WHAT DRIVES NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS TO THE TOP?

Review of the
KEY DRIVERS
reported by 2016 applicants revealed that regardless of schools' public or non-public status, size, level, locale, percentage of disadvantaged students, or diversity
65% attributed their success to STUDENT SUPPORTS or INSTRUCTION

1. **34%** — **STUDENT SUPPORTS**
   e.g., whole child education, school culture, family engagement
2. **31%** — **INSTRUCTION**
   e.g., data-driven instruction, student-specific instructional support, project-based instruction
3. **23%** — **SCHOOL STRUCTURE**
   e.g., collaborative culture, strong leadership, effective teachers, partnerships
4. **12%** — **CURRICULUM**
   e.g., ELA, STEM, college and career readiness

within each KEY DRIVER
some practices stood out as especially strong

1 STUDENT SUPPORTS

WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

Oak Grove School, Green Oaks, IL

Social Emotional Learning instruction provides students, families, and staff with dedicated time focused on empathy, compassion, and creating a positive environment.

Anna Reynolds Elementary School, Newington, CT

Promoting positive citizenship and school climate are reinforced by using a kindness "Bucket Filling" strategy.

Springfield Estates Elementary School, Springfield, VA

Deliberate teaching of social and emotional skills and values during daily Morning Meeting strengthens student-teacher connections individually, culturally, and developmentally.

SCHOOL CULTURE

York Suburban Senior High School, York, PA

High standards and expectations are never put forth without a plan to support and encourage students. Teachers talk about growth as much as achievement.

Devinny Elementary School, Lakewood, CO

A growth mindset framework encourages teachers to model resilience, showing students that through perseverance, mastery of learning will occur.

New Mexico School for the Arts, Santa Fe, NM

In Ninth Grade Academy freshmen learn how problem-solving, perseverance, endurance, and collaboration apply to their academic classes as well as their art studies.

2 INSTRUCTION

DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION

Thornhill Elementary School, Oakland, CA

Creating, implementing, and analyzing Focal Student Plans in reading allows teachers to identify proficiency levels and develop instruction and intervention plans.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Westlake High School, Westlake Village, CA

Students have daily access to Academic Support Centers that utilize a peer tutoring model.

Pickering Valley Elementary School, Chester Springs, PA

Applying an 8-step cycle for using data drives building-centered goals, grade level goals, small-group goals, and individual student goals.

Mesa Elementary School, Clovis, NM

Analyzing data at the classroom and grade level allows teachers to reflect on their own teaching, resulting in more effective instruction.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, Louisville, KY

Teachers and parent volunteers help students lacking strong family support complete assignments.

Rosemeade Elementary School, Carrollton, TX

Daily "Roadrunner" time involves students in differentiated instructional groups for remediation or enrichment.

3 SCHOOL STRUCTURE

COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Edison Computech 7-8 School, Fresno, CA

Facilitating consensus-based management, the campus is interconnected through team committees and utilizes proposals and simple voting to ensure ownership, accountability and buy-in across stakeholders.

St. Joseph Catholic School, Marietta, GA

Constant collegial communication provides faculty the opportunity to improve instructional practices and the flexibility to introduce new, creative, and exciting programs.

STRONG LEADERSHIP/EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Bald Creek Elementary School, Burnsville, NC

A 9-year turnaround has changed the school philosophy, vision, personnel, curriculum, instruction, student expectations, technology, parent involvement, and the facility.

Avoyelles Public Charter School, Mansura, LA

The application process for new teachers includes an interview to determine if they will love a child enough to invest their time and talents to make a difference and inspire a student to reach their potential.

4 CURRICULUM

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Barrington High School, Barrington, RI

A writing program's emphasis on integrating text-based evidence into informational and argumentative writing assignments has improved students' ability to read, comprehend, and write about complex texts across all core subjects.

Big Apple Academy, Brooklyn, NY

Students performance in ELA has improved due to a signature Vocabulary Acquisition Program that includes vocabulary blocks, activities, and weekly/monthly assessments.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Southern Columbia Area High School, Catawissa, PA

Although small, the school's partnerships with local universities and community colleges have enabled it to enhance the curriculum and offer post-secondary credit.

Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology, Lawrenceville, GA

A required 4-year internship experience includes a rigorous career day, a job readiness workshop, semester and yearlong internships, and student presentations.

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