Welcome!
Name a time you felt truly heard as a high school student.
(Drop answer in the chat)

Uncovering Root Causes Together
Identify, develop, and implement strategic actions

GRAD Partnership Community of Practice
February 20, 2025

THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP
Advancing Student
Success Systems

GRADPARTNERSHIP.ORG

Our Mission

Partnering with communities to use **high-quality student success systems** so that schools are empowered to graduate all students ready for the future.

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GRAD Partnership Organizing Members

What You'll Gain

- Proven tools and strategies to foster data-driven decision-making.

- Insights on centering student experiences in your improvement work.

- Practical approaches to designing, testing, and refining solutions.

- A collaborative space to reflect, learn, and grow.

Facilitation Team

Jazmin Fermin
Network for College Success

Data Strategist

Andrea Cortes
Network for College Success

Transformation Coach

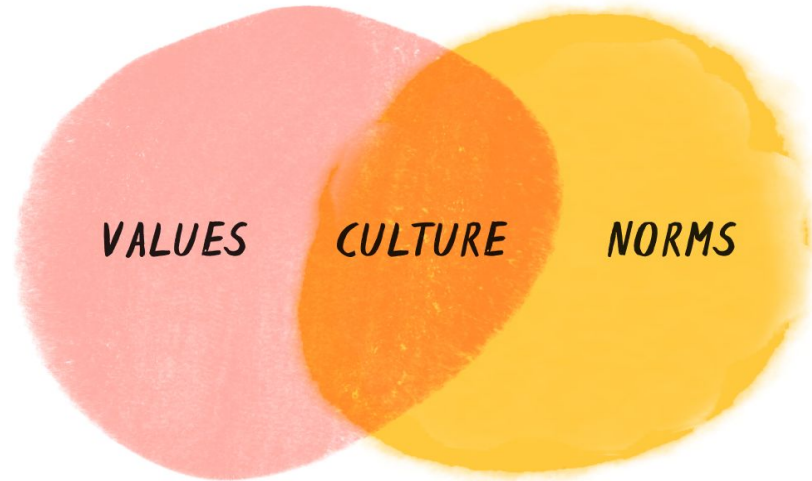# GRAD Partnership Community Members

Welcome!

In the chat, please share your name, organization, and location.

Community Agreements

- **We, not me**: Share stories and air time
- **Accept non-closure**
- Chatham house rule: **Use the ideas, keep details in the community**
- **Share to learn**
- **Make room for joy**

VALUES   CULTURE   NORMS

Values are the beliefs, philosophies, and principles that drive a group.

Norms are the ground rules that dictate how people interact.

Culture is the interaction between the two; the beliefs and the behaviors of the group.

Community of Practice Learning Arc 2025

Jan 23

Uncovering Root Causes Together

Identify, develop, and implement strategic actions and supports to address root causes

Mar 20

Reflect to Refine and Sustain Success

Evaluate the use and impact of the actions and supports, and decide whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon a strategy

Unlocking the Power of Data to Drive Student Success

Setting the Stage for Data Conversations

Harness the power of data and implement meaningful, student-centered strategies to improve student success in your schools.

