

## **Title: Building and Sustaining School Culture: Making the Change**

### **Description:**

**Educators know intuitively that a positive school culture leads to higher student achievement; furthermore educational research supports this commonsense idea. So how, then, do schools build a positive school culture? At Milford Public Schools we are building and reinforcing a positive school culture through the use of an overarching theme. This comprehensive theme is expressed through this exhortation: “Everyone has a story . . . make yours worth telling.” Students are supported as they write their story by our PK-12, district-developed, character education/discipline model - Eagle Pride. The Eagle Pride model gives us the vocabulary and protocols we need to make sure we are doing what is best for our kids. The success we have had flows from everyone working toward a common goal while recognizing that school culture is always a work in progress. In our judgment, the work has paid dividends for both our students and staff.**

**Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.**

# Eagle Pride



**Building and Sustaining School Culture: Making the Change**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# Preview

- **Where we started**
- **The journey to where we are now**
- **The continued work of the district**

***“Culture represents the unwritten mission of the school - it tells students and staff why they are there”***

**~Todd Whitaker and Steve Gruenert**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# Over the Years

Milford Elementary had a new “Theme” every year.



M180X is an example of the “Themes” the Jr/Sr High used to motivate staff and students.

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# Can You Say Blackmail?

M180X



Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.



# Eagle Pride



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# District Wide Mentality For Staff

- **Bridge Parable**
- **Solution Tree Training (4 Guiding ?'s)**

**What is it we expect each student to know or be able to do?**

**How will we know when each student has learned it?**

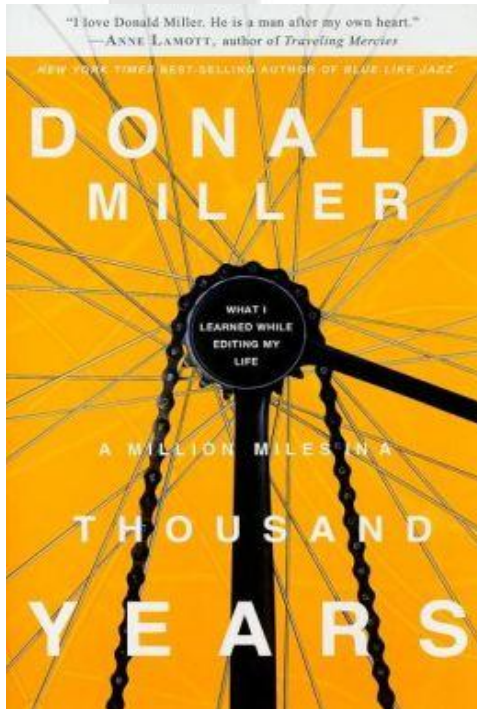
**How will we respond when a student has not learned it?**

**How will we respond when a student already knows it?**

- **PLCs**
- **Grading**
- **Common Curriculum**
- **Common Language For Instruction**

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# District Wide Vision For Students and Staff



- **More Focused Approach To Building A Positive Culture**
- **Staff Book Study Over The Summer**
- **Developed The District's Theme**

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# Everyone Has A Story...

## Staff Connection

### Legacy

- What kind of legacy are you leaving behind?
- What do students say about your story?
- What do colleagues say about your story?
- What is your why? Knowing how you want to be remembered helps you live a better story now.

***“A good storyteller doesn’t just tell a better story though. He invites other people into the story with him, giving them a better story too.”***

***~Donald Miller***

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# Everyone Has A Story...

## Student Connection

- **Helping students write a better story!**
- **Many of our kids bring emotional and social baggage to school. Remembering their story helps us focus on the time we have them and the things we can control.**

***“The effectiveness of a new culture depends on the strength of the people behind the change and the strength of the pre-existing culture.”***

***~Todd Whitaker***

**Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.**

# Everyone Has A Story...

## Artifacts

- T-Shirts
- Coffee Mugs
- Cups
- Notepads
- Sticky Notes
- Reminder Bands
- Thank You Cards
- Focus Passes

## Branding

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Website
- Letterhead
- Eagle Eye Logo

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# Everyone Has A Story...

**Below: A vinyl mural designed to not only display our theme, but also the history of Milford Public Schools.**



**Above: A media wall with two monitors and a vinyl graphic with our theme on it. Also on the left monitor is our school logo complete with the theme.**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# Eagle Pride

- **District wide philosophy and common vocabulary**
- **Character education**
- **Keeps the teacher and student relationships a priority**
- **Helps guide conversations with students**
- **Easy to keep these ideas in front of the students**
- **Develops continuity at all levels**

**Transition from Elementary to Junior High**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.



# What Is Eagle Pride?

## Kindness

Being friendly, generous, and considerate.

## Courage

Doing what's right in the face of adversity or fear.

## Citizenship

Getting involved and making your community a better place.

## Honesty

Choosing to be truthful to yourself and others no matter who is around.

**EAGLE  
M**

## Respect

Honoring what others do and believe.

## Responsibility

Being accountable for your words, for your actions, and for finishing what you start.

**PRIDE**

## Effort

Giving your best and making the most of every opportunity.

## Trustworthy

Being loyal, reliable, and always doing the right thing.

*Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling*

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# **What does it look like?**

- **It is used PK-12**
- **Everyday conversations**
  - Constant reinforcement of expectations**
  - Office/Discipline Referrals**
- **Classroom management issues**
- **Developing action plans**
- **Trying to make a difference in the lives of kids and their overall character**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# **Supporting Activities**

- **Eagle Pride Slips For Students/Staff**
- **First Fridays At The Elementary**
- **Youth Frontiers 5th, 7th, 9th**
- **Sportsmanship Committee PSA**
- **Junior High Leadership**
- **Junior High Awards Ceremony**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# **Supporting Activities**

- **Career and College Access Day**  
**EQ Grant, School Funding**
- **College Fair During PT Conferences**
- **Attorney Talks about Digital Citizenship**
- **TeamMates**
- **NCA and SNC Leadership Summits**

Everyone has a story...make yours worth telling.

# Implications and Results

- **Junior High Discipline Data**  
2007-08    477 Detentions  
2013-14    180 Detentions
- **High School Discipline Data**  
2007-08    634 Detentions  
2013-14    189 Detentions

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# Implications And Results

- **Elevated Standardized Test Scores**
- **Attitude of Improvement**
- **Growth Mindset**
- **Focus Shifted To The Big Picture**

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# Questions?

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