gains for students.
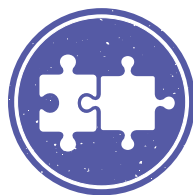
Phase II: Analyzing Data

After conducting focus groups and interviews, we analyzed the data to identify consistent trends in terms of strategies commonly leveraged at these schools. The trends that emerged became our True Grit Factors:

Making Data Dynamic

Working Smarter Together

Strengthening School Culture

Partnering with Families and the Community

While these strategies are often interconnected, they are ranked in this report according to the rate at which focus group participants cited each factor as the most essential driver of school climate and/or A–G college readiness.

Phase III: Sharing What We Learned

Our third "True Grit Report" highlights the strategies that local schools credit for helping them improve school climate and college readiness. The insights and voices of teachers working in True Grit schools are at the core of this report, which has been shared with more than 700 schools as well as elected, district, union, academic, and community leaders throughout California. We hope these practitioners and leaders use this report as a tool to learn from and accelerate progress for our students.

True Grit Schools in This Report

FIGURE 1: TYPES OF TRUE GRIT SCHOOLS

45% HIGH

17% MIDDLE

26% ELEMENTARY

5% PILOT

7% SPAN K–12

93% DISTRICT

7% CHARTER
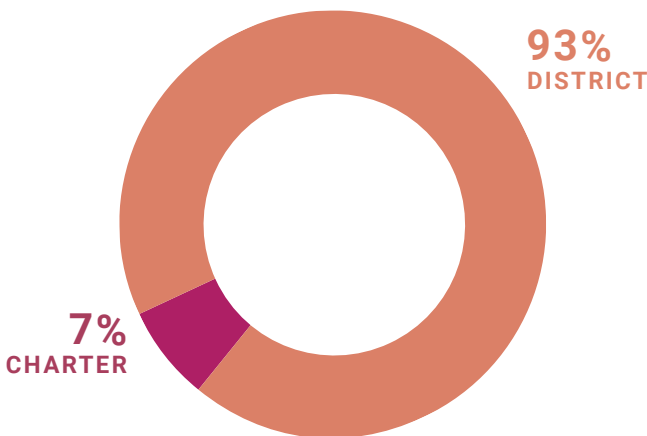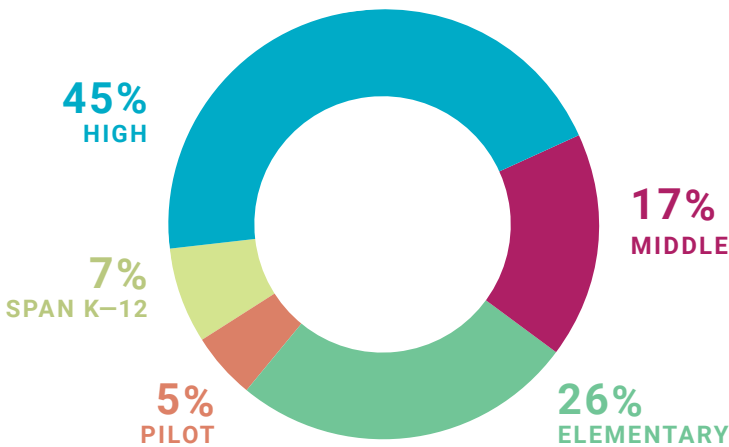
Note: The two figures above represent the True Grit schools in this report. This data was collected from Los Angeles Unified School District and the California Department of Education.

FIGURE 2: MAP OF TRUE GRIT SCHOOLS

- ● True Grit School
- ■ North Educational Service Center
- ■ East Educational Service Center
- ■ South Educational Service Center
- ■ West Educational Service Center
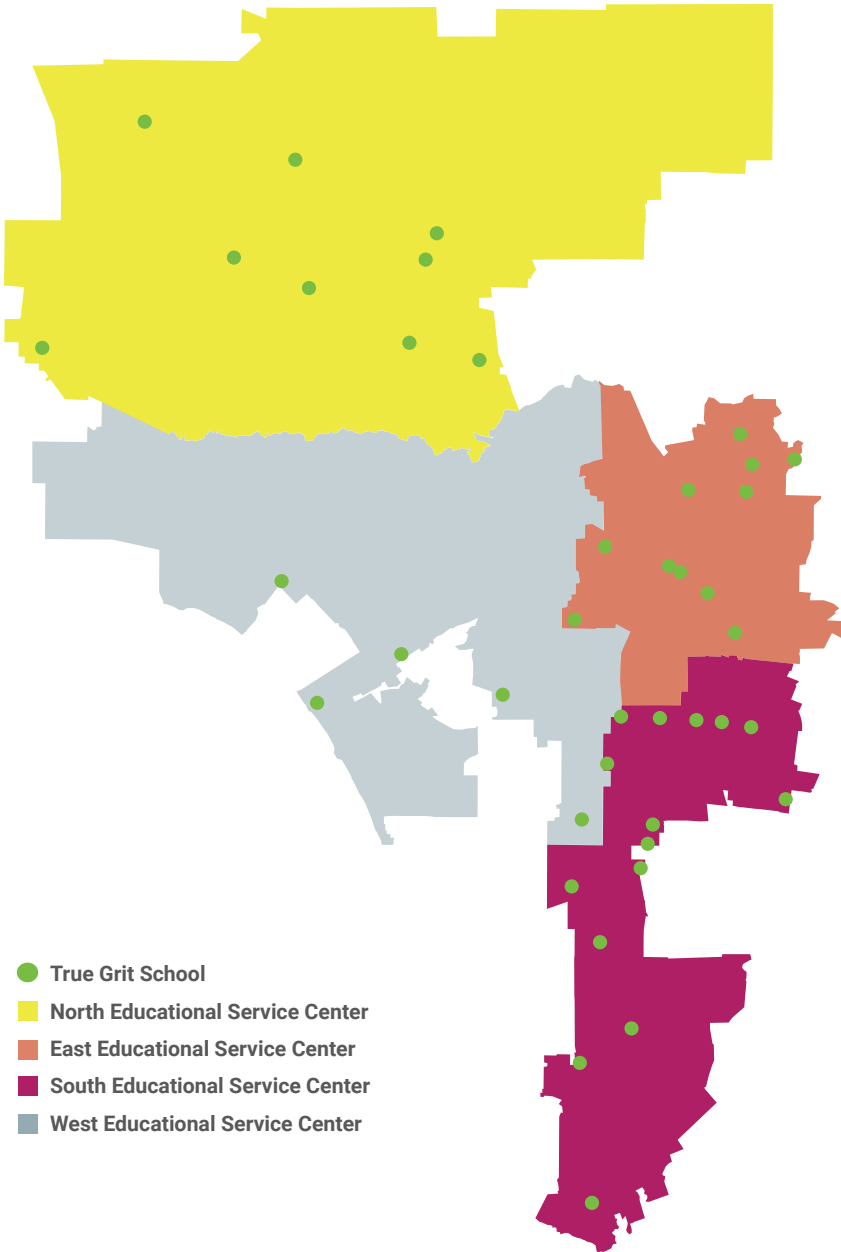
Note: The figure above was adapted from a map provided by LAUSD—Master Planning and Demographics.

