



ACIS Leadership Conference

Developing
Noble Purpose
@ Valor Collegiate



Daren Dickson, LMFT

Chief Culture Officer

Valor Collegiate Academies

Nashville, TN



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COMPASS



Daren Dickson

- *Denver Native*
- *Smoky Hill High School (89)*
- *University of Denver (93)*

THE NEXT 75 MINUTES

at-a-glance

Valor Collegiate Academies Overview

5 min

Purpose Learning Overview

10 min

Purpose Learning at Valor

15 min

Compass Badge Work: Finding Purpose

15 min

Compass Circles: Enacting Purpose

20 min



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Valor Collegiate Overview



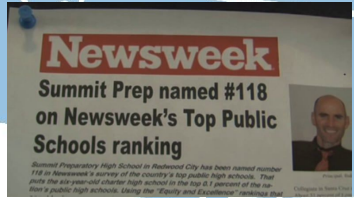
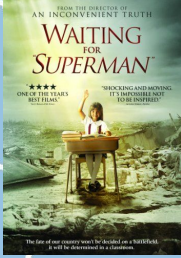
Circa 2002-2012



SENECA
Family of Agencies



Circa 2002-2012

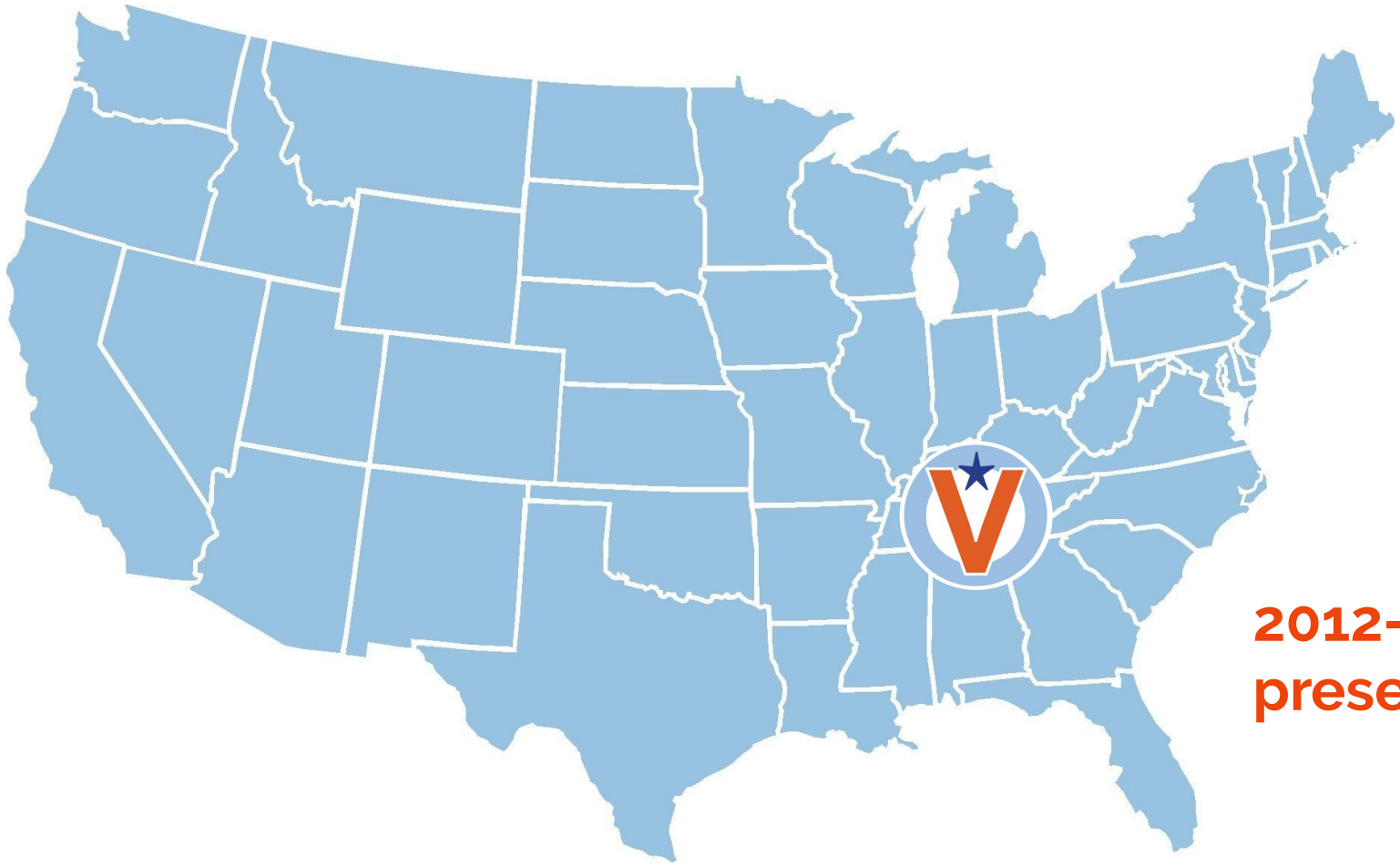


Circa 2002-2012









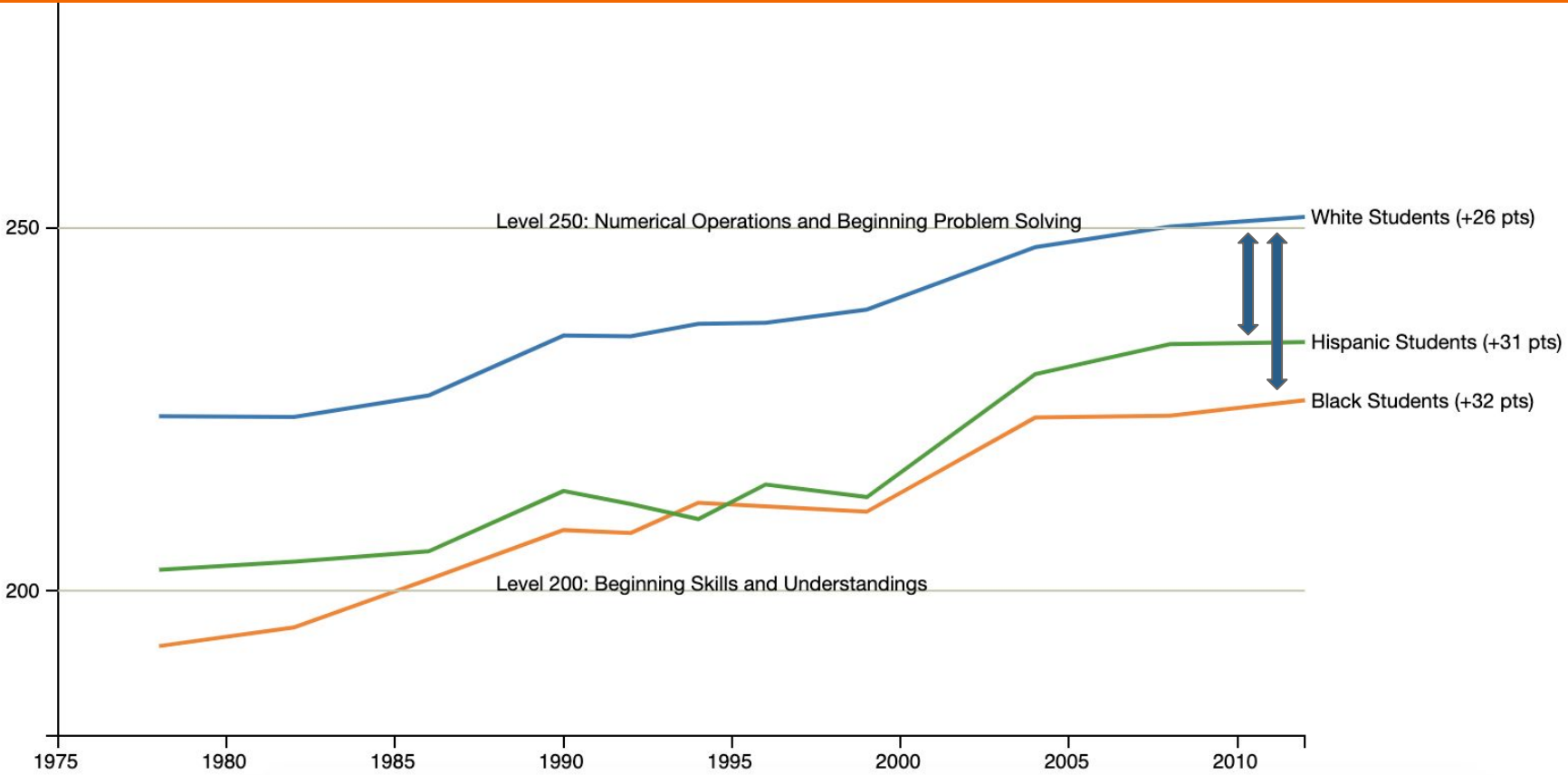
**2012-
present**

65 years after Brown v. Board of Education, school segregation is getting worse

A new report finds that the historic school segregation ruling has been undermined in recent decades.

By P.R. Lockhart | May 10, 2019, 7:00pm EDT

Average NAEP Score



Level 250: Numerical Operations and Beginning Problem Solving

White Students (+26 pts)

Hispanic Students (+31 pts)

Black Students (+32 pts)

Level 200: Beginning Skills and Understandings

By Patrick Cook-Deegan | Jun. 27, 2016

