



# ***BUILDING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE***

**Ben Burnett, Ph.D**

**William Carey University**

**Howard Savage, Jr. Ed.D**

**Quitman High School**





Dabo Swinney-Dec. 30, 2018

after beating Notre Dame 30-3

**“Players come and go-coaches  
come and go, but our *culture stays  
the same*”**





## OPENING ACTIVITY

### WALLET/PURSE INTRODUCTIONS

- 3 to 5 participants will pull an object out of their wallet or purse, which represents them and explain why.





## TOPICS OF CONVERSATION

- **What is School Culture?**
- **Positive vs Toxic School Culture?**
- **Role of the Leadership in Creating a Positive School Culture**
- **Strategies for Sustaining a Positive School Culture**
- **Inspiration for 2019-2020**





# *What Is School Culture?*





## DEFINING CULTURE

Culture is defined as  
the school's personality  
(Hofstede, 1997)





## *Definition of Culture*

In short, Terrence Deal, author and professor at Vanderbilt University, explains, "*It is the way we do business here and clarifies what is important and what is not.*"





# Why Is School Culture Important?

What research tells us:

**“Positive learning can only take place in a positive culture. A healthy school culture will affect more student and teacher success than any other reform or school improvement effort currently being employed.”**

**-Gary Phillips**







# *Charateristics of Positive School Culture*





POSITIVE  
SCHOOL  
CULTURE





*CHARACTERISTICS  
OF CULTURE*

- Appreciate what you have-are thankful
- Focus on the **TEAM**
- Accept blame





## CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

- **Welcome and support new teachers**
- **Celebrate accomplishments**
- **Build positive relationships**
- **Focus on priorities**



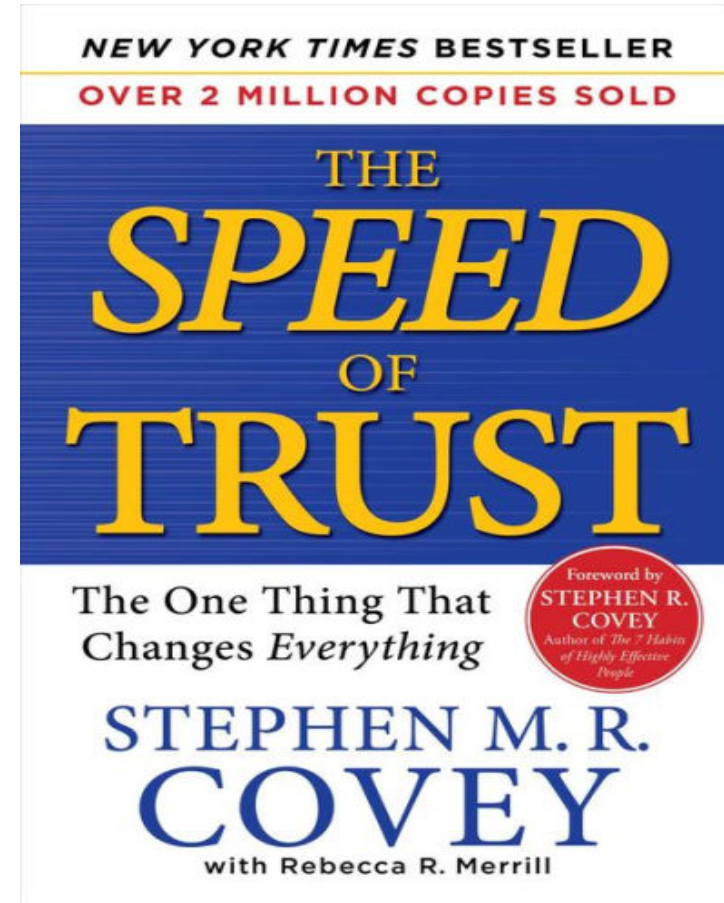


**MORE  
CHARACTERISTICS  
OF CULTURE**

- James 3:18 - Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness
- Display GRACE and TRUST
- Place equal value of all students, parents, co-workers
- If you want to be big enough to lead, you have to be small enough to serve



Suggested Reading





## SHAPING POSITIVE CULTURE

- Work with the informal network
- Recount stories and history
- Communicate core values in your actions
- Use ceremonies and celebrations to recognize accomplishments
- **Changing culture takes TIME!**



How long does it  
take to **change**  
**culture?**

- With a carefully planned transformation leveraging all of these dimensions, your organization can **feel very different** within 12 months. Consistency and persistence however are needed so that you don't declare victory too soon – remember your people are watching and waiting to see whether this is for the long haul.