True Grit Schools in This Report

FIGURE 3: STUDENT RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS IN TRUE GRIT SCHOOLS—AVERAGE

10%
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE, ASIAN, FILIPINO, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

71%
HISPANIC OR LATINO

8%
WHITE

11%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN

FIGURE 4: ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELS) IN TRUE GRIT SCHOOLS—AVERAGE

19%
EL

FIGURE 5: STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH IN TRUE GRIT SCHOOLS—AVERAGE

70%
**FREE &
REDUCED
LUNCH**
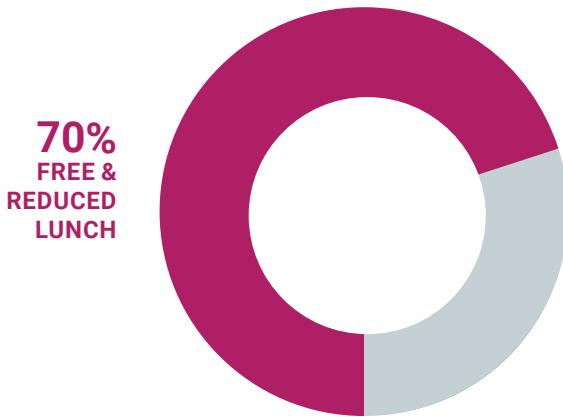
Note: The three figures above represent the True Grit schools in this report. This data was collected from Los Angeles Unified School District and the California Department of Education.
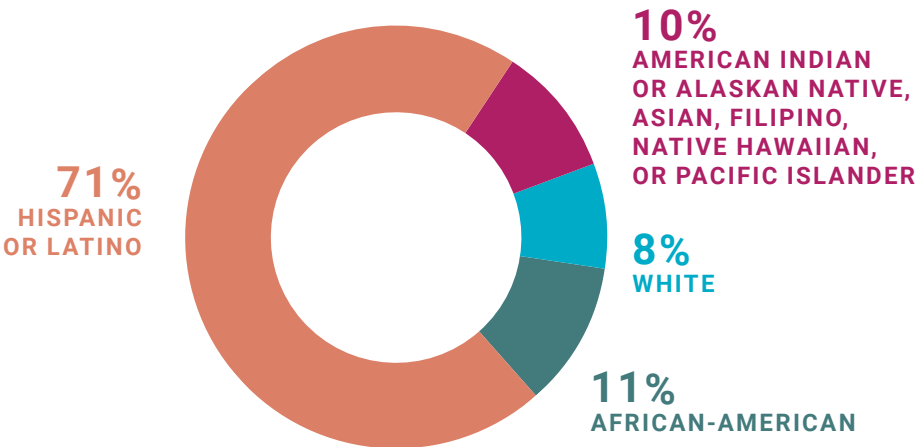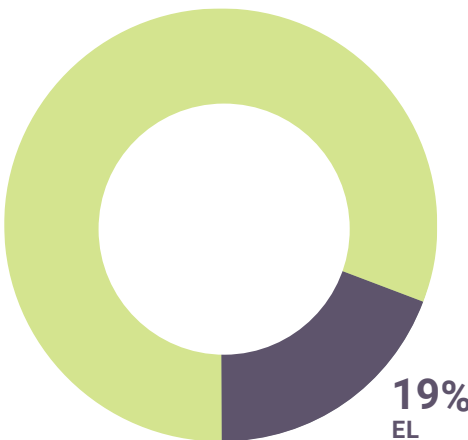
Preface: True Grit

Dear Teacher, School Leader, Parent, Community Member, or Policy Shaper,

When I ask most families to boil down the most essential aims of a school, they often arrive at two conclusions:

1. I want my child to be safe and happy at school.

2. I want my child to go to college and have a good career.

This is true for parents like me, who are college-educated, nonprofit leaders. This is also true for parents like my grandmother, a Jamaican immigrant who never graduated from high school and saved every nickel to send my mother to college. These simple, fundamental aims are at the crux of this report, which investigates how schools are becoming more positive places that prepare youth to be successful in college and in their careers.

In the debate about how to improve public education, we often see one of these aims rise above the other. We may see civil rights groups pump their fists for an end to discipline practices that perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline. We may hear education reformers bang their fists on the table, calling for more urgency and accountability to raise achievement, graduation, and college attendance levels.

This report reminds the fist-pumping civil rights activist and the fist-banging education reformer that school culture and academic achievement are essential and inextricably linked.

Without creating schools that inspire, engage, and nurture youth, we will struggle to get youth to stay in class long enough to receive rigorous college-ready instruction. And without truly engaging and effective instruction that can capture the attention spans of today's social media-savvy generation, youngsters will understandably find more tempting distractions or pressing obligations.

So how do we focus on these simple fundamental aims amid competing district priorities, mandates, and the ever-swinging pendulum of education reform? This report uncovers the "secret" strategies schools have employed to significantly reduce rates of suspension and increase satisfaction levels among staff, students, and families. It also does the same investigating for schools that have increased the enrollment and achievement of students taking A–G courses. In creating this report, which spotlights nearly 50 schools, our team of former teachers at Educators for Excellence looked under the hood of this data and asked teachers and administrators three simple questions:

What's working to generate these gains?

What's not working as well?

What advice do you have for policymakers looking to see similar growth system wide?

The answers led us to identify clear trends and themes that are highlighted in this report. If the reader notices recurrent themes, it is because we want to unearth and unpack the common wells where many schools drink to reach and sustain growth. If the reader finds unique or even radical strategies and practices, it is because we want to also lift up novel ideas that are worth exploring. As a result, this report is a mix of conventional wisdom and out-of-the-box thinking that teachers cite as game changers. It's also worth noting that this report is spotlighting not only the highest-performing schools, but the schools that have struggled and are on a path to real growth and improvement. This is critical to providing diverse examples of how schools—no matter where they begin—can transform and grow.

Read, think, and enjoy,

Ama Nyamekye
Executive Director—Educators for Excellence–Los Angeles

TRUE GRIT

Schools Creating a More Positive Culture

#1 TRUE GRIT FACTOR:
School Climate
Working Smarter Together to Improve School Culture

Nearly **90 percent** of schools surveyed identified working smarter together as a key factor for improving school culture.
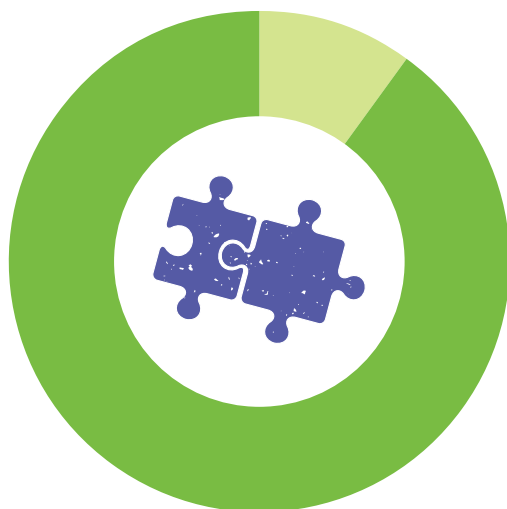
Improving school culture is not a one-person job. Every school that emphasized the importance of working smarter together recognized that transforming the school's climate would only be possible if everyone tackled their issues and opportunities together as a team. These schools identified ways that teachers, staff, and administrators could better help each other in order to better help their students.

What Schools Are Doing
to Work Smarter Together

Collaborating within grade levels. Teachers have much to offer their students, but they also have much to offer each other. Administrations create the time, expectations, and support that encourages teachers to observe each other's classrooms to spark new ideas and inspiration. At an elementary school in Van Nuys, the teachers do what they call "mixing" within grade levels, a process in which each teacher is responsible for planning the week's lessons in one subject for the entire grade-level team to share ideas, best practices, and the workload.

Collaborating across different grade levels. A student's education is a continuous process. To prevent learning gaps or overlap, teachers of different grade levels collaborate. In addition to consistency in curriculum, there is consistency in terms of the procedures for managing classroom behavior, homework, tutoring, and other much-needed supports for students.

Forging more relationships between staff and students. The only personal staff connection for many students is their teacher. The schools that work smarter together have found ways to help students develop more personal relationships with additional staff members. At one high school in East Los Angeles, all of the 10th graders are divided among every faculty, administrator, and support staff member to ensure that every student is paired with an adult mentor. Students develop new staff connections, and staff interact with a new group of students.