High school should be a launching pad to a meaningful life. Instead, it's often a missed opportunity filled with apathy, purposelessness, and incredible amounts of stress. The three words most frequently used by students in the United States to describe their high school experience are “tired,” “stressed,” and “bored.”

ER visits for suicidal thoughts, attempts doubled among youth in recent years, study finds

BY ASHLEY WELCH

APRIL 9, 2019 / 6:45 PM / CBS NEWS



- **Equity Crisis**
- **Segregation Crisis**
- **Meaning and Connection Crisis**



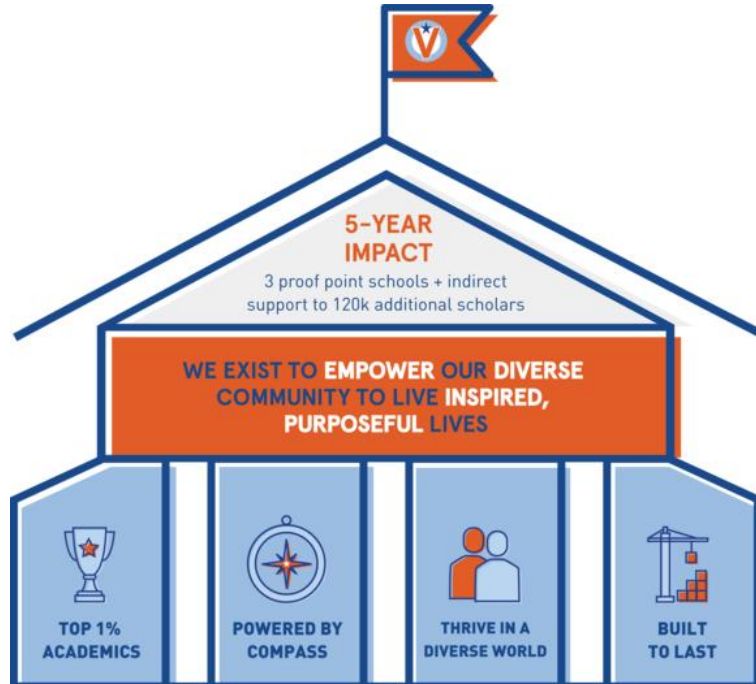
Design Principles

- Close the Achievement Gap
- Create Meaningful and Intentional Diversity
- Teach and Practice Meaning and Connection
- All on public funds...



WE EXIST TO EMPOWER OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY TO
LIVE INSPIRED, PURPOSEFUL LIVES.