Feb 20

Design Strategic Student-Centered Actions
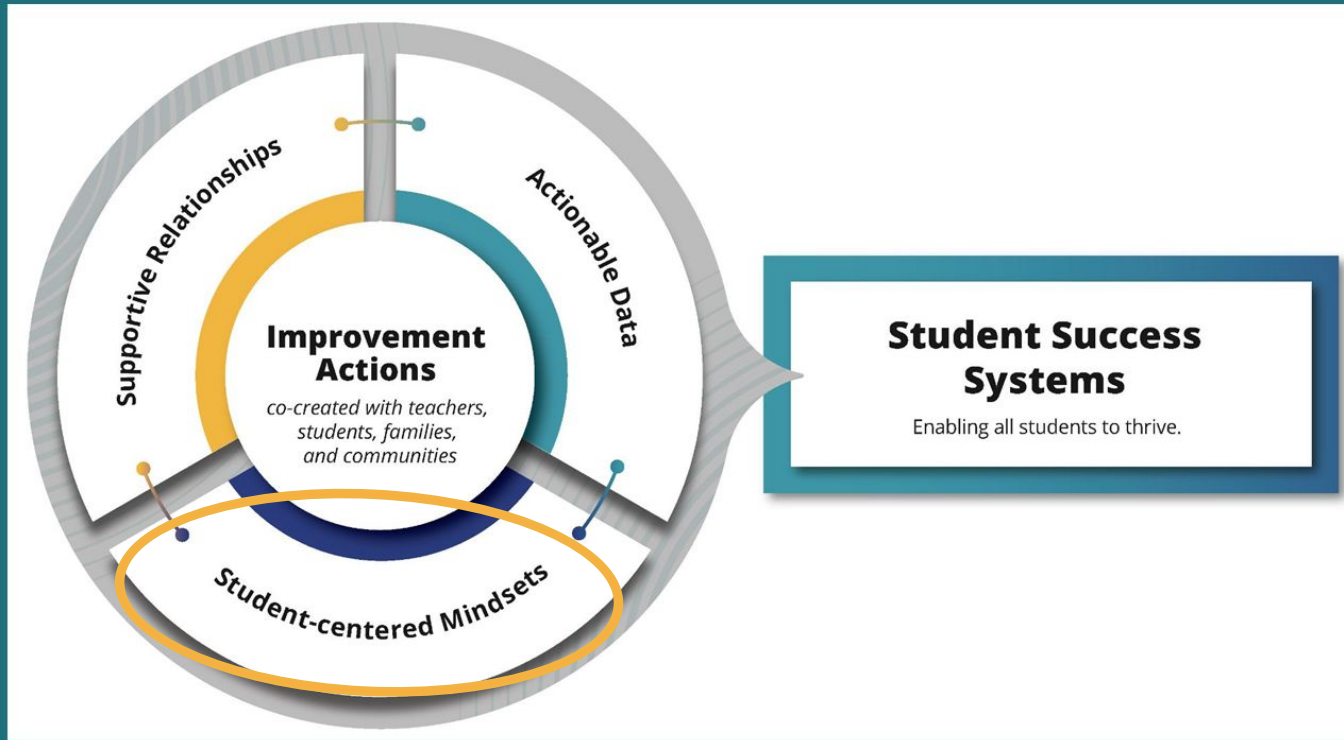
Turn insights into manageable, impactful actions.

Apr 24

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9

Moving Beyond Symptoms to Meaningful Action

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Student Success Systems are Next Generation Early Warning / On-Track Systems

04 SHARED SET OF STUDENT-CENTERED MINDSETS

Student Success systems work when the adults implementing them develop a shared understanding of their purpose including:

- Equity rather than injustice and unfairness
- Inclusion rather than separating and stigmatizing
- Empathy rather than judging and blaming
- Strengths- and asset-based framing rather than deficit framing
- Proaction rather than remediation

- **Belief in educator and student agency rather than thinking nothing can be done**
- Belief that good outcomes for all can be obtained, rather than thinking only some can be helped
- Improving with and together, rather than improving alone, for, or because
- **Acting based on evidence and with shared understanding rather than compliance and custom**

Engaging and supporting all students so they can graduate on a pathway to postsecondary success

Root Cause Analysis

A process for questioning assumptions when interpreting data

- Helps by:

    - Providing deeper insight into what is happening

    - Enabling more intentional decision-making

    - Allows for different perspectives to better understand the problem

    - Distinguishing symptoms from causes

Symptoms & Causes

Symptoms are what we see

Causes are what drive them

In pairs

Think about an action you/your team took to improve outcomes - What did your team consider before choosing an action to take?

Common Pitfalls in Identifying Root Causes

- Conversations focus on things that are out of one's locus of control

- Conversations jump to solutions too quickly

- Conversations are adult centered and and miss the opportunity to collaborate with students

Share in the Chat

What other common pitfalls have you noticed when identifying root causes?

Navigating Pitfalls

- Ask yourself, "what conditions are WE creating"?

- Slow down to be able to dig under the surface

- Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution

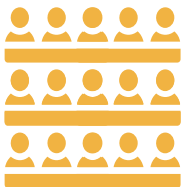Working with those affected by our practice is essential ⇨ *Students*

Student Collaboration

Allows adults to better understand what students are experiencing.

Reveals what is working and not working for students in the current system.

Ensures student perspectives, needs, and priorities are part of the process & solution.

Sends the message, "You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about the issue...