Opening the door of opportunity. One way to ensure that administrators are always available as a support resource is to maintain an open-door policy that welcomes students, teachers, and parents into the office for help addressing challenges. An open door is also symbolic—it opens up more opportunities for communication, support, and lasting relationships. At a high school in Huntington Park, parents and students are also included in the instructional rounds and decision-making process. Both groups go out and collect data to report to teachers, which results in a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

How Schools Can Work
Even Smarter Together

Rethink professional development. Professional development (PD) for teachers can become a space for specialized training, collaborating, and brainstorming. The PD calendar can rotate between whole school, departmental, and interdisciplinary teams to ensure that schools continue to be collaborative communities.

Make time for collaboration. Teachers have busy schedules, so creating more designated time for collaboration is essential for helping educators to better teach and help their students. Time should be built in for addressing specific topics, such as integrating general and special education, or intervening to address behavioral challenges.

Share more ownership and responsibilities. For teachers, it often feels like their work is never done. There are always more students to mentor, bulletin boards to make, clubs to manage, and parents to call. Committees can be an easy way to ensure that no single teacher has too much responsibility. Committees can range in type and purpose, based on the key needs of the school community.

Expand the boundaries for bonding. A school is more than just a building—it is a community. Team building, social evenings, and staff outings can all help to create and strengthen community among teachers. A sense of community fosters increased collaboration and creates a more inclusive culture.

How Policymakers Can
Help Schools Collaborate

Establish clearly articulated, realistic goals. District leaders, school administrators, and teachers are a team working toward the same goal. The goal should be decided collaboratively to ensure that it is realistic and that the team has a common understanding of what it is and how to achieve it. District leaders who have not been in a classroom for many years should visit the school sites regularly to obtain a firsthand perspective on school environments, which could inform the goal-setting process.

Increase funding for specialized positions. When a school is short-staffed, teachers have to assume several roles, and students are often deprived of much-needed resources. The district should increase funding for schools to have social workers, professional tutors, and specialized teachers. These positions, when leveraged well, can increase supports and relationships for students.

Develop stronger feedback loops. Great ideas are often met with unexpected challenges during implementation. A stronger two-way feedback loop between school sites and local districts can help the district improve the rollout of various policy changes. At the same time, if the district shares feedback and best practices for implementation, this can improve how schools transform policy ideas into practice.

"As you navigate through the rest of your life, be open to collaboration. Other people and other people's ideas are often better than your own. Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life."

Amy Poehler, comedian

58 percent of schools identified strengthening school culture as a key factor for improving school climate.

School culture is often the driver of success. When students feel safe and supported by their peers and teachers, they engage more deeply and consequently perform better. But the responsibility of improving school culture does not fall squarely on the shoulders of school leadership. Administrators, teachers, families, and students together can help transform school culture. The schools that identified improving school culture as a priority understand that cultivating a positive school culture requires all hands on deck.

What Schools Are Doing to Strengthen School Culture

Leaning into restorative practices. Restorative justice is an approach to conflict resolution that emphasizes community-building and repairing relationships. While all LAUSD schools committed to implementing restorative justice practices in 2013 with the adoption of the School Climate Bill of Rights, the roll-out has produced mixed results. Some schools have taken creative and innovative approaches to implementing restorative justice. At a middle school in Central Los Angeles, for example, students take advantage of the Restorative Justice Room to settle conflicts or talk about issues they face in a confidential and supportive setting. The Restorative Justice Room is staffed with professional counselors to provide students with a safe space for reflection, conflict resolution, and stress management.

Understanding the whole child to teach the whole child. Teachers who make time to get to know their students holistically are better able to support the confluence of academic and personal challenges that students face. Many True Grit schools talked about the importance of building relationships with students beyond the bell and beyond the confines of the classroom. Teachers can strengthen understanding of relationships with students by attending extracurricular or school-spirit events, such as sports games and school performances. At a high school in Inglewood, teachers are encouraged to attend special life moments for their students. This integrates teachers into students' lives and communities, and incorporates students into building a culture around school pride.

If you see something positive, say something positive. Maintaining high behavioral expectations and redirecting students when they fall short is crucial to a positive school culture. Rather than over-relying on traditional "punishment," many True Grit schools are switching to positive discipline to reinforce good behavior and curb negative behavior. From reward points to grade-level awards, schools use a variety of ways to promote and incentivize positive behavior and leadership. One South Los Angeles elementary school does this by playing the "Tiger Song" (which is based on the school's tiger mascot) each morning, and giving students "Tiger Bucks" when they are observed engaging in positive acts that strengthen their school community.

How Schools Can Further Strengthen Their School Culture

Recognize and celebrate success and improvement. In addition to celebrating success through rituals like honor roll, schools can also celebrate those who demonstrate considerable improvement, possess school spirit, or embody the school's core values. Schools should make these celebration rituals consistent and frequent to reinforce the value of improvement and success.

Put your community to work for your students. When schools bridge the gap between real-world application and in-class content, learning comes alive for students with diverse learning styles and interests. By partnering with local organizations, schools can increase the diversity of programming they offer to students. When students have the opportunity to intern, network, shadow, and learn from local partners, their skills, relationships, and connections are strengthened.

Improve teacher training. Teaching can feel like an isolating profession, but professional development allows teachers to learn and grow together. Many of the schools surveyed cited a need for more relevant professional development focused on implementing techniques and strategies that support positive classroom environments—from behavioral management to making rigorous new standards accessible for all.

Give teachers more time to plan. Students who face greater challenges require greater collaboration and support. By carving out time for inter-departmental, grade-level, and cross-grade interactions, teachers can share best practices and work together to create a network of support for students. One middle school in Northridge takes an intentional approach to creating opportunities for teachers to interact. Teachers meet in collaborative, small learning communities with their grade-level teams on a weekly basis to discuss their students. Teachers use this time to work together to create discipline plans and connect students and families with external social services.

How Policymakers Can Help Schools Strengthen Culture

Learn from and partner with teachers as policy practitioners.
Because teachers are at the "front lines," they often have great insight into what is and isn't working as policy gets implemented on the ground. By studying teacher implementation of key school climate policy shifts, policymakers can better understand what to invest in and divest from; what to scale and tweak; and what to radically overhaul.

Invest in support staff to improve implementation. While teachers work passionately to help their students thrive, they cannot do it alone. Teachers require a team of support staff (e.g., nurses, librarians, counselors, social workers, janitors) who help create the right conditions and support networks to help our students engage more deeply at school. These staff positions are not nice-to-haves; they are essential to meeting the needs of students and maximizing the impact of teachers.

"You can't make positive choices for the rest of your life without an environment that makes those choices easy, natural, and enjoyable."

Deepak Chopra, American philosopher

School Climate

Partnering with Families and Community to Improve School Climate

33 percent of schools identified partnering with families and the community as a key factor for improving school climate.

The most influential adults in a child's life are often teachers, parents, and family members. The impact and influence of these adults can be multiplied when they are moving together in the same positive direction. Schools with vibrant family and community partnerships are more informed, responsive, and embraced. The schools that identified this factor as key to their success are working harder to create and operate systems that enable staff to forge and leverage partnerships and resources to benefit their students. Putting in the time and effort to create these partnerships pays off in the long term for students, staff, families, and the community.

What Schools Are Doing to Partner with Families and Community

Meeting parents where they are, in order to go farther together. Schools have gotten creative about ways to interact with parents as individuals. This can empower parents with information and skills to be partners in their child's education. Some True Grit schools offer parents new and convenient ways to partner with the school, including opportunities like regular "coffee-hour chats" with the principal, workshops on college readiness standards, parent-run parent centers, and digital platforms that enable parents to engage more flexibly and conveniently. A high school in east L.A. created a "Family Action Team," composed of family, staff, and community leaders who develop workshops and school events together.

Getting off on the right foot. Communication is essential for building a sense of trust and partnership. This helps parents understand that their voices are valued in the school and, in turn, draws them further into school involvement. In one South L.A. elementary school, teachers discuss academic success with parents prior to the start of the school year. And an East L.A. high school has counselors conduct home visits to incoming ninth graders to discuss high school expectations and tips for success.