Anchors

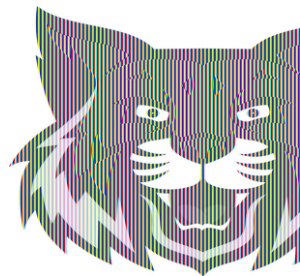




3 Proof Point Schools + National Impact



**Flagship
MS**



**College
Prep HS**

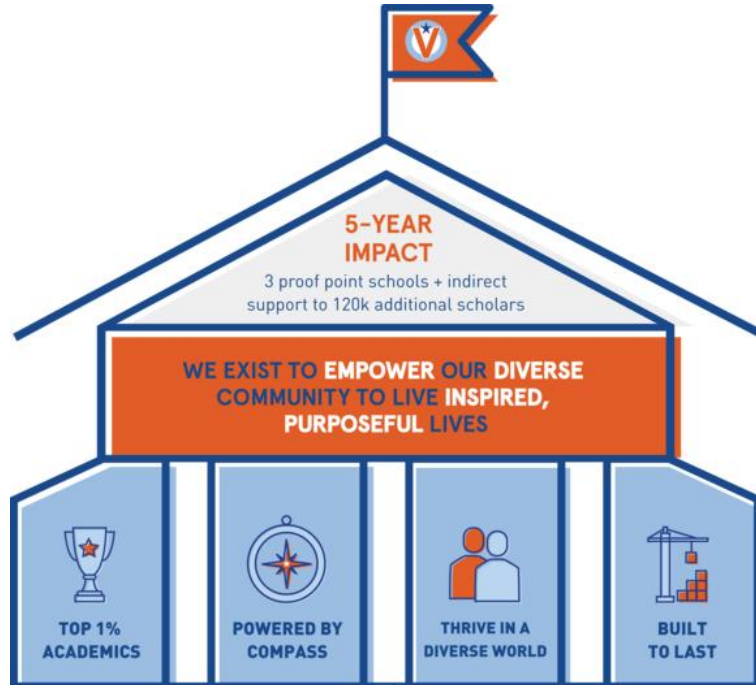


**Voyager
MS**



**Compass
Camp**

Anchors



- **Close the Achievement Gap**
- Create Meaningful and Intentional Diversity
- Teach and Practice Meaning and Connection
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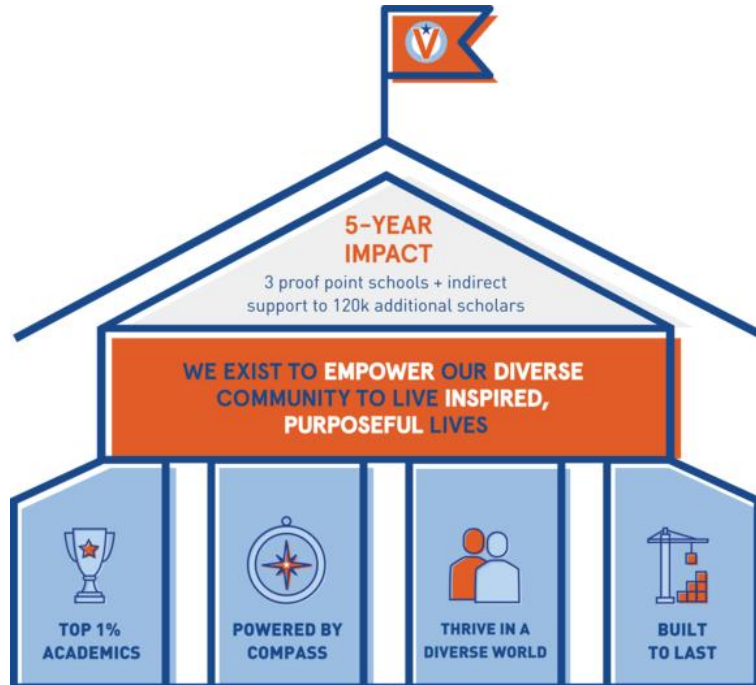
Top 1% Academics

Valor | Flagship ranked #1 in Composite Growth in the State two years in a row

Valor is the only school in TN in top 2% for both Growth and Achievement

Valor ED scholars are in top 1% for ACH and GROWTH in TN four years straight

Anchors



- Close the Achievement Gap
- **Create Meaningful and Intentional Diversity**
- Teach and Practice Meaning and Connection
- All on public funds...



