



UP Education Network Educational Philosophy

We humbly believe that we are taking on some of the most essential work in U.S. public education today: bringing the highest quality K-8 schooling to historically underserved students. To date, we've focused our work in Massachusetts, where we've committed to restart chronically underperforming schools and improve them until they are truly extraordinary. Our work is not complete until every scholar in each of our schools has the knowledge, skills, and strength of character to succeed on the path to college. We must create an unbreakable foundation of academic, emotional, and social learning for all of our students, by the time they complete 8th grade, that will carry them through high school and into higher education and career. In order to do this work:

We commit to serving all students. When we say "all students," we mean absolutely all students. We do whatever it takes to serve students throughout the school year regardless of their level of need. For our scholars with the most complex and severe learning needs, we recognize that creating a path to higher learning and independence is also a key part of this mission. We always focus our thinking and our practice on what we can do better to support *our* scholars in *our* school building, not somewhere else. We also seek to maintain student populations that mirror the pre-turnaround state of our schools or operate schools according to the open enrollment rules of districts. This means that we are privileged to serve many special education students and English Language Learners at all of our schools.

We commit to building teams of hard-working, effective, and diverse educators who embrace a common approach to achieving our mission and who believe that anything is possible. We believe that our educators must be able to build bridges and connect in meaningful ways with our diverse student body. Our scholars should have the opportunity to see themselves in the faces of our educators; as such, we must ensure that our school teams come from varied racial, ethnic, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds. We are nothing without incredible people, and we must do whatever it takes to recruit, retain, and develop our educators.

We design and sustain schools that:

Engage in transformative teaching. Many of our students enter our schools multiple grade levels behind; as such, our teaching must rapidly close gaps, address unique needs, and propel all students towards the absolute and rigorous expectations of the standards. Our teachers must become content experts and sharp analyzers and responders in the classroom in order to help every scholar meet these expectations. Our teaching must inspire a love of learning in all our scholars. We must ensure that our students build an intrinsic thirst for knowledge and develop a strong sense of intellectual independence. Our teaching of content must also merge with the teaching of social habits so that our scholars can be prepared to navigate the complex and sometimes inequitable structures of this world. This inspiring task may also require multiple approaches to ensure that we reach every single student in our buildings. To that end, we commit to finding multiple paths to the same destination.

Build positive school cultures which prioritize high expectations and joy. We believe that high expectations help create an environment that is conducive to engaged learning and true intellectual freedom. Because

we often restart schools with unstable learning environments, we prioritize school safety. Students feel secure and are most successful when clear structures are set and consistently maintained throughout the school day. We believe that students need to be held to high behavioral standards measured by a constructive and clear consequence and reward system (e.g., merits and demerits); these expectations allow scholars to practice social skills that will help them achieve their goals of success in high school, college and the complex world beyond. We ensure that scholars understand that our expectations of them will lead them on a path to being engaged citizens that will positively shape the world around them. Our safe and orderly school climates enable students to take positive risks, discover their passions, and achieve success. Through joyous routines and strong relationships, we seek every possible opportunity to celebrate our scholars' achievement in ways that build our students' confidence, sense of worth, and love of learning.

Execute our systems with precision. We restart schools that are often lacking structure. As such, investing the time it takes to build, implement, and maintain strong systems helps ensure that every student in every classroom has the same opportunity to be successful in our schools, and that we can take advantage of every minute that we have with our scholars. Our students are most likely to advance on the path to college and be successful in our schools when we build systems to support all facets of what it takes to make a school truly extraordinary. The details matter; we must get the details right if we want our schools to run on time, our facilities to speak to the importance of our mission and to inspire our scholars, and our scholars and staff to have the resources they need to succeed.

Partner with our families and the communities in which we work. Because many of our families do not choose our schools in the restart context, we must work especially hard to give them a voice in their scholars' education. No one knows our students like their families. We cannot achieve our shared vision for their students' future if we do not engage in authentic and meaningful relationship building. Our families must feel heard and valued in this work. They entrust us with their students every day. We must earn that trust and showcase - through our words and actions - that it is an honor to serve them and their students. We must also work to be active participants in our communities by forging partnerships with local organizations. We must aim to be more than just a school in the neighborhood; we must become a source of pride and a trusted member of the community. This is essential to our mission.