Knowing the community you are reaching and teaching. To better understand the lives of the students they serve, some schools have staff visit students at home. This enables staff to better understand the context and circumstances facing our students, which is key to identifying and leveraging a student's strengths and honestly tackling their key challenges. Open community meetings are held every fourth Tuesday at an elementary school in South Los Angeles. Community members use the space to share updates on changes, challenges, or opportunities in the community, and educators do the same with regard to the school.

How Schools Can Partner More with Families and Community

Be more available to families. Informing families about their children's education is essential for increased school engagement. Therefore, schools should offer alternative times for families to be involved that work with their schedules.

Talk to parents about available resources. Many parents are not aware of the available resources that could assist their child in school. In order to better serve children, schools should host community fairs that showcase all the organizations and services relevant to students.

Communicate through many channels. One of the biggest challenges for schools is increasing parent engagement, as they often struggle to get in contact with parents. Schools have to know which forms of communication will most successfully reach parents—from landlines to text and email.

How Policymakers Can Help Schools Partner with Families and Community

Incentivize and recognize teachers who go beyond the bell and the classroom. District leaders and administrators should leverage leadership roles and career pathways to recognize, leverage, and compensate teachers going above and beyond to serve students outside of school hours.

Invest in a district alumni strategy. Many True Grit schools called out the power of having alumni from our district engage in public speaking, mentoring, and tutoring around the importance of college readiness. Given the research-based impact of these programs in supporting college-going and endurance rates among students who would be the first in their families to graduate, LAUSD should invest in a similar strategy. The district should build a strategy and platform that enable schools to easily connect with alumni for school speaking, mentoring, tutoring, or other volunteer opportunities.

Invest in a network of community partnerships. Several schools featured in this report talked about the importance of building relationships with local organizations and businesses as a way of connecting students to more people and resources. City elected officials should consider having or reviving an "adopt a school" program that ensures that all schools in LAUSD have at least one adopted partner who will help connect the school with greater resources and support.

"Wherever I go, I bring the culture with me so that they can understand that it's attainable."

Jay-Z, hip-hop artist
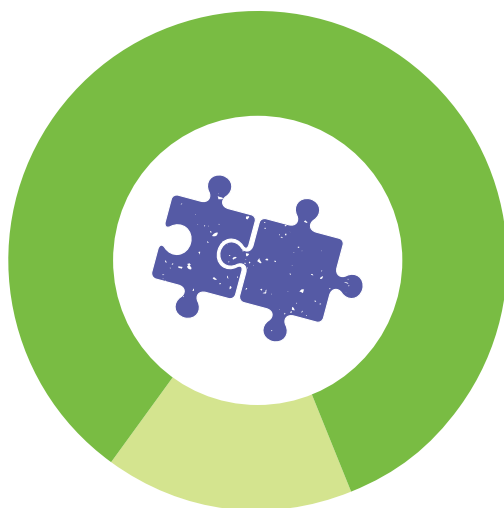
TRUE GRIT

Schools Improving College Readiness

84 percent of schools surveyed identified working smarter together as a key factor in improving A–G readiness.

It takes a village not only to raise a child, but to propel a child to college and beyond. Key parts of this village are the schools that are increasing the number of students taking and passing courses required for college. These True Grit schools are taking students farther by working together as a cohesive team.

What Schools Are Doing to Work Smarter Together

Making professional development inspiring and relevant.
Diverse and meaningful professional development should include granting teachers the autonomy to lead professional development sessions for their peers. A high school in central Los Angeles uses a mini-symposium model for professional development in which each teacher has the chance to share his or her lessons and expertise during different sessions. This model allows teachers to learn from one another and fosters a community of collaboration and respect.

Teaming up with teachers and academic counselors. At many True Grit schools, information about A–G requirements is reinforced by both academic counselors and teachers. They work together to identify and support students in order to ensure their enrollment and success in A–G courses. For example, counselors at a high school in Downtown Los Angeles team up with teachers during staff meetings to share data and develop action plans to support individual students.

Constant contact can shrink the distance between high school and college. Teachers at True Grit schools consistently work together and check in with students to ensure enrollment, success, and completion of A–G courses. Staff members collaborate in order to identify students who are not on track to complete their requirements, and work on early intervention methods and individual graduation plans. A day school in Valley Glen holds weekly meetings where the entire staff, including the psychologists and support staff, work to identify students who need more intervention and then brainstorm strategies to address those needs.

Giving children and youth second, third, and fourth chances to succeed. Administrators and teachers develop systems and protocols to create a variety of opportunities for students to catch up on A–G courses when necessary. This ensures that more students have the time and ability to enroll and finish their course requirements. Some True Grit schools implement an extra period in the school day, while others offer Saturday classes, or additional after-school options for tutoring.

What Schools Can Do to Work Even Smarter Together

Plan together to achieve together. Planning and collaborating across disciplines enables teachers to align their instruction and approach in addressing student needs, which is key to reaching the ultimate goal of college readiness. Schools should leverage systems, schedules, and calendars to rethink how they use existing time and talent to respond to student needs.

Encourage friendly competition. While competition does not motivate everyone, it can—when structured properly—foster a sense of curiosity, focus, excitement, and celebration for success. When structuring internal competitions among staff or students, the school should be very clear about the kinds of behaviors and outcomes they want to incent and reward.

Be parent friendly by being easily accessible. Communicating with parents regularly and through various channels can help ensure that families have a thorough understanding of how to support their children in meeting A–G requirements. Administrators, counselors, and teachers should create more time and channels for communication, so that parents can stay engaged and informed about college readiness.

How Policymakers Can Help Schools Collaborate

Streamline professional development. Professional development practices vary greatly within LAUSD schools, and the quality of training for teachers varies greatly as well. The district should update professional development guidelines for all schools to encourage more creative, student-focused, and teacher-led professional development.

Connect restorative justice training to college readiness. Consistently applied restorative justice practices help students build relationships, confidence, and a sense of responsibility for their actions and community. This creates the foundation upon which students can learn, achieve, and be prepared for college. Districts should introduce more cohesive and universal restorative justice training to ensure that teachers and staff know how to build this foundation for learning.

Increase school support staff. Additional support staff at schools would ensure that students receive adequate academic guidance and emotional support, while also enabling teachers to focus more time and effort on the creation and delivery of college-ready instruction. Greater investment in school support staff—including guidance counselors, coaches, and social workers—makes possible a constellation of strategies needed to close the college readiness and access gap.

"There are essential elements for our public schools to fully develop the potential of both students and educators. They should be centers of community, where students, families, and educators work together to support student success. They should foster collaboration."
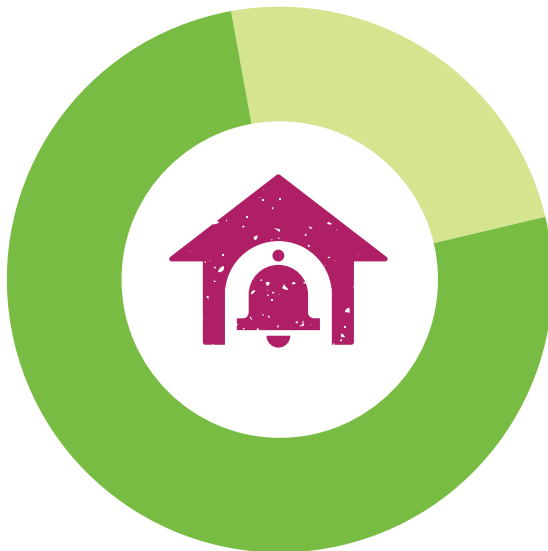
Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers

#2 TRUE GRIT FACTOR:
A–G

Strengthening School Culture to Increase A–G Enrollment

76 percent of schools identified strengthening school culture as a key factor for improving A–G enrollment.