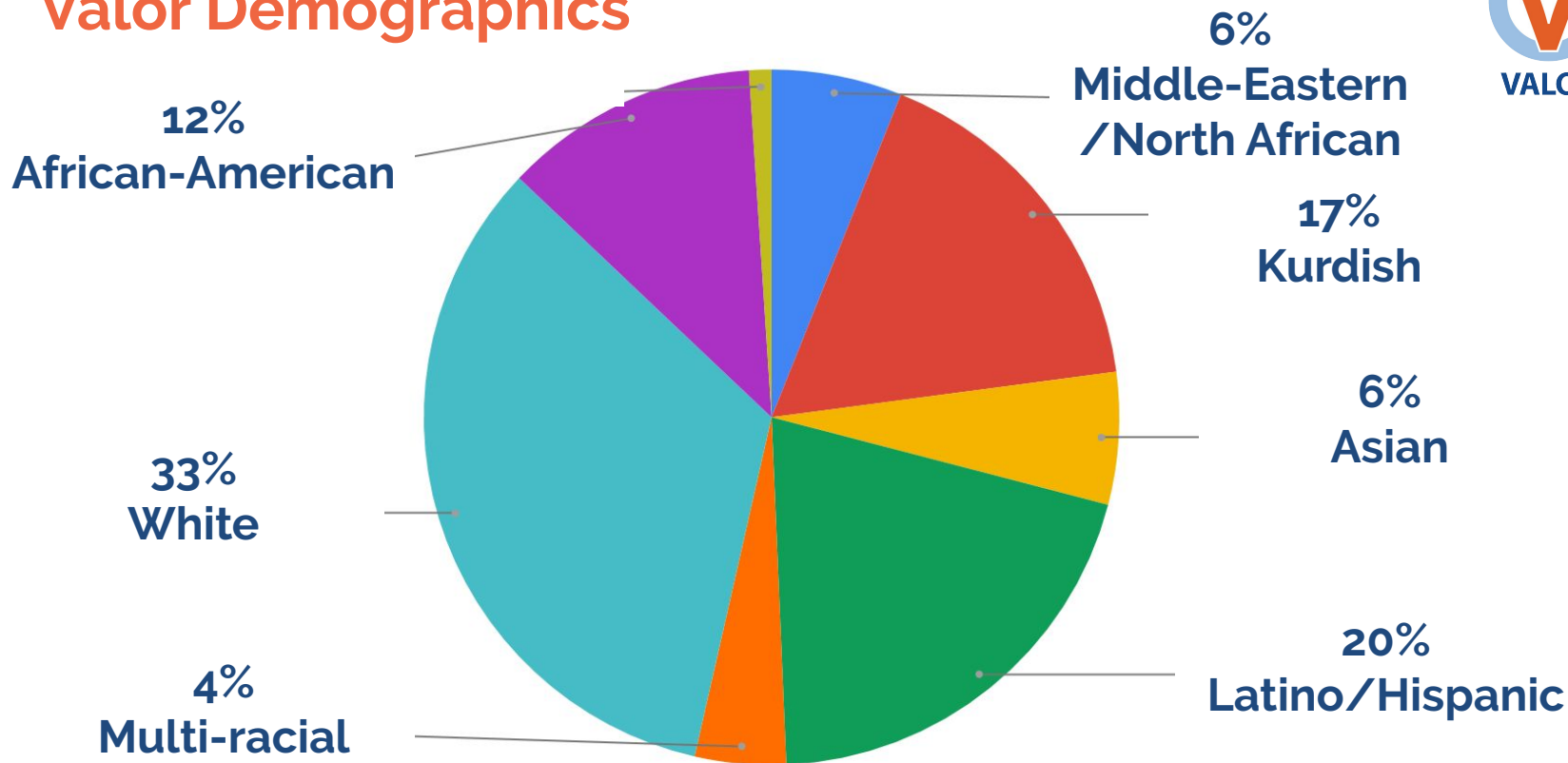


56%

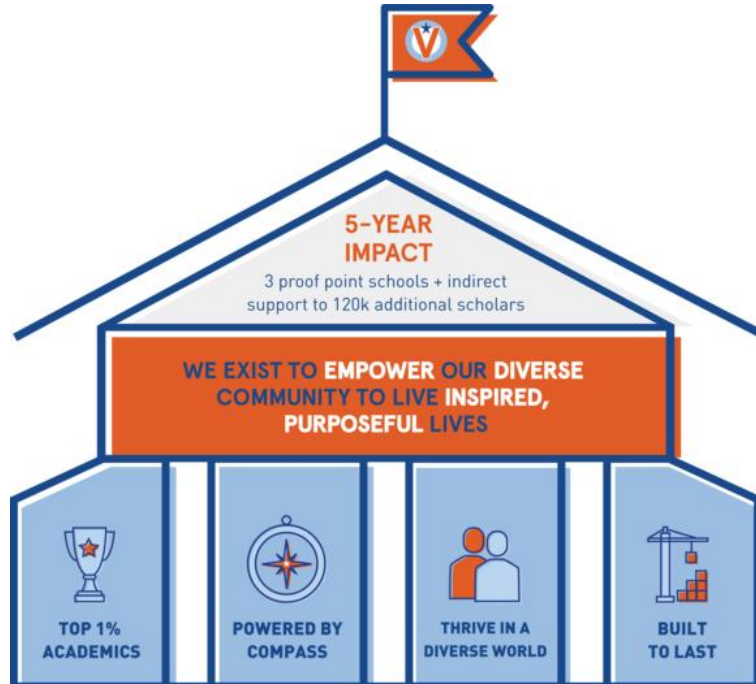
Free and Reduced Lunch



Valor Demographics



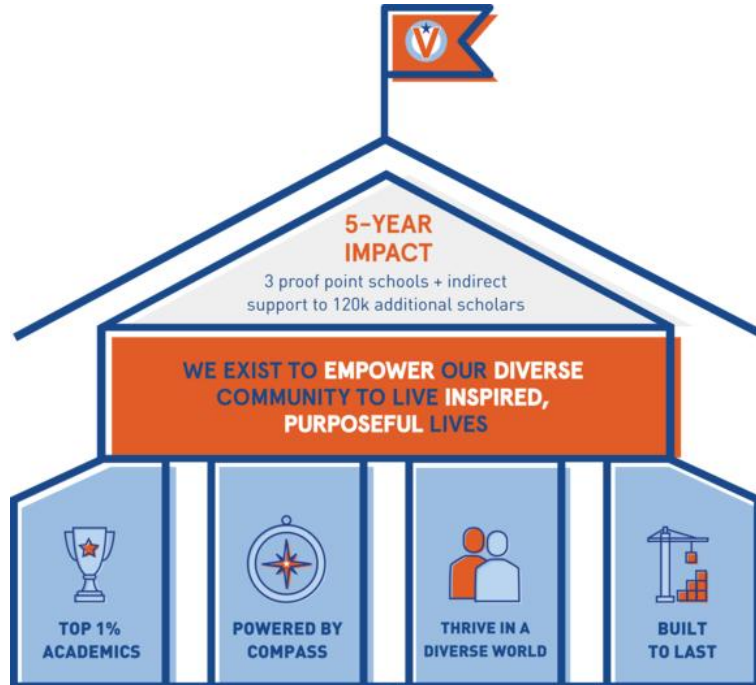
Anchors



- Close the Achievement Gap
- Create Meaningful and Intentional Diversity
- Teach and Practice Meaning and Connection
- **All on public funds...**



Anchors



- Close the Achievement Gap
- Create Meaningful and Intentional Diversity
- **Teach and Practice Meaning and Connection**
- All on public funds...



THE VALOR COMPASS



Our Compass model is a comprehensive human development model that is grounded in the foundational elements of what it means to be human. **“Working the Compass”** means growing in body, heart, mind, and spirit in pursuit of excellence in every dimension.



ALIGNED ACTIONS



BIG HEART



SHARP MIND



NOBLE PURPOSE



TRUE NORTH



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What is
Purpose Learning?

- **Equity Crisis**
- **Segregation Crisis**
- **Meaning and Connection Crisis**





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"The Path to Purpose is a beautiful and important book. William Damon takes on one of the most hidden and yet important elements of child development today and provides warm insight and clear advice."

