School Scheduling and Teaching Practices Related to Improving Student Achievement

CREATE SMALL GROUP, CARED-ABOUT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS. This practice is essential for the most alienated students in our schools!

BALANCE WORK LOAD of STUDENTS; pay special attention to homework and independent work expectations. **BALANCE WORK LOAD of TEACHERS.**

ASSIGN STRUGGLING STUDENTS to TEACHERS who MAKE IT DIFFICULT for students to fail but also who INSIST THAT STUDENTS DO HIGH QUALITY WORK by providing FOCUSED FEEDBACK and having students RE-DO WORK UNTIL THE WORK IS ACCEPTABLE. Provide students with daily opportunities to read, write, discuss, debate and re-write! Institutionalize a ZAP (zeroes aren't possible) policy in the school. Address major attendance policies with modified make-up requirements; offer support/tutorials to assist students in completing "missed" work.

OFFER ELECTIVE CLASSES that build FOUNDATION and COMPETENCIES for CORE Classes. Consider SREB materials. (www.sreb.org)

ALTER POLICIES and GRADING PRACTICES that focus on "SORTING AND SELECTING" rather than TEACHING and LEARNING!

PROVIDE SUPPORT for Students. Provide time in the Master Schedule for **TUTORIALS.** For some students this assistance is more productive if provided by the teacher(s) responsible for the initial instruction.

PROVIDE SCHEDULES that REDUCE FAILING TIME for Students and that ALLOW SHORT-TERM ACADEMIC GOALS to be MET.

BUILD SCHEDULES BASED ON STUDENT NEEDS/DATA.

PROVIDE EXTENDED LEARNING TIME for high-failure courses and for struggling students. Institutionalize this practice; do not just assume individual teachers will or can do it!

OFFER FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING of CORE CLASSES for struggling students; schedule essential core classes that begin at various times during the school day/year. For some working students a power English class might begin at 10:00 a.m., and run for three blocks of time for 30 days. This schedule is equal to a year's work and can provide a full credit. Such schedules reduce the failing time that many students experience in traditional schedules.

INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THEIR LEARNING. Use technology extensively. Let students work in cooperative groups to solve problems and to complete difficult work assignments. Use real-work examples/problems. Try to give assignments that have meaning to the students and the world in which they live.