When we raise expectations and improve supports for students, we are ultimately telling youngsters: *You are worthy. You are capable.* To do this, we must shift cultural assumptions, biases, and internalized beliefs about who can and should go to college. Most of the schools in this report that made gains in college readiness focused on school culture by directing their beliefs, systems, and people toward the north star of graduating students eligible for admission to our state's colleges and universities.

What Schools Are Doing to Strengthen School Culture

Building time, culture, and conversation around college readiness. Schools emphasize building a culture centered on college attendance. This culture sees postsecondary education as an expectation, not just an option, and focuses on providing time and resources for students and parents to understand the college application process. As a result, schools stress A–G requirements through various strategies. Schools utilize A–G workshops for parents and students, allot time for college applications, and develop programs specifically for first-generation prospective college students. This increased emphasis on A–G requirements ultimately leads to greater A–G enrollment and completion. One high school in South L.A. puts on an event called "Cash for College," where students come with parents (and all their documents) to sit with a tutor to fill out all of the FAFSA documents. This process resulted in 99 percent of their seniors being enrolled into two-year or four-year college.

Assembling a quilt of supports for students. Culture by itself is not enough to ensure greater A–G enrollment. In order to address the emotional and psychological barriers facing students, schools often provide wraparound services to address the academic and emotional needs of students. Addressing the basic psychological and emotional needs of students enables them to focus on academics, college, and their futures. A junior/senior high school in Eagle Rock has grade-level counselors who move with their classes from seventh to twelfth grade, fostering deep relationships and connections with the students. Teachers know exactly which counselor to contact when there is an issue, which allows for clear communication and teamwork.

Opening the lines of communication. It takes teamwork, navigation, and constant communication to understand where a student is or is not on the road to college. Schools utilize centralized data and communication hubs (such as user-friendly websites and social networks) to share information among faculty, students, and parents. By creating a space where students and parents can clearly see what is required in order to fulfill A–G requirements and graduate, these schools make it easier for their students to correct their course and reach the destination of college admission.

Celebrating the milestones on the journey to college. Schools publicly celebrate student achievement and success to reinforce and reward college readiness. Events such as honor roll recognition, school spirit events, monthly assemblies, and individual rewards communicate that academic success is not only appreciated but celebrated. If students look forward to going to school, they are more receptive to communication on A–G requirements from teachers. At a middle school in southeast L.A., students visit three universities by the end of eighth grade. All students get a tour of college campuses, where they learn about entry requirements and collect "college facts" by writing down essential information as they go through the tour.

Going the extra mile to be extra ready for college. Extracurricular activities, especially those emphasizing leadership, help students stay engaged and knowledgeable about college preparation. Perhaps equally important, extracurricular programs give students an outlet outside of academics. By providing a variety of options for students, schools empower them to determine their own path in high school, and tailor A–G requirements to their own needs. Students involved in dance or other creative arts through extracurriculars, for example, can use that experience to fulfill the A–G visual and creative arts requirements.

Strengthen School Culture

How Schools Can Further Strengthen Their Culture

Align school mission to college. Greater alignment between school mission and college can help teachers connect their students' lessons and work to A–G workshops and support programs. True Grit schools want more allotted time for staff bonding, faculty discussions, teacher-led events, and extracurriculars focused on college readiness.

Increase family engagement and understanding of A–G. If parents are not engaged or informed about their child's academic standing, they cannot be the needed advocates or partners in their child's journey to college. True Grit schools often noted that events targeting parents tend to suffer from poor attendance. Engagement is a two-way street: Schools must be more flexible and creative in engaging parents or guardians, who can in turn be more proactive about engaging in their child's school.

Deploy more time and resources to more vulnerable students. Meeting A–G requirements is about supporting youth through enrollment, participation, and successful completion of college-ready coursework. Several schools suggested implementing after-school programs that would allow students to receive additional academic and A–G requirement assistance. Furthermore, tutoring services should be offered as a source of mentorship and encouragement to struggling students currently enrolled in A–G classes.

Engage A–G alumni as role models. If students can see a clear path from their classroom right now to the college or career in their future, they are more likely to invest in academics. Thus, many schools suggested greater alumni engagement through outreach to alumni or legacy families, or starting an alumni tutoring program.

How Policymakers Can Help Schools Strengthen Culture

Customize aspects of goal-setting for individual schools.
While schools understand the need for districts to set broad goals for critical indicators like graduation and college readiness, they also want more flexible and realistic goal-setting that takes into account a school's demographics and available resources. Plans for improving A–G enrollment and achievement should be customized to the unique needs and realities of each school, while also guaranteeing equity and access for all students.

Involve teachers in more talent development functions. Along with staff support, schools called for greater teacher involvement in district processes such as hiring, observing, training, and evaluating other teachers. Involving teachers in these critical elements of how instruction is delivered can increase their stake in the school and district mission, build teamwork, and improve retention.

Fund more college counselors. Low counselor-to-student ratios (554 students to one counselor) hinder a school's ability to get more students ready for college and enrolled. College counselors, especially A–G counselors, bring awareness of postgraduate educational opportunities and provide critical information and needed support. Investing in more college counselors will help guide a greater number of students through A–G requirements and the college application and financial planning process.

"The learning process is something you can incite, literally incite, like a riot."

Audre Lorde, poet

Partnering with Families and the Community to Improve A–G Enrollment

Nearly **25 percent** of A–G schools surveyed identified partnering with parents and the community as a key factor in improving A–G enrollment.

Though their individual contributions are essential to student learning, teachers cannot and should not work alone. Students need a network of supportive adults who together provide mentorship, resources, instruction, cheering, and, at times, tough love. The schools featured in this report spoke about the opportunity and challenge of building a supportive network for students.

What Schools Are Doing to Partner with Families and the Community

Being flexible and firm. To reach a common destination, families and schools need to be on the same page. This may require schools to be flexible and accessible to truly reach families. A handful of schools offer frequent parent–teacher conferences with flexible hours to explain A–G requirements at convenient times for families. For example, a high school in South L.A. offers meeting times for parents throughout the day to explain how A–G works at their school.

Investing in community outreach. Teachers already have a lot on their plates in the classroom. Some schools have recently created a new position that serves to bridge the gap between parents and staff regarding student performance. A middle school in Woodland Hills, for example, appointed a parent and community engagement coordinator who holds weekly workshops with parents on how to help students succeed academically.

Helping to "school" parents on A–G. Parents, regardless of their education achievement level, often want to build their knowledge and skills so that they can help their child achieve in college and beyond. To help parents, some schools offer courses that teach about different learning styles, college admission requirements, and the skills required to fulfill A–G requirements. For example, a middle school in Huntington Park provides a 10-week course of this nature that receives recognition from the California State University system.

Partnering with your nearest college. Local communities are invested in student success. Schools leverage their connections with these communities to expose students to higher learning institutions and advanced classes. In one Los Angeles high school, students can take college courses that support A–G as early as freshman year, allowing them to earn an Associate of Arts degree by the end of high school.

What Schools Can Do to More Deeply Partner with Families and Communities

Use technology to reach and teach parents. Parents with busy schedules still need a channel to flexibly engage with their child's school. Greater accessibility and consistency in school online resources can provide a quick, easy way for parents to get involved and stay up to date on their child's progress with A–G.

Increase partnerships and internships with the local community. An increase in organizational partnerships would expand student resources in the community. While there are several schools that already visit colleges on field trips, they could further leverage these partnerships by developing mentorship programs with current college students. Likewise, engaging with local businesses and organizations for activities like "Career Day" can demonstrate the value in obtaining a college education.

Be proactive with parents. Keeping parents updated and informed on their children's A–G progress should not come up only when problems or setbacks arise. Schools should leverage technology to develop systematic procedures for contacting parents early and regularly, regardless of student performance.

