Not Present, Not Accounted For: Trauma, Learning, and School Discipline

How to Create Buy-in for Change
How did this emerge as a critical issue for us?

- Campaign for Grade Level Reading
- Issue of Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
- What are the factors that keep kids out of school in general?
What are ACES?

• 1. Recurrent physical abuse
  2. Recurrent emotional abuse
  3. Sexual abuse
  4. An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
  5. An incarcerated household member
  6. Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
  7. Mother is treated violently
  8. One or no parents
  9. Emotional or physical neglect

• Other Factors: witness to violence, chronic poverty, shame
How Do Children Respond to ACES?

• Withdrawal/Flight

• Acting Out/Fight

• Paralysis/Freeze

• De-Valuing
Occam’s Razor

• ACES are:

• Greatest single predictor for attendance, behavior, and health
• Second strongest predictor after Special Education for academic failure

Relationship between academic achievement and health status appears to be more strongly related to ACES than to income
Inoculating Against ACES

• Conditions that support health and well being
• Critical for everyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, or income
• Attend to protective factors
• Build resilience
• Utilize Trauma Informed Care
• Build buffers that provide support and coping strategies
What Does This Mean?

• Support parents in caregiving with specific information, tools, and strategies
• Build kid’s ability to identify and regulate emotions
• Intentionally teach social skills
• Provide healthy outlets and develop competencies in arts, exercise, group activities
• Take timely action if there is a concern
How do we help kids achieve this?

- Hope, trust, and a sense of belonging
- Attachment to a caring adult
- Ability to express feelings and calm oneself
- Learn to sense triggers that create negative behaviors and accept ownership of behaviors
- Learn responsibility, problem solving, and decision making
- Learn to ask for help and accept help
- Learn to show appreciation and empathy
- Learn to self-advocate and develop self-esteem
- Develop friendships and share something important
- Develop a sense of control
- Work as a team and give back to the community
- Master a skill and experience success
How do Adults Factor In?

Model appropriate behavior
Model problem solving skills
Set clear expectations and rules
Establish consequences
Teach youth self-discipline and responsibility
Assign chores to give youth responsibility
Have regular check-ins with youth
Let youth know they are loved
Let youth know you are available to help
Help youth express their feelings
Help youth develop problem-solving skills
Help youth appreciate cultural and ethnic heritage
Give youth choices
Respect youth’s ability to make decisions
Allow youth’s experience of success and failure
Resilience Initiative

• The Flexible Framework is a Universal Design approach that guides the development of learning environments able to accommodate individual needs in building resilience in children and cultivating support safe and welcoming schools. The intervention would affect all members of the school community—students, teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents.
Resilience Initiative cont’d

• Pilot in targeted schools
• Build on work with Joe Ristuccia from MassAdvocates, train all adults through Joe’s presentation
• Train 12-25% of teachers (the Core) in targeted schools Lesley University Curriculum; of these identify one per school as a trainer
• Train parents and youth development workers in modified Lesley Curriculum
Resilience Initiative cont’d

• Work with Clark University to create a community of practice
How are we building an authorizing environment for change?

- Partnership with Latino Education Institute
- *Not Present, Not Accounted For* Initiative
- Forum in May of 2013
- White Paper with Executive Summary (for distribution) and recommendations
- Op Ed pieces
- Program with Joel Ristuccia and MassAdvocates for Children x 2
- Individual Meetings with School Committee members, opinion leaders, other critical stakeholders
- Ongoing, shared work with District Administration
- Language shift to *resilience* from *trauma*