



**THE VERITAS GROUP**  
E N T E R P R I S E

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**SCHOOL CULTURE MATTERS  
CULTURE SETTING FOR URBAN  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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Importance of Setting and Maintaining the School Culture Presentation  
Theme: Calling All Eagles

**JULY 19, 2016**

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## INTRODUCTION

There is such a cry in the hearts of educators to guide students to reach their God created and God ordained purpose. *Research shows that 40% to 50% of teachers leave their classrooms within the first five years of employment. Data also indicates that 9.5% leave before the end of their first year. Often new and urban school leaders or principals leave their posts within one to two years.*

School cultures and school climates greatly influence student achievement and learning. The working conditions of staff are affected. Unfortunately, in some of our schools very negative school cultures and climates have taken root and these impacts, on educators and the students, we serve, are a heavy burden in the heart of urban educators.

I believe the Holy Spirit will guide us into spirit filled strategies and creative ideas to help us establish the positive school cultures and school climates we desire.

For the purpose of our discussion today, I want to guide us into an analogy and comparison of how eagles build their nest and how we as urban educators can use some of these attributes in building a Spirit led school culture and school climate. The goal is for us to realize the importance of setting and maintaining a Spirit led school culture and school climate that meets the individual needs of your school.

The eagle is a majestic and powerful bird. It is sometimes referred to as the "king of all birds." Characteristics attributed to eagles include: vision, fearlessness, tenacity, being a high flyer, possessing vitality, nurturing their young and demonstrating leadership and strength.

As urban Christian leaders in education, we are required to possess, embrace and demonstrate these same characteristics. We are required to inspire TRUST in the leadership as stakeholders learn and work in our schools.

"But they that wait upon The Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk; and not faint."  
(Isaiah 40:31 KJV)

"You have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to me. If you will listen obediently to what I say and keep my covenant, out of all peoples you'll be my special treasure. The whole Earth is mine to choose from, but you're special: a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. (Exodus 19:4-6)

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TRUST in the urban school leadership is the master key in developing and maintaining a Spirit led and positive school culture and school climate. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ releases these attributes to the leadership and they impart them to students and staffs.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

### COMPARISON of HOW EAGLES PREPARE THEIR NEST

(Homes: Cultures and Climates) and URBAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS and PRINCIPALS SET and MAINTAIN

### THE SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

"Yes, all the other roles and responsibilities of a school principal are important. But a positive school culture is imperative" Shelly Habegger: [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org)

WHO: The eagles prepare their nest is the first factor in establishing their home. Both male and female work and build the nest together. They work as a team; pair bonding. Each one brings specific items to build the nest. TRUST ESTABLISHED!

### HOW URBAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS MAKE APPLICATION TO THE EAGLE ATTRIBUTES

#### WHO FACTOR: DESIGN A TEAM

1. Create a sense of belonging to a team. The home, school and church are the core team needed to support the students entrusted into their care.
2. School board, school leadership, teachers and support staff bond together as one; each member bringing their gifts to the culture and climate. Training, practical ideas are respected and implemented. Delegation and accountability of team goals helps to maintain a vibrant, energetic and engaged urban school learning community.
3. Bonding between adults and students in the urban Christian environment has positive impacts which can change lives for eternity.

"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:12 NLT)

## WHEN FACTOR: DESIGN DIRECTION

WHEN: The eagles build their nest one to three months prior to mating.

1. Positive and clear directions are mandatory. Goals and expectations are clearly developed, established and agreed upon by staff prior to students' arrival.
2. Goals for student learning and services are clearly understood by administration and teaching staff. For example: clear understanding of what administrative support looks like in terms of student discipline and parental expectations is established prior to the opening of school.
3. Goal setting for classroom behavior is emphasized and established with students during the first weeks of school. Practical steps of implementation and ownership of school wide and classrooms behaviors are understood and followed.

"Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. (Habakkuk 2:2)

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain. (Psalm 127:1)

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. (Psalms 119:33-34)

## WHAT FACTOR: DESIGN THE SCHOOL CULTURE AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

WHAT: The bald eagle's nest is constructed of interwoven sticks lined with corn stalks and other materials. Golden eagles' nest are composed of sticks, vegetation, animal bones and human made items like wire.

The school culture and school climate in each urban Christian school is constructed differently; yet what it is designed to do is the same.

1. The ultimate design of the urban Christian culture is to create a school climate where students can grow and develop a Christian worldview and gain the academic skills necessary to fulfill the profession or calling on their lives.
2. The foundation of the urban school culture and school climate is spiritual in nature. The Holy Spirit is directly responsible for providing all stakeholders with the spiritual tools of wisdom and understanding necessary for the spiritual development of the community.
3. The Spiritual Tools common to the design of an urban school culture and school climate is: prayer, praise and worship, reading, study, memorizing, mediating and acting on specific scriptures, Bible study and modeling Christian behavior daily. The team working in unity with the help of Holy Spirit uses the tools specific to them.

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4. The urban Christian leader and principal must provide leadership using the highest and most innovative academic and educational opportunities needed to prepare their students.

Well trained professionals and credentialed teachers called to teach are basic to offering the education urban students need. Technology and integration of learning styles must be included.

"And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:26-27 KJV)

"For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]. (Ephesians 2:10 AMP)

### **WHY FACTOR: DESIGN PURPOSE**

WHY: Eagles bring a process in preparing their eaglets to become eagles. The eaglets are released into the Earth ready to live the nomadic life for which they were created. They are trained to fly high and look down on things. Eaglets are trained to sense tragedy yet not fear. Eagles nurture their young, demonstrate and develop them as leaders.

1. Urban Christian leaders and workers are called and chosen by Almighty God to be "Eagles!" We are called to be vessels that the Holy Spirit can use to nurture students and develop their gifts.
2. We are to train them to become Christian leaders and workers. Our eaglets are being trained to impact their sphere of influence with Kingdom values and principles.
3. As urban "Christian eagles" we are required to train our eaglets the importance and vital necessity of total dependence, reliance and obedience to directions given by Holy Spirit.

### **HOW FACTOR: DESIGN FOR ETERNAL INWARD CHANGE, PURPOSE AND DESTINY**

HOW: Eaglets are taught many lessons in the nest. In the beginning eaglets are fed in the nest by opening their mouths and receiving the food the mother drops into their mouths. After eaglets become a certain size everything changes. The mother eagle systematically pushes the eaglets out of the nest. She changes her feeding methods and cleans the nest by removing the comfortable feathers and soft linings.

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Eaglets must be taught to fly and become eagles.

1. The urban school culture and school climate must be designed so that instilled in the character of our "Eaglets" is a moral code they will choose throughout their lifetime. They will always choose to live for God in a world that is sometimes just the opposite of the training they have received.
2. The urban school culture and school climate must so be designed that our students take flight with both spiritual and academic skills needed to change their generation and their worlds.
3. They must become "Eagle Christians that have eyes to see what others cannot see. They must be self-confident and strong from the inward man so that it is reflected outward to those who will one day be entrusted into their care.

" And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:9-10)

## CONCLUSION

The importance of setting and maintaining a Spirit led urban school culture and school climate is foundational to our work. We must design the atmosphere in our schools where our students see and sense "HIS GRACE" at work. As leaders we must help every stakeholder to see beyond "urban blight and unthinkable behaviors rooted in poverty and lack of nurturing to "The Seed" Christ and seek to train and develop " the seed: spirit, soul (mind, will, emotion, intellect and imagination) and body.

The urban school culture and school climate should be designed that our "eaglets" become "Eagle Christian leaders" influencing society in:

1. Religion
2. Family
3. Education
4. Government
5. Media
6. Arts and Entertainment
7. Business

"A positive school culture is the underlying reason why the other components of successful schools were able to flourish." Shelly Habegger: [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org).

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20 NKJV).

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