How Policymakers Can Help Schools Partner with Families and Communities

Invest in a broad parent communication platform and strategy.
Getting into college requires support and advice from the adults in a student's life. Local districts should systematically communicate college admissions requirements and timelines to all parents in their jurisdictions, ensuring that this information is uniformly distributed across all of their schools.

Adopt student-led parent conferences. When students are allowed to run their parent-teacher conferences, they are prompted to inform their parents about their goals, progress, and learning style. This format helps empower students, who are the critical link between the teacher and parent. Districts should introduce and train all principals on how to use this innovative format and approach in their schools.

Learn more from schools. School districts can invest in a research and development arm that goes out to schools to study the community engagement strategies at work in schools that are improving college readiness. A great example of this practice is the True Grit report you are reading right now!

"Our nation's oldest sin and deepest crime is the isolation of minority children—black children in particular—in schools that are not only segregated, but shamefully unequal."

Jonathan Kozol, author

#4 TRUE GRIT FACTOR:
A–G
Making Data Dynamic to Increase A–G Readiness

12.5 percent of schools identified making data dynamic as a key factor in improving A–G readiness.

Dynamic data is an underutilized tool for educators to support their students and ultimately increase A–G enrollment for schools. Many True Grit schools use data from a variety of sources to gain insight about students. These educators have learned how to make data a source of true power for teachers, students, and parents.

What Schools Are Doing to Make Data Dynamic

Taking a holistic approach to data. A student's academic experience is more than just test scores. Attendance, behavioral records, and performance growth are all essential to understanding students and their needs. By adopting a holistic approach, educators can modify their own instruction appropriately to maximize A–G readiness. For instance, a high school in Sun Valley looks at PSAT, SAT, and A–G data, in addition to attendance, tardies, and referrals. When data is incomplete or inaccurate, school leadership is proactive about identifying and addressing any missing parts of the data puzzle.

Helping students see the big picture with data. Students may feel disconnected from the policy decisions made at the administrative or district levels. One way to combat this disconnect is for teachers to show data to their students and explain the connection between data trends and the decisions made. This can show students how the school and district are working in concert.

Using data early and regularly. Oftentimes, families do not realize their child is falling behind at school until the end of the academic term. By that point, it may be too late to improve their grades and keep them on track to meet all requirements. To prevent this, schools can regularly analyze data and send progress reports, so problems can be addressed constructively. Continuous data analysis enables teachers, students, and parents to effectively intervene, change course, and/or celebrate progress. At a high school in Highland Park, counselors meet with seniors at the beginning of the year to plan out their whole year, and set expectations around meeting with every senior twice each semester.

Designing individualized A–G plans for students. Every student has a unique set of strengths and challenges. Data can help teachers better understand and teach students as individuals. Giving students individualized goals related to attendance or course completion can provide them with direction and show that the school cares about their personal academic experience. A high school near Downtown L.A. uses data to inform individualized instruction. Teachers look at Lexile scores for differentiation of instruction and heterogeneous grouping, so they can group in teams and learn from peers with diverse skill sets.

What Schools Can Do to Make Data More Dynamic

Use data to identify gaps in teaching, not just learning. Teachers use many different curricula to cover wide-ranging content for students. At times, some content may fall through the cracks without teachers realizing it. If educators can identify the standards and skill areas where students struggle, they can adjust their curricula accordingly to fill those gaps.

Continue collecting data after graduation. For many schools, the data collection process ends when students graduate. Schools that continue to collect data after graduation have a better understanding of how prepared their students are for college and the workforce. If a school realizes that its students have high college matriculation rates, but low college graduation rates, they can make adjustments. But schools can identify that problem only through continued data collection.

Make data more friendly, accessible, and actionable. Many teachers have expressed positive reactions after using data to inform their instruction, but not all teachers may have access to useful data. Schools should ensure that all teachers can easily access and interpret data collected by the school.

Make time for more celebration. Teachers spend much of their time intervening when students are struggling, but it is equally important to recognize and celebrate students when they are succeeding. By regularly analyzing different types of data, educators can identify and celebrate the bright spots in our schools. Schools can hold a short assembly or create a bulletin board to celebrate students meeting their individual monthly goals. Celebrating student success reinforces student success.

How Policy Leaders Can Help Schools Make Data Dynamic

Spend less time finding data and more time using data. Teachers have a lot on their plates: creating lesson plans, meeting with students, and engaging in countless other day-to-day activities. Creating a centralized location for data can reduce the time and energy required for teachers to learn more about their students. This means less time searching through different databases and more time utilizing data to inform instruction.

Draw meaningful comparisons from data. While it may be tempting for district leaders to compare their schools' data to that of neighboring districts, it is not always productive to do so. Progress and comparative metrics should be considered carefully to ensure that they are useful for helping schools improve.

Invest in training to help school leaders, teachers, and staff analyze and use data. Closing gaps in opportunity and achievement for students will require multiple strategies, including using data to better understand, analyze, and act upon trends. Programs that offer induction and training, credentialing, and ongoing professional development should prioritize helping practitioners gain comfort and confidence using data to inform their education strategies and school budget or operations decisions.

"The number one benefit of information technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential."

Steve Ballmer, business leader

True Grit in Action
24th Street Elementary: Strengthening School Culture

The Challenge

In 2013, 24th Street Elementary underwent a massive restructuring after the implementation of California's Parent Empowerment Act (a.k.a. "parent trigger" law). Parents cited unsatisfactory teacher attendance and preparation, concerns around the safety and cleanliness of school facilities, and perhaps most importantly, consistently poor academic performance. They felt that our school was not meeting the foundational elements of quality public education: giving students a safe, clean, and stable place to learn and achieve.

All stakeholders faced the challenge of both learning and complying with new structures, responsibilities, and circumstances of the whole-school restart. Some stayed to help forge the change. Most of the new teaching staff was composed of current or recent graduates, who were navigating a variety of unfamiliar professional duties in conjunction with the specific conditions of the transformation. Similarly, while highly qualified and knowledgeable, several of the leadership team had been assigned to new roles and were tasked with both developing and guiding the systemic shifts in our school. Students, many of whom exhibited severe behavioral and academic needs, had to adjust to the various abrupt changes in school culture, expectations, and protocols. As a result of their previous school experiences, many students and their families understandably approached the new school personnel and organization with considerable caution and, in some cases, distrust.

Our Solution

To help turn around our school culture, we employed the following strategies:

- School administration and leadership dedicated professional development time to both communicating and guiding the co-development of a clear mission and vision for the school, which were strongly rooted in principles of social justice. Administrators ensured opportunities for constant feedback and reflection on the implementation of this vision. Common language and schoolwide behavior initiatives were established and consistently practiced. One such example is a values-based system called PRIDE: Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Discipline, and Excellence. This system served as a code of conduct for all members of our school community.

- Teachers fostered strong professional learning communities through regular scheduled and unscheduled meetings. These meetings were used to develop common goals, calibrate progress, and solve problems. We participated in purposeful, strategic observations of our peers, with the intent to discover, review, and/or refine standard baseline best practices. In addition, some teachers took initiative to research and implement practices in teaching socioemotional skills and applying restorative justice principles.

Our Impact

24th Street saw the following gains in school climate in the 2015–2016 school year:

- Rates of suspension decreased by 14 percent.

- 76 percent of staff reported feeling satisfied with our approach to school climate and discipline, up 8 percent since our school transformation.

"My students know that as they shake my hand each morning, they are being welcomed into their professional learning community, where we support each other in reaching high expectations."

Ms. Worley,
24th Street Elementary

True Grit in Action

Franklin High School: Making Data Dynamic to Improve College Readiness

The Challenge

It's not enough to simply communicate a belief that college is possible and attainable for our students. We need to get real about the problem and set realistic and achievable goals. At Franklin High School, we noticed that A–G enrollment was not high. Naturally, in order to adequately prepare students for college and their future career paths, we had to increase the number of students enrolled in and passing A–G courses. To meet this challenge, we had to better understand who was and was not taking A–G courses and why. We met with students on an individual basis to have conversations about their A–G plans, options, and goals. This level of individual analysis helped us better understand and tackle this challenge.