Student Voice Continuum
STUDENT POWER

← STUDENTS AS BYSTANDERS   STUDENT GOVERNANCE →

Stance Towards Youth	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Lead Together
Impact	Reproduce Inequities	Tokenization	Voice	Delegated Power	(Shared) Ownership
Goal	Provide youth with relevant information.	Gather input from youth.	Ensure youth needs and priorities are part of the process & solution.	Ensure youth capacity to play a leadership role in design and implementation of decisions.	Democratic participation and equity through shared leadership, & decision-making.
Message	*"We will keep you informed."*	*"We care what you think."*	*"You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about the issue.."*	*"Youth leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue."*	*"We cannot unlock transformative solutions without you."*
Racial Equity **BIYOC** = Black, indigenous, youth of color **Underrepresented, intersectional** = youth of color that also identify as immigrant, multi-lingual, Queer and Transgender, foster care, systems-impacted, unhoused, or as youth with disabilities	Communication materials are distributed widespread without targeted outreach to BIYOC.	Multiple rounds of widespread BIYOC engagement events and activities are conducted through a variety of methods (such as surveys, focus groups, and town halls).	Targeted engagement of BIYOC and underrepresented, intersectional youth engage in events to share their unique needs and priorities.	BIYOC and underrepresented, intersectional youth co-lead with adults to engage other BIYOC and stakeholders in the decision-making process and have some decision-making power. Training and support is provided for youth to participate meaningfully.	BIYOC and underrepresented, intersectional youth have significant or full leadership and decision-making power. They collaborate with adults as equals. Training, supports and financial resources are provided for youth to lead meaningfully.
Activities	Online information postings, fact sheets, presentations, open houses	Focus Groups/Surveys, Community Forums, Public Comment	Youth Advisory Committees, Students on Hiring Committees	Youth on school wide decision making committees or as members on boards or school site councils, youth task force, partnering with a community organization to engage and support youth	Participatory Budgeting, youth-led funding decisions, youth-led initiatives or campaigns, partnering with a community organization to have youth lead

Californians for Justice

Share in the chat

What are some ways you already engage young people in school improvement?

How could you strengthen that?

Tools for Engaging Young People to Uncover Root Causes

Empathy Interviews	5 Whys	Fishbone Diagram
One on one conversations Helps uncover unacknowledged or unmet needs of those being interviewed.	Get at the foundational root of a question and uncover multiple perspectives on the question. Ask "why" a problem exists 5 times to get to root causes that are within the sphere of influence	Arrive at a deeper understanding of a problem before jumping to solutions. Brainstorm and group related causes
Consult: Input is gathered from students on a situation	Involve: Students are part of the process in identifying root causes	Collaborate: Students are part of the process of identifying high leverage and practical responses to root causes
Collaborate with students who are most impacted by your issue		

Pair convo

What's something you can do in the next week to tap into student wisdom about a problem you are trying to solve?

Share in the chat or aloud...

What is a main takeaway from today or possible next step you are considering?

Student-centered Mindsets

Considerations and Tips	Ask yourself...
Create systems and protocols that focus on inclusion and empathy rather than stigmatize and separate students and adults	What ways do we seek to gain a holistic understanding of our indicator data, whose experiences/perspectives are considered?
Promote educator and student agency	What mechanisms do we have in place to hear from all stakeholders, especially students and teachers?
Take actions that are strength and asset based, proactive, and preventative	How are we learning from and working with students when data indicates they might need additional supports or improved learning environments?

Looking forward...

Register for March 20 CoP:
Session 3: Design Strategic
Student-Centered Actions

Subscribe to our newsletter for the
latest CoP details!

Check us out on X
@GRADpartners

Share Your Feedback!

https://bit.ly/GPCOP24-25

Grad Partnership Community of Practice

Thank you for being part of our community - and for offering honest feedback and input to help us shape our future meetings.

Thank you!

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What do Shared Student Centered Mindsets Look like?

Strength/asset-based language use when speaking about families and students	Safe practices for sharing information and ideas
Coherence between student and adult perspective of school connectedness for all	Educator and student input in idea formation, data review, and decision-making

Student Success Systems are
Next Generation Early Warning / On-Track Systems

01 **STRONG SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

Supportive relationships in all directions — school adults to students, students to students, staff to staff, school adults to parents/caregivers — provide the foundation for student and school success. High-quality student success systems both build upon and strengthen these relationships.

Engaging and supporting all students so they can graduate on a pathway to postsecondary success

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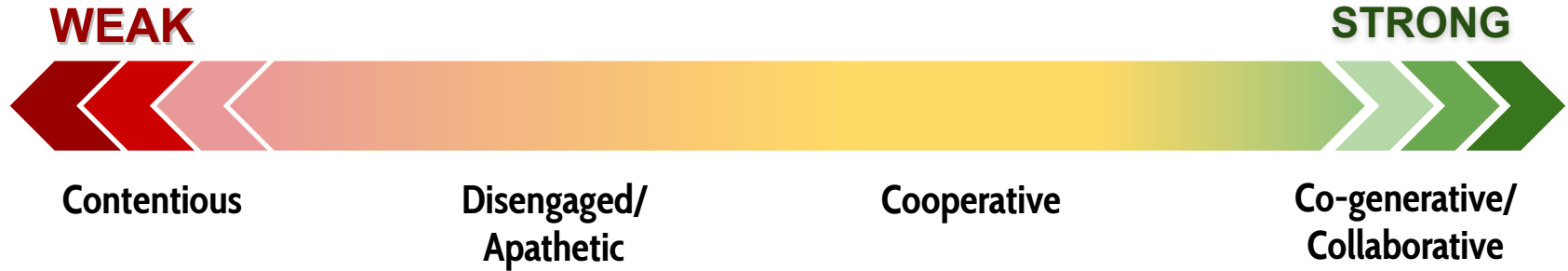## 04 SHARED SET OF STUDENT-CENTERED MINDSETS

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Quality Relationships Continuum

WEAK   STRONG

Contentious   **Disengaged/**   **Cooperative**   **Co-generative/**
                         Apathetic   **Collaborative**

Which of the four relationships in your community is the strongest?

