Children at Risk serves as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration, and advocacy.

For more information please contact info@childrenatrisk.org or 713-869-7740.

Children at Risk is also grateful for the participation of Galena Park ISD, Galveston ISD, Houston ISD, Pasadena ISD, and Spring ISD for access to their school campuses, administration, and staff who shared their valuable perspective on how to best serve students and families.

Thank you
This work was made possible because of the generous support of The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation.

Building Gold Ribbon Schools
A Blueprint for Success in High-Poverty Schools

How can you help?
It is possible for all students to attend a high-quality school regardless of race, location, or economic background. It takes perseverance, time, and hard work, which educators should not have to do alone. You can support your school community by having conversations with school principals and administrators, donating your time or money to school programs and special events, advocating to the district’s school board, joining or starting a Parent-Teacher Association, and encouraging your local and state policymakers to pass policies that benefit and improve opportunities for all students in Texas.

For more ways to support your school community, go to childrenatrisk.org/get-involved.

Communicate Continuously with Families
Reach Outside the Box for Resources
Support the Whole Child
Use Data to Drive Instruction
Set a Culture of High Expectations

How can you help?
BUILDING GOLD RIBBON SCHOOLS: A Blueprint for Success in High-Poverty Schools

To understand school quality, each year CHILDREN AT RISK (C@R) ranks and grades schools across Texas. C@R celebrates schools that rise beyond expectations and excel academically. Gold Ribbon Schools are an example of these campuses that collectively meet or exceed the state’s standards. More than 1,000 out of 1,140 of all Gold Ribbon Schools campuses’ students are low-income and they receive an A or B in C@R’s annual school rankings.*

For many years, Gold Ribbon Schools have been nonexistent or rare. However, poverty is not an excuse for low-performing schools; the rise in Gold Ribbon Schools across the state is proof. In order to better understand what makes these schools successful, C@R interviewed Principals of Gold Ribbon Schools across five school districts in the Greater Houston Area. From these conversations, C@R identified common themes and practices that can be easily adopted by campuses and concrete practices that parents can advocate for. A blueprint of best practices for other campuses, the following recommendations may help lead to higher performance.

For more information on C@R’s school rankings visit TexasSchoolGuide.org

COMMUNICATE CONTINUOUSLY WITH FAMILIES

Gold Ribbon Schools recognize the importance of meaningful communication with parents and other stakeholders and in a variety of ways. Transparency and clarity are necessary to help parents feel welcomed, understand the progress of their students, and know how to engage in the school setting.

On at least a weekly basis, Gold Ribbon Schools relay campus-wide information through multiple platforms including emails, text messages, phone calls, in-person meetings, campus videos, and online platforms. Beyond mass communication, Gold Ribbon Schools emphasize a belief that frequent and consistent touch points with parents build stronger relationships and engagement among families. Parents are actively updated on their child’s unique needs and academic performance. They receive regular contact from teachers and administrators, not just when students miss an assignment or misbehave, but to celebrate success and accomplishments.

COMMUNICATION is a vital relationship with parents. Parent communication and engagement are key to both a student’s and school’s success. Milton Cooper created a weekly parent meeting on the type of communication, events, and support they wanted and would be helpful for their children. Taking away expenses of best practices, Milton Cooper has been able to engage with and meet the needs of students, parents, and families in ways that are most helpful to everyone at his campus.

SET A CULTURE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools are an example of these campuses that have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are high, students often rise to meet them.

Gold Ribbon Schools have a high bar of success for students no matter who they are or where they live. When expectations are high, students are more likely to rise to meet them. Similarly, when expectations are low, students will frequently fail to raise the bar, even when they are capable of more. Instead of lowering expectations or making excuses, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents reinforce that all students are capable of more. When expectations are low, students often rise to meet them. Similar...