Our Solution

To improve our understanding of this problem, we began connecting our students and counselors early on in the A–G curriculum to identify where students were in their A–G journey. Sadly, some were very far behind. Awareness of this reality was key to opening lines of communication to inform students about their options and opportunities. It was also critical to ensuring that students, parents, and teachers understood the importance of passing A–G courses with a C or better, as that is the lowest benchmark universities and colleges accept. Our students were deeply invested in this process, as well: the Associated Student Body (ASB) Leadership created an online data tool to gather students' reflections on the school's high failing/D rate in A–G courses. After synthesizing the data, the ASB published their findings in the school newspaper to be shared with their peers.

Once we had a better sense of where our students were struggling and succeeding, we began implementing schoolwide strategies to guarantee that our students were A–G ready. These strategies included the following:

1. A pre-orientation to ensure that all students were enrolled in the correct A–G courses before the school year even began;
2. Partnering with outside organizations such as the Upward Bound Program at Occidental College that offers A–G courses to students;
3. Providing enrichment opportunities through initiatives like the Jaime Escalante Math Program; and
4. Creating a whole-school calendar to confirm that all students were seen by their academic counselors at least twice a semester.

Additionally, our counselors monitored the progress of students toward the goals in their plans and provided positive encouragement through public recognition and rewards. It was not unusual for a student to be presented with an award during homeroom, in front of classmates, or at schoolwide assemblies.

While guidance counselors led the charge on communications and outreach, teachers initiated implementation in our classrooms. We met and discussed common issues, trends, and pass rates at our department meetings and designed class supports to help students pass. For example, we expanded tutoring hours to better meet the needs of the students and created a system to offer them more opportunities to make up or retake assignments and assessments. We also monitored the progress of students who had been doing poorly in the past to ensure that they turned in their assignments and had the individual support they needed. And for students who struggled to meet the goals in their plans, we redoubled our efforts by building interventions and a safety net for students who did not initially pass A–G classes with a C or better. This safety net included additional time and tutoring, and more intensive outreach and strategies, like credit recovery, online courses, and core waiver classes. The goal throughout was to build a cohesive team, as well as multiple communications channels and strategies, to reach each student.

Our Impact

As a result of these and other efforts, our school saw the following key gains in college and career readiness in the 2014–2015 school year:

- 26 percent increase in students who enrolled in courses required for UC/CSU admission

- 19 percent increase in graduates who passed all courses required for UC/CSU admission

"I care deeply about my students and the issues that affect them and their communities. I validate and affirm my students' cultural backgrounds and life experiences, which I use as powerful scaffolds for learning. I am also part of their socioemotional support system to help them succeed in my class and in life."

Mr. Covarrubias,
Franklin High School

True Grit in Action

John H. Francis Polytechnic High: Working
Smarter Together to Improve School Climate
and College Readiness

The Challenge

It can be difficult for large urban districts like LAUSD to see and meet the unique needs
of each school and community. This can create a gap between those designing policies
and those of us working on the ground level with students. A top-down approach to
district policymaking can also fail to tap into the creativity and insights of those working
on the front lines of our schools to better prepare our students for college and careers.

Our Solution

A team of teachers decided to take more ownership and responsibility for the fate of JHF
Polytechnic High. We became a pilot school, which allowed us to have greater autonomy
from some district and union policies. We crafted our own vision, mission, and working
agreements that would enable teachers to collaboratively create school culture, key
protocols and rituals, programs, and curriculum to meet the needs of our students. One
such innovation is a "hybrid teacher-leader" role, which enables a teacher to teach part-
time and also take on a key leadership role in our school. This innovative position enabled
leadership decisions to be more responsive to the needs of teachers and students and
allowed us to creatively leverage our teachers as experts. These hybrid teacher-leaders play
a unique role in our school. They facilitate working groups that bring teachers together
to collect and analyze data, design professional development and instructional supports,
create individualized education plans, and align curriculum across grade levels and subjects.

One benefit to building this leadership capacity among teachers is that we have the
ability and time to think deeply about trends and design creative solutions. For instance,
two of our hybrid teacher-leaders developed a class that combined AP Government and
AP Research, two courses that were in high demand among students. They co-created
the curriculum and developed a class that enabled students to efficiently apply research
skills to analyze government issues and prepared students to take both AP exams. The
inspiration for this idea came from teachers seeing the trends in data and coming together
to solve problems and unlock opportunity for our students.

Our Impact

JHF Polytechnic High saw the following key gains in A–G in the 2014–2015 year:

- 33 percent increase in students who enrolled in courses required for UC/CSU admission

- 20 percent increase in graduates who passed all courses required for UC/CSU admission

Our school saw the following key gains in school climate in the 2015–2016 school year:

- Rates of suspension are now zero percent, which represents a decrease of 5.4 percent.

- 92 percent of staff reported feeling satisfied with our approach to school climate and discipline, up a whopping 73 percent since our school transformation.

"I am serious and even-tempered. I scurry from one student table to the next, giving unsolicited feedback, because I see everything as a rough draft, an opportunity to always do and be better."

Mrs. Nellon,
JHF Polytechnic High Math/Science Magnet

True Grit in Action

116th Street Elementary: Partnering with Families and the Community to Strengthen School Climate

Challenge

Building a culture of reading is key to the practice of learning. In order for students to become critical thinkers and writers, they must become critical readers. But in order to become readers, our children need easy access to books. While 116th Street provided books that students could check out at our library, we needed a way to cultivate a passion for reading—at home and in school—among our students. This would be tough, for two big reasons. First, many students do not have access to books at home, and as a result they see reading as a "school activity" rather than a "life activity." Second, not only do student families struggle to find the resources to pay for items like books, so too does our school, which has a limited budget and many competing expenses. We recognized that if students owned their own books, it would be a first step to creating a culture of reading. The challenge was finding the resources for every student to own their own books.

True Grit Strategy

Our school partnered with Reading Is Fundamental, a program covering grades K–3. The organization provides new books at a significantly lower cost than the market value. Finding and funding books was the first task, but promoting the books was perhaps the even tougher and more important task. To promote reading the new books, we held thematic assemblies about the notion of reading the types of books available. Teachers created thematic costumes so students could dress as pirates or other fun characters. Each year, students accumulated a different set of books. In doing so, they were essentially building their own home libraries. A student who is with us for their entire elementary school experience would graduate with a library of 18 books. This is one of many examples of how our school leveraged the community and its resources to foster a mindset and culture of learning within our campus.

Our Impact

Our school saw the following gains in school climate in the 2015–2016 school year:

- Rates of suspension are now zero percent, which represents a decrease of 2.2 percent from previous year.

- 84 percent of staff reported feeling satisfied with our approach to school climate and discipline, up 19 percent from the previous year.

"If you walk by my classroom, you'll probably hear my students repeat my mantra: 'I don't want the first one done, I want the best one done.' I am constantly reminding my students that learning is not a race, but a practice."

Ms. Bass,
116th Street Elementary

Closing Thoughts

E4E-LA's True Grit ritual began in 2013 as a simple solution to a challenge we often encountered as teachers. There are more than 1,000 schools in LAUSD, and many share common challenges—why shouldn't they share solutions? Wouldn't it be great if the school struggling with school climate could learn from those who are innovating and improving their campus culture? Wouldn't it be great if the schools that were struggling with academic achievement could learn from those that were beginning to take students academically farther faster? And wouldn't it be great if we celebrated not just the high achievers, but the ones doing the gritty work of turning around their campuses? We hope our True Grit Report provides a space for this type of questioning, learning, and celebrating.