What is contributing to that strength?

Shared Actions for Student Success

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02 HOLISTIC, REAL TIME, ACTIONABLE DATA

This data encompass:

- Research-based indicators such as attendance, course grades, and grade point averages that can predict key secondary student outcomes, including on-time, earned grade promotion; high school graduation; and college and career readiness and attainment.

These indicators are continually available throughout the school year in as real time as possible, are available at the student and teacher level, and are actionable by school- and district-level personnel.

- Information about student well-being, belonging, school connectedness, and experiences in their classrooms.

- Insights from teachers, school staff, students, and families/caregivers.

Student Success Systems are Next Generation Early Warning / On-Track Systems

03 STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS: AN ADAPTIVE ANALYSIS, RESPONSE, AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

A school-based approach to analyzing and responding to holistic, real time, actionable information that is evidence-based; student centered; adaptive to local context; and involves students, teachers, and community members in the co-design of improvement efforts. It is supported by professional learning, frameworks, and/or protocols that enable teams of adults who know students well to work collectively on a frequent, planned cadence throughout the school year to:

- Progress monitor all students using predictive indicators of well-being (belonging and school connectedness) and academic success, identifying patterns and trends that can inform action

- Use additional, real-time, user-friendly quantitative and qualitative data (including social-emotional metrics; classroom experience data; and teacher, student, and parent insights) to identify underlying causes that school actions can address

- Identify, develop, and implement strategic and effective actions and supports to address those causes

- Evaluate the use and impact of the actions and supports, and

- Use continuous improvement approaches to modify or change them as needed until proven to work.

Actions and supports can be at the district, school, grade, classroom, student subgroup, or individual levels.

Strong, Supportive Relationships

Considerations and Tips	Ask yourself...
Gather data to understand the relationship types and components that are contributing to strong, supportive relationships and use those data to make informed decisions	How do we know we have supportive relationships with each other, students, families, etc?
Reflect on whether some relationship types are stronger than others.	Which relationships are going well, which need attention?
Collaboratively identify and co-create tangible actions and behaviors intended to develop relationships.	How does our team develop supportive relationships, agency, trust, and well-being?

Student-centered Mindsets

Considerations and Tips	Ask yourself…
Create systems and protocols that focus on inclusion and empathy rather than stigmatize and separate students and adults	What ways do we seek to gain a holistic understanding of our indicator data, whose experiences/perspectives are considered?
Promote educator and student agency	What mechanisms do we have in place to hear from all stakeholders, especially students and teachers?
Take actions that are strength and asset based, proactive, and preventative	How are we learning from and working with students when data indicates they might need additional supports or improved learning environments?

Real-time, Actionable, Holistic Data

Considerations and Tips	Ask yourself...
Assess the **data you have access to**, particularly around elements that have not been historically collected such as information about student well-being, belonging, and school connectedness.	In what ways are we gathering information about student well-being, belonging, and school connectedness?
Build in **continuous improvement cycle data** to check interventions.	How frequently are we able to access and analyze student, classroom, subject-area, and grade level data on students' progress in their classes? Is it often enough for us to be proactive and influence report card outcomes?
Reflect on the availability of opportunities to **invite students and families into conversations** that can include their experiences and insights.	In what ways do we seek families' voices and insights? How are we learning from and working with students when data indicates they might need additional supports or improved learning environments?

Strategic Improvement Actions

Considerations and Tips	Ask yourself...
Routinely identify trends and patterns of student success indicators and use that analysis to inform actions.	How do our teams' actions build on students' strengths and assets, including students with unique needs?
Have a process to record what action is going to be taken, follow up on the proposed action, review the impact of the action, and modify or change, if needed.	What is our team's process for deciding what actions to take at what level (i.e. school, grade, subject area, classroom, small group, individual), based on the data and insights gathered?
Acknowledge and accept that change in practice may mean letting go of old habits and practices.	How does our team regularly reflect on the impact of the team (actions taken, number of students positively impacted) to identify areas where the student success system could be improved)?
Engage the resources of the greater school community (i.e., students, parents, caregivers, community organizations) to understand needs and craft solutions	What is our team's process for regularly communicating its work with the larger school community?

In the chat,

Think about an action you/your team took to improve outcomes - How did your team decide what action to take?