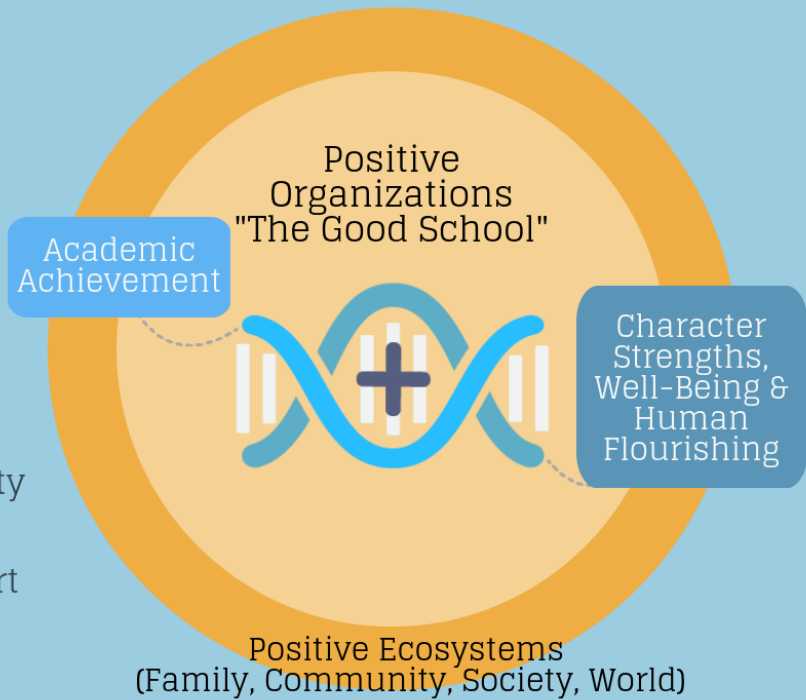# POSITIVE EDUCATION

1 What is it?

Positive Education unites the exciting new science of positive psychology and related disciplines with the study of education's most promising innovations to enable human flourishing and academic excellence as complementary aims of education. It believes in education of the head and the heart.

Its goal is to equip people - students, teachers, school systems, and community partners - with the well-being skills and tools to flourish, and contribute to the flourishing of others, in ways that support and strengthen traditional learning.

Positive Organizations "The Good School"

Academic Achievement

Character Strengths, Well-Being & Human Flourishing

Positive Ecosystems
(Family, Community, Society, World)

2 What are some of the components?

Academics

Reading/Literacy
Mathematics/Numeracy
Science
Language
History

Human Flourishing

Positive Emotion
Engagement
Social Emotional IQ
Positive Relationships
Meaning
Accomplilshment

Character Strengths

Resilience
Growth Mindset
Grit
Perseverance
Fairness
Forgiveness

Positive Schools

Great places to work where a positive culture permeates all facets of a school: teachers, students, administrators, specialists, para-educators, lunch staff, custodians, facilities managers, sports, music, theater, sustainable design, nutritional excellence

Positive Ecosystems

The larger ecosystem nurturing and reinforcing these ideas: parents, families, PTOs, after school programs, comprehensive care partners, community partners, green ecosystems

3 How is it taught?

Teacher/Staff Training

Teachers and staff are trained in positive psychology, strengths, and resilience and on how to infuse these skills into their academic courses.

Curriculum Development

Schools typically consider existing evidence-based programs and contemporary well-being theory, and design a curricula aimed at cultivating key competencies for life and lifelong learning (i.e. resilience, coping with emotions, problem solving, goal setting)

Measurement and Assessment Tools

Whether report cards or surveys, a number of tools exist for measuring well-being. For example, the Character Lab Report Card helps teachers evaluate students character strengths (zest, self-control, optimism, gratitude, and social intelligence).

Whole School Approach
(Appreciative Inquiry and Positive Organization Development)

Well-being interventions in schools are most effective when they permeate all facets of an educational institution: students, teachers, staff, leadership, existing academic subjects, and extra-curricular activities (whole systems planning).

Cultivating Positive Relationships

Students, teachers, and staff learn how to cultivate positive supportive relationships: Listening effectively, developing trust and empathy, giving and receiving feedback, accepting and celebrating differences, and improving communication skills.

4 Does it work?

Students at Positive Education Schools report significantly higher levels of life satisfaction, happiness, gratitude and perseverance. Having a better understanding of the significance of their friends' well-being, resilience, and character strengths, leads to improved peer relationships and a greater sense of acceptance and inclusion at the school.

Importantly, studies show that as well-being skills increase so does achievement in traditional subject matter. An increased sense of well-being in students has been linked to better learning outcomes, subsequent employment success, economic participation and empowerment, overall health, increased love of learning, decreases in risky behaviors, and more.

5 Studies show youth well-being...

Lastingly Improves Academic Performance

Contributes to Better Physical Health in Adulthood

Promotes Creativity, Innovation and Entrepeneurship

Education of the Heart and the Head Leads to Social Cohesion

Encourages Good Citizenship

Leads to Earning More Money in Adulthood

Protects Against Youth Depression

Reduces Risky Behaviors

6 Why now?

Every institution in society has a moral obligation to promote human flourishing and the flourishing of others, yet none more so than those responsible for the education of young people—families, schools, and systems of education.

Over the last 50 years, material standards across most of the world have improved, but well-being has remained roughly unchanged. During the same time, the prevalence of depression has increased at an alarming rate, and the median age of a first episode of depression has moved from adulthood to early adolescence.

At school, mental illness in students contributes to lower grades, higher absenteeism, lower self-control, and higher dropout rates. Stress and burnout among teachers and staff is also high, as they struggle to achieve educational goals and objectives. The World Health Organization reports that by 2030, depression and mental health problems will be among the most widespread and costly diseases, chronically straining national health systems in the developed world. Preventing them should be a priority.

Moreover, we need education that helps overcome division, debilitating conflict, and intolerance. The educational systems of the future should place greater emphasis on strengthening human abilities, such as warm-heartedness, a sense of oneness, humanity and love - that is, our natural affinity for goodness, compassion, and caring for others.

7 A New Education Model

There is a clear need for an education that raises adolescent psychological well-being, teaches academic skills, and promotes human flourishing.

Positive education aims to holistically and systemically:

★ strengthen youth's psychological fortitude and their capacity for flourishing and advancing the flourishing of others

★ enhance academic performance by improving how students feel (studies have shown that teaching wellbeing enhances academic learning)

★ use Appreciative Inquiry, systems science, and positive organization development (POD) to turn schools and communities into deeply developmental more fully human organizations

We know these aims are desirable, feasible, and capable of changing the world. With some 2 billion children in schools, this is a task of historic significance - join us!

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