At the end of the day, however, we don't believe any report alone can change practice. It is what you do after reading this report that will change how we create more welcoming schools for our students that prepare them for success in college and in future careers. As such, we encourage you to put down this report, visit and learn from some of our True Grit schools, and begin experimenting with new ideas.

"We've spent three years studying grit, which I now believe is truly contagious—educators pass on the pursuit of grit and growth to their colleagues and their students."

Ama Nyamekye,
executive director, Educators for Excellence–Los Angeles
Former 10th-grade teacher

Appendix

SCHOOL	📖 A–G ♡ SCHOOL CLIMATE	REGION
116th Street Elementary School	♡	S
24th Street Elementary School	♡	E
61st Street Elementary School	♡	S
Academies of Education and Empowerment at Carson High School	📖	S
Animo Watts College Preparatory Academy	📖	S
Arroyo Seco Museum Science Magnet School	📖	E
Orchard Academies 2B: Arts & Media Academy	📖 ♡	S
Avalon Gardens Elementary School	♡	S
Chapman Elementary School	♡	S
Charnock Road Elementary School	♡	W
Cohasset Street Elementary School	♡	N
Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts	📖	E
Diego Rivera Learning Complex: Public Service Community School	♡	S
Downtown Magnets High School	📖 ♡	E
Eagle Rock High School	📖 ♡	E
East Valley Senior High School	📖 ♡	N
John H. Francis Polytechnic High School	📖 ♡	N
Benjamin Franklin High School	📖 ♡	E
Gardena High School	♡	S
George Ellery Hale Charter Academy	📖	N
Henry T. Gage Middle School	📖	S
International Studies Learning Center (Span School 6–12)	📖	S
Jack London Community Day School	📖	N
John F. Kennedy High School	📖	N
Magnolia Science Academy 8: Bell	📖	S
Linda Esperanza Marquez High School	📖	S
Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez High School	♡	E
Middle College High School	📖	S
Narbonne SH-Humanities & Arts (HArts) Academy of Los Angeles	📖	S
Northridge Middle School	♡	N
Orchard Academies 2C: Global Studies & Technology Academy	📖 ♡	S
Paul Revere Charter Middle School	📖	W
Porter Ranch Community School	📖	N
San Pascual Avenue Elementary School	♡	E
San Pedro High School	📖	S
Sonia Sotomayor School of History and Dramatic Arts	📖	E
Sun Valley High School	📖	N
Sunrise Elementary School	♡	E
Virgil Middle School	♡	E
Westminster Avenue Elementary School	♡	W
Windsor Hills Math/Science/Aerospace Magnet School	♡	W
Youth Opportunities Unlimited Alternative High School	♡	S

MAKING DATA DYNAMIC (19)	WORKING SMARTER TOGETHER (17)	STRENGTHENING SCHOOL CULTURE (9)	PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY (1)
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Appendix

Table of Community Nonprofits Working on School Climate or College Readiness

Though not extensive or exhaustive, here's a list of places where you can go to start learning more about A–G college readiness and advocacy.

Organization	Mission
Alliance for a Better Community afabc.org Los Angeles	ABC advocates for policy changes that will create improved outcomes for Latinos throughout the region. ABC has three primary focus areas: Education, Health & Wellness, and Economic Development.
Center for Powerful Public Schools powerfuled.org Los Angeles	We build the capacity of educators to create and sustain powerful public schools that prepare every student for college, career, and life.
Community Coalition cocosouthla.org South L.A.	Community Coalition works to help transform the social and economic conditions in South L.A. that foster addiction, crime, violence, and poverty by building a community institution that involves thousands in creating, influencing, and changing public policy.
Inner City Struggle innercitystruggle.org East L.A.	Our mission is to build a powerful and influential movement of youth and families on the Eastside of Los Angeles to promote healthy, safe, and nonviolent communities. The Eastside comprises the communities of Boyle Heights, unincorporated East Los Angeles, El Sereno, and Lincoln Heights.
Mexican American Legal Defense Fund maldef.org U.S.A.	MALDEF strives to implement programs that are structured to bring Latinos into the mainstream of American political and socioeconomic life; provide better educational opportunities; encourage participation in all aspects of society; and offer a positive vision for the future.
United Way of Greater Los Angeles unitedwayla.org Los Angeles	We're on a mission to permanently break the cycle of poverty for our most vulnerable neighbors: low-income families, students, veterans, and the homeless. And by focusing on education, housing, and financial stability, we can attack poverty at its roots to ensure better lives for all Angelenos.

Though not extensive or exhaustive, here's a list of places where you can go to start learning more about school climate and restorative practices, advocacy, and services.

Organization	Mission
Alliance for Boys and Men of Color allianceforbmoc.org California	The Alliance for Boys and Men of Color is a coalition of change agents committed to improving the life chances of California's boys and young men of color. The Alliance includes youth, community organizations, foundations, and leaders in government, education, public health, and law enforcement.
Brothers Sons Selves Coalition bsscoalition.org Los Angeles County	Eleven community-based organizations working together to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color by advocating for positive alternatives to suspension and reducing criminalization in communities of color.
CADRE cadre-la.org South Los Angeles	A community-based, independent, parent-led organization that makes parent power a strong, organized, and permanent force to be reckoned with.
Californians for Justice caljustice.org California	CFJ is a statewide grassroots organization working for racial justice by building the power of youth, communities of color, immigrants, low-income families, and LGBTQ communities. Led by students, we organize to advance educational justice and improve our social, economic, and political conditions.
California Conference for Equality and Justice cacej.org/cause/restorative-justice California	CCEJ's work focuses on a broad range of "isms"—the manifestations of discrimination and oppression. To confront and overcome these challenges, CCEJ maintains an abiding commitment to work with decision-makers and leaders to support their work in building a more inclusive and safe society.
Center for Powerful Public Schools powerfuled.org California	We build the capacity of educators to create and sustain powerful public schools that prepare every student for college, career, and life.
Community Coalition cocosouthla.org South L.A.	Community Coalition works to help transform the social and economic conditions in South L.A. that foster addiction, crime, violence, and poverty by building a community institution that involves thousands in creating, influencing, and changing public policy.
Fix School Discipline Coalition fixschooldiscipline.org United States	Fix School Discipline is a comprehensive resource for students, parents, teachers, principals, community leaders and organizations, school superintendents, and anyone else interested in learning about eliminating harsh, push-out discipline practices and putting in place solutions that work.
Inner City Struggle innercitystruggle.org East L.A.	Our mission is to build a powerful and influential movement of youth and families on the Eastside of Los Angeles to promote healthy, safe, and nonviolent communities. The Eastside comprises the communities of Boyle Heights, unincorporated East Los Angeles, El Sereno, and Lincoln Heights.
Los Angeles Education Partnership www.laep.org Los Angeles	Los Angeles Education Partnership is an education nonprofit that works as a collaborative partner in high-poverty communities to foster great schools that support the personal and academic success of children and youth from birth through high school.
LAUSD Discipline Foundation Policy achieve.lausd.net/Page/11927 Los Angeles County	The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to providing safe classrooms and healthy environments conducive to learning and free from disruption for all students.
Partnership for Los Angeles Schools partnershipla.org South L.A.	Our mission is to transform schools and revolutionize school systems to empower all students with a high-quality education. We have accelerated student achievement while scaling successes across our network and beyond.
Youth Justice Coalition youth4justice.org Los Angeles County	YJC is working to build a movement of youth, family, and formerly and currently incarcerated people to challenge America's addiction to incarceration and race, gender and class discrimination in Los Angeles County's, California's, and the nation's juvenile and criminal justice systems.

For far too long, teachers have been treated as subjects of change rather than as agents of change.

Founded by public school teachers, Educators for Excellence is a growing movement of over 25,000 educators, united around a common set of values and principles for improving student learning and elevating the teaching profession. We work together to identify issues that impact our schools, create solutions to these challenges, and advocate for policies and programs that give all students access to a quality education.

Learn more at **E4E.org**