<https://blog.walkingthetalk.com/busting-the-myth-how-long-does-it-really-take-to-change-your-culture>



# How long does it take to **change** **culture**?

- **Number of Employees**    10   100   1,000   10,000   100,000  
**Year to complete change**   1   2   3   4   5
- **The speed of culture change depends on size, commitment, and resources.**
  - **The size of the organization**— with fewer people to involve, small companies change faster than big companies.
  - **The commitment of the top leaders** to walk the talk. If leaders show by their actions that they are committed to the change, employees and managers will quickly join them. If leaders delegate the task, little will change.
  - **The resources available.** Developing a work culture takes a little extra time. If the operational needs are too demanding, if there simply is no time to meet and discuss the culture, it may be best to wait.
- <http://companyculture.com/314-how-fast-can-culture-change/>



# *Charateristics of Toxic School Culture*





TOXIC  
SCHOOL  
CULTURE





## TOXIC SCHOOL CULTURE

- **Wish you were somewhere else**
- **Focus on yourself**
- **Blame others**





## TOXIC SCHOOL CULTURE

- **Judge each other**
- **Low expectations**
- **Complain**
- **Gossip**





## TOXIC SCHOOL CULTURE

- Negative Values and beliefs
- No Shared sense of purpose
- Negative Relationships.
- Destructive individuals or groups.
- No sense of trust or caring.
- Few positive rituals or ceremonies to build a sense of community and hopefulness.

Deal and Peterson (2009)





*Role Of The Leadership In Creating A  
Positive School Culture*





ROLE  
OF  
THE  
LEADER

*“The leader is the key person in developing trust, both by demonstrating it him/herself and in fostering a culture of trusted relationships.”*

~M. Fullan







## CULTURE AND EFFECTIVENESS

“At a deeper level, all organizations, especially schools, **improve performance** by fostering a shared system of norms, folkways, values, and traditions. These infuse the enterprise with passion, purpose, and a sense of spirit.”

(Peterson and Deal, 2002)





# COMMITMENT

- Levels of commitment
  - Commitment
  - Compliance
  - Resistance
  - Disengaged
- Building commitment
  - Model it for others
  - Be honest about costs and rewards
  - Let others voluntarily participate





# LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

- **Timely identification of mistakes**
  - Requires psychological safety
  - Blameless reporting systems
  - Statistical process controls and feedback
- **Effective analysis**
  - Regular debriefings and evaluations
  - Example: Airline crashes
- **Deliberate experimentation**
  - Create a culture of innovation, risk taking, and expected failure





TRUST  
IS  
A  
MUST

*“The biggest dilemma facing all leaders with moral purpose is what to do if you don’t trust the competence and motivation of the people you are expected to lead.”*

~M. Fullan





## TRUST OF CAPABILITY

- Respect people's knowledge, skills and abilities
- Respect people's judgment
- Surround yourself with excellence
- Develop others
- Support people in learning new skills
- Involve others and seek their input





## BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS

- 🔑 **Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with focus on learning**
- 🔑 **Time for collaboration built in school day**
- 🔑 **Teams focus on key questions**
- 🔑 **Produce team norms and guidelines**
- 🔑 **Products of collaboration are made explicit**



What Google says about TEAMWORK





## ADVANTAGES OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

- Gains in student achievement
- High quality solutions to problems
- Increased confidence of all staff
- Teachers able to support one another's strengths and accommodate weaknesses
- Ability to test new ideas
- More support for new teachers





Suggested  
Reading

Proven Principles and Practices  
*That Make  
Great Teams Great*

THE  
**POWER**  
OF A  
**POSITIVE  
TEAM**

**JON GORDON**  
Bestselling Author of *The Energy Bus* and  
*The Power of Positive Leadership*



Promote school  
spirit





## KEY WAYS CULTURE IS MANIFESTED

- What hallways and classrooms look like.
- Relationships among staff.
- How newcomers are treated.
- Relationships between staff and administration.
- How students who are struggling are treated.
- Relationships with parents and the community.
- How staff collaborate to improve the school.
- How successes and accomplishments are celebrated.





# *Strategies For Building A Positive School Culture*





**STRATEGIES  
FOR  
BUILDING  
SCHOOL  
CULTURE**

- Individual Meetings With Students and Teachers
- Individual Graduation Plans
- Push Academic Numerical Data
- Establish Academic and Behavioral Competitions





## STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING SCHOOL CULTURE

- Implement PBIS system classroom and schoolwide
- Use social media for branding purposes
- Great teachers and students with spirited hello or high five daily
- Clear up misconceptions about college vs careers





*Inspiration For The 2019-2020  
School Year*





**LEAD  
BY  
EXAMPLE**







RETAINING  
QUALITY  
EMPLOYEES

■ Refer to *Article*:





## CLOSING ACTIVITY



### Remind Me



- Participants will complete a School Culture Survey form about his or her school and place it in a self addressed envelope to be sent by presenters within 2 to 3 months after the start of the 2019-2020 school year.





# *Contact Information*





# SOCIAL MEDIA

- [bburnett@wmcarey.edu](mailto:bburnett@wmcarey.edu)
- Facebook-@WCUSOE
- Twitter-@WCU\_ED
- Instagram- wcu\_edu
- Website: [www.wmcarey.edu](http://www.wmcarey.edu)
- LinkedIn-Ben Burnett, Ph.D.





# SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Facebook- howard savage**
- **Twitter- howardsavagejr1**
- **Linkedin- howard savage, jr. Ed.D**
- **Instagram- principal\_savage**
- **Pinterest- howard savage, jr.**
- **Youtube- principal savage**

