



Building a Culture of Hope: Enriching Schools With Optimism and Opportunity

By Robert Barr, Emily L. Gibson

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Research demonstrates that children of poverty need more than just academic instruction to succeed. Discover a blueprint for turning low-performing schools into Cultures of Hope! The authors draw from their own experiences working with high-poverty, high-achieving schools to illustrate how to support students with an approach that considers social as well as emotional factors in education.

Benefits

- Understand the relevance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to K-12 education.
- Discover tested strategies behind the success of high-poverty, high-achieving schools.
- Access surveys that gauge the temperature of your school's culture.
- Integrate the world of jobs and professional careers into academic curriculum.
- Support students with tools to envision and plan for the future.
- Define processes for building consensus and increasing collaboration.

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Editorial Review

Review

In the era of high-stakes testing and accountability ratings, Barr and Gibson provide educators with a much needed dose of humanity. This book does more than provide a shot in the arm for schools and students who lack hope; it provides a theory, structure, and methodology for any school struggling to inspire underserved students."

Anthony Muhammad, educational consultant, author of *Transforming School Culture* and *The Collaborative Administrator*

All children, regardless of race or wealth, want to feel safe and secure, to be loved and experience a sense of belonging, and to become competent and capable. As educators, our moral obligation is to create the context and conditions to meet these universal needs so that each of our graduates is college, career and life ready. Bob Barr and Emily Gibson provide a pragmatic road map for systemically building a culture of hope in our public schools and classrooms. Today, more than ever, we need new constructs that connect people, purpose, and passion through transformative practices, recognizing the interdependency of relationships and results.

Steven T. Webb, Superintendent, Vancouver (WA) Public Schools

If we don't believe that the American dream is dying, this important book reminds us it is chronically ill. Barr and Gibson highlight the tragic failure of education to respond to the growing achievement gap between rich and poor, then give us clear directions for turning those schools into gateways out of poverty. Take an honest look around. Then use some of the authentic instruments and surveys in this essential resource. The time for action is now. --Alan Boyle, director, Leannta Education Associates

About the Author

Robert D. Barr, PhD, is recognized as one of the nation's leading experts on reaching and teaching children of poverty and minority students and helping high-poverty schools become high-performing ones. He is an educator, speaker, author, and emeritus analyst with the Boise State University Center for School Improvement. Bob has keynoted hundreds of state, regional, national, and international conferences and has provided workshops for schools, school districts, and state departments of education in every area of the United States. He has helped high-poverty schools in more than forty states improve student performance.

Escaping poverty and realizing the American dream are a part of Bob's personal story. His grandparents were migrant workers, and the overriding values of his family were hard work, thrift, and the abiding belief that if you kept at it, life would get better. When Bob was in the fifth grade, he cashed in his school banking account so the family could use the \$48.00 to buy a mule. Through hard work and sacrifice, his parents saved enough to buy an acre of land, then eight acres, and finally, their dream, a 150-acre ranch in the cedar breaks and rolling hills of Glen Rose, Texas.

Bob has been selected for the National School Boards Association's prestigious Meet the Expert sessions at their national conferences twelve times and has received three national awards for Distinguished Achievement. He has been a guest on the PBS program *Firing Line*, *ABC Evening News*, and the Fox television show *The O'Reilly Factor* and has been quoted in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. In addition, he has provided expert testimony to the U.S. Congress and a number of state legislatures and often serves as an expert trial witness. Bob has served as professor and director of teacher

education at Indiana University, dean of the Oregon State University College of Education, and dean of the Boise State University College of Education.

Emily L. Gibson, EdD, has worked in rural, high-poverty schools since she began teaching in 1992. Her research interests include educating children from poverty, equity and access to quality education, differentiated instruction, school improvement, writing instruction, and classroom and school community. A fellow of the National Writing Project, since 1997 Emily has provided regular professional development in writing instruction for K-12 teachers as a teacher-consultant with the Redwood Writing Project. In 2002, she started Blue Heron Middle School, a charter school for students in grades 6-8 who were struggling to find success in more traditional middle-school settings.

Raised primarily by a single mom with health issues, Emily grew up on welfare, AFDC, and Medi-Cal, yet her childhood home was filled with laughter, creativity, and a passion for learning. But school was not a place where she felt belonging, hope, or safety. Instead, she experienced bullying and the social stigma that came with being a low-income child. She made it through high school with the help of her biology teacher, who called her Dr. Gibson, and her equine friends at a stable down the road, who taught her about hard work, responsibility, and love. During her high school years, she mucked stalls, carried feed, brushed horses, cleaned tack, and rode in the pacific coast rain. Working two jobs, she put herself through college.

Emily's doctoral work focused on parent and student perceptions of differentiated instruction and charter schools. She has also earned a second BA in Psychology and an MA in education with an emphasis on differentiation, brain-based instruction, and parent involvement. Emily is the co-author of Graduate School Learning Curves: McNair Scholars' Postbaccalaureate Transitions, with Scott Willison, PhD, published in *Equity & Excellence*

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