

Second Edition

TRANSFORMING SCHOOL CULTURE

*How to Overcome
Staff Division*

Anthony MUHAMMAD

foreword by ***Richard DuFour &
Rebecca DuFour***



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Introduction

A lot has changed since 2009, including the importance of school culture. The challenges facing educators have become even more daunting, and the need for staff cohesion has become even more imperative. This edition will explore the impact of internal and external factors that have provided challenges and opportunities in the development of school culture.

Public policy has a tremendous effect on school function. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) challenged the status quo of education in positive and negative ways. NCLB was replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2017, which will again have an impact on school funding. The Great Recession of 2007–2009 also impacted public policy and funding, and shaped the goals, focus, and culture of schools.

In 2009, *Transforming School Culture* provided educators with a context to understand the behaviors and motivations of their colleagues, and a road map to how to overcome clashes and division. Since 2009, more studies have validated the importance of school culture in student performance; most notably the work of John Hattie and his *Visible Learning* research in 2012. In this edition, I provide more insight into ways to transform culture in the light of the new challenges and research. The integrity of the first edition remains intact, and the second edition builds on that foundation to provide a modern context.

This second edition has the following additions and revisions.

- New insights into the four types of educators (Believers, Fundamentalists, Tweeners, and Survivors)

- An updated research base, including over thirty new references
- Connections to ESSA and CCSS
- Reflections on NCLB's impact on education
- Further guidance on what it takes to be a transformational leader and how to redirect Fundamentalists through communication, trust, capacity, and accountability
- A new chapter of frequently asked questions in regard to school culture, leadership, and the four types of educators

Chapter 1 first presents the consistent cultural reform that must take place in the U.S. public school system for schools to arm all students with the 21st century skills they need to succeed in the ever-changing world they face. After that, chapter 2 displays the framework of a modern school culture and identifies the factors—both internal and external—that make school cultural transformation difficult; when educators examine their current behaviors and their school's conditions, they can better strategize to form a healthy public school environment. Chapters 3–6 identify the characteristics that make each group's behaviors, actions, and attitudes distinct and that impact a school culture. Chapter 3 addresses the Believers, seasoned educators who make key school decisions and therefore play the largest role in achieving higher levels of student performance and satisfaction. Chapter 4 discusses Tweeners; schools must fortify the bonds built between a school and a Tweener to help growth and reform take place. Chapter 5 next considers the Survivors; their lack of good professional practice hugely impacts the quality of students' education. Then, chapter 6 covers the type of educator that poses the biggest threat to school culture improvements: the Fundamentalist. Chapter 7 shows readers how to help Fundamentalist educators drop their long-held, unintentionally toxic practices; actively reform their mindsets; and seek a more productive, unified methodology that produces greater student achievement. Chapter 8 covers practical methods that school administrators and teachers can use to foster a collective sense of purpose among leaders, teachers, and students and maintain a healthy school culture focused on student learning. Finally, chapter 9

offers answers to questions I have frequently been asked since the first edition of *Transforming School Culture* was released in 2009. These questions and answers center on school culture, leadership, Believers, Tweeners, Survivors, and Fundamentalists.

The book includes an appendix that features specific details regarding my formal and informal observations of thirty-four schools across the United States and how the behavior of the schools' staff supported or hindered student achievement.

As you delve into the following chapters, consider my hope for this book: that educators dedicate themselves to creating schools that provide guidance and support for all students. These schools, that ensure learning for all, are transformational institutions that make the community and our world a better place to live in.

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