A Place Where They Want To Be: *Schools That Focus On Students*

Dr. Mark Wilson  
2009 National High School Principal of the Year  
June 4, 2014
In our time together:

**A Place Where They Want To Be:**

1. What does it look like?
2. How do you build it?
A Place Where They Want To Be

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
Why Students Drop Out

Among the most common reasons for students dropping out:

• Did Not Like School
• Did Not Feel Belonged There
• Could Not Get Along With Teachers
• Could Not Get Along With Others
• Moved; Did Not Like New School

— Source: Dalton, Glennie, Ingels, and Wirt (2009, p.22); Dropout Indicator 29.
A Place Where They Want To Be

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
What Does It Look Like?

Students at the school are:

• Valued
• Respected
• Listened to (and heard)
• Cared for
• Challenged
• Empowered
What Does It Look Like?

Adults at the school are:

- Deeply committed to student success
- Unified in a common mission
- Professionals, supported and encouraged
- Driven by purpose and desire to do well and help others do well
What Does It Look Like?

Together, the citizens of the school have a strong sense of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unity</th>
<th>Identity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
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Culture and Climate Matters

Developing and sustaining high-quality school climates is deeply tied to strategies emerging from dropout prevention research and work.

—Marty Duckenfield and Beth Reynolds, “School Climate and Dropout Prevention”, February 2013
# Freshman Passing Six or More Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>94%</td>
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# Graduation Rates

*(Calculated Using The Cohort Method)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>86%</td>
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HOW?
A Place Where They Want To Be

HOW DO YOU BUILD IT?
Build a Culture of Success

Vision

Unity

Empowerment
Adults in the Building

CHANGE THE WAY THEY THINK AND ACT
—CHANGES THE WAY STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL PERFORM
—CHANGES THE WAY PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY VIEW THE SCHOOL AND LEARNING
Build a Culture of Success

Vision

Unity

Empowerment
SUCCESS
Vision: Student Success

What kind of people they grow to be

What they know

What they can do
What They Know

2012-2013
47 AP Scholars (1 in ’07-’08)
18 IB Diploma Graduates (4 in ’06-’07)

225 High School Graduates
Over 80% of applicants to state’s research universities accepted

Over 75% of graduates continue post-secondary education
Number of Students in AP or IB Classes (non-duplicated)

- 0 (03-04)
- 125 (08-09)
- 250 (10-11)
- 375 (11-12)
- 500 (12-11)
Number of AP Test Scores of 3, 4 or 5

- 05-06
- 06-07
- 07-08
- 08-09
- 09-10
- 10-11
- 11-12
- 12-13

- 180
- 135
- 90
- 45
- 0

0 - 05-06 06-07 07-08 08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13
WHAT THEY CAN DO
WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE THEY ARE GROWING TO BE
Vision: Student Success

What kind of people they grow to be

What they know

What they can do
Build a Culture of Success

Vision

Unity

Empowerment
ONE MORGAN
Build a Culture of Success

- Vision
- Unity
- Empowerment
DARIUS GOES WEST
CALEB’S LESSON LEARNED

Morgan County students impact legislators’ unanimous vote for Caleb’s Law

BY KATHRYN SCHILIRO • PHOTOS BY ANGELINA BELLEBONO

It’s rare that all members of the General Assembly, Democrat, Republican, Independent—would band together in passing a piece of legislation.

Even more unusual—teenage lobbyists.

Last Thursday, however, upon the encouragement of Morgan County High School’s own students, the Georgia Senate unanimously elected to pass Senate Bill 360, better known as “Caleb’s Law.”

Caleb Sorohan, a recent graduate of Morgan County High School, was only 18 years old when he was killed—a victim of a tragic, but preventable, road accident.

Caleb’s family worked their way through the state Senate, finding an acquaintance in Senator Jack Murphy (R-Cumming). Murphy worked up anti-texting while driving (TWD) legislation and, in early February, Murphy’s SB 360 was introduced, calling for Georgia drivers age 18 and under to be prohibited from using “wireless communications devices” for text messaging while behind the wheel, made the floor.

“The bill proposed, and far better than similar anti-TWD legislation. Over the weeks, SB 360 evolved to include all drivers—not just those 18 and under—texting in vehicles while behind the wheel.”

From top: Students and teachers are joined by Caleb Sorohan’s mother, Mandi, for a day off lobbying at the state Capitol Thursday. Students handed out bumperstickers and green reminder bracelets as they lobbied for Senate Bill 360.
GREAT THINGS HAPPEN AT SCHOOL EVERYDAY
"You look beautiful today!"

How Morgan County High School students and faculty recognized one student among all others—Nicholas Walker—for his random acts and words of kindness.

CLOCKWISE: Walker is being surrounded by his friends and peers at MCHS. When he was recognized, he showed his generosity by giving them his shirt. Walker's random acts of kindness are what make him special to his fellow students.

Nicholas Walker—his name means "he who walks in kindness"—is a senior at Morgan County High School. He is known for his random acts of kindness, which have earned him recognition from his peers and faculty.

Walker's kindness has not gone unnoticed. His friends and classmates have noticed his acts of generosity and have rewarded him with words of appreciation and support.

"Nicholas is a great person to have as a friend," said one of his classmates. "He always does what he can to help others and never looks for recognition."

The recognition for Walker's kind acts has not stopped at his school. A local newspaper has featured a story about him, and he has been invited to speak at a state-wide conference about his philosophy of kindness.

Walker's story is a testament to the power of kindness and the positive impact it can have on others. He has shown that even small acts of generosity can make a big difference in the lives of those around us.

"I want people to know that kindness is important," said Walker. "It's not just about doing something nice for someone else; it's about making the world a better place for everyone."

Walker's story is an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the power of kindness and the importance of recognizing the good that others do.

PHOTO BY ANGELINA SELLESUONO

TEXT BY CHRISTINA SANTER
SUCCESS
Thank You!

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