*—Michael Gurian, author of *The Wonder of Boys* and *The Wonder of Girls**

The Path to Purpose

*How Young People
Find Their Calling in Life*

William Damon

*Author of **THE MORAL CHILD** and
GREATER EXPECTATIONS*



Purpose Definition

A stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that at once is personally meaningful and at the same time leads to productive engagement in the world beyond-the-self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003)



Purpose Definition

A stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that at once is personally meaningful and at the same time leads to productive engagement in the world beyond-the-self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003)

- A long-term, far-horizon goal
- That is personally meaningful
- And motivated by a desire to contribute to the larger world



Purpose Research

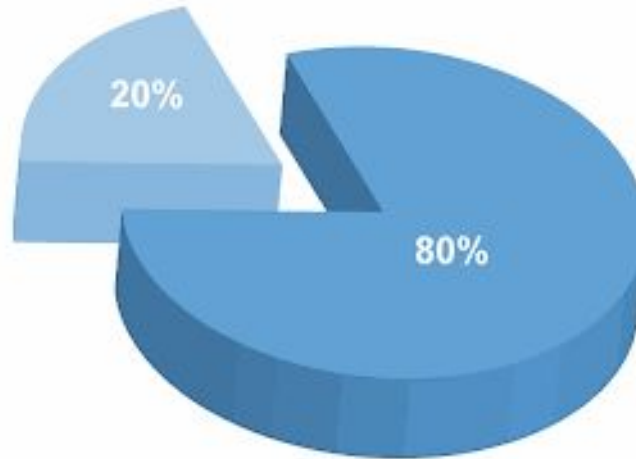
Well-documented benefits of having purpose:

- better sleep
- longer life
- greater happiness
- faster healing
- lower rate of serious disease
- better stress management



Purpose Research

Sense of Purpose

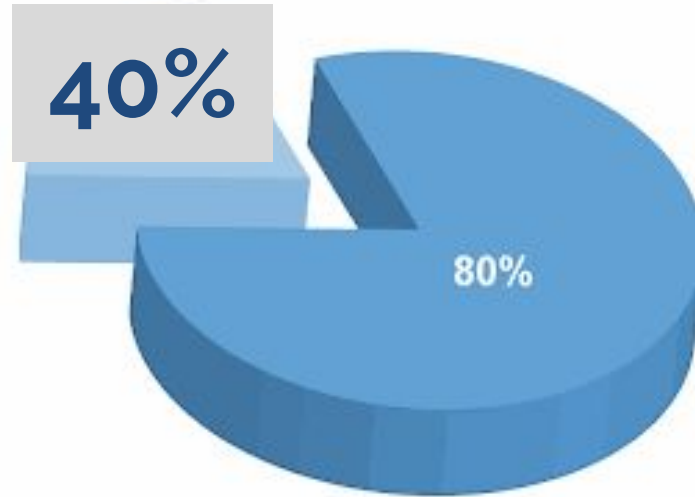


- Dabblers
- Dreamers
- Disengaged



Purpose Research

Sense of
Purpose



- Dabblers
- Dreamers
- Disengaged



Good News:
Neuroplasticity

Turn & Talk

What is compelling about the purpose learning research?

How are you currently applying it in your schools?

How might you integrate it more deeply?





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Purpose Model #1

Richard Leider
Power of Purpose

GIFTS + PASSIONS + IMPACT = PURPOSE

IMPACT

If you had a magic wand, what would you change about the world around you? What problem calls to you? What connections to the world do you feel?



GIFTS

What are your natural skills? These could be things you can't remember learning, that people observe you doing well, and that you lose track of time while doing.

PASSIONS

What are things you love to do? How do you spend your free time? What would be your dream job?



Purpose Model #2

“Ikigai” is a classic Japanese concept that basically translates as “a reason for being”, which invites us to look at our own life purpose from four different angles — what we love, what we are good at, what the world needs, and how we make our living.





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Purpose Model #3

Brooke Stafford-Brizard
and
Turnaround for Children

Summit Public Schools

INDEPENDENCE AND
SUSTAINABILITY



PERSEVERANCE

MINDSETS FOR SELF
AND SCHOOL

SCHOOL
READINESS

HEALTHY
DEVELOPMENT



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Valor's Approach to
Purpose Learning

Principles of our Theory of Change



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- Schools are responsible for developing whole children.
- The primary driver for the development of whole children is the development of whole adults.
- The development of whole adults and children is dependent on the creation of safe, productive, and affirming communities.

Shifts for our Theory of Change



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- Head to Heart
- Them to Us
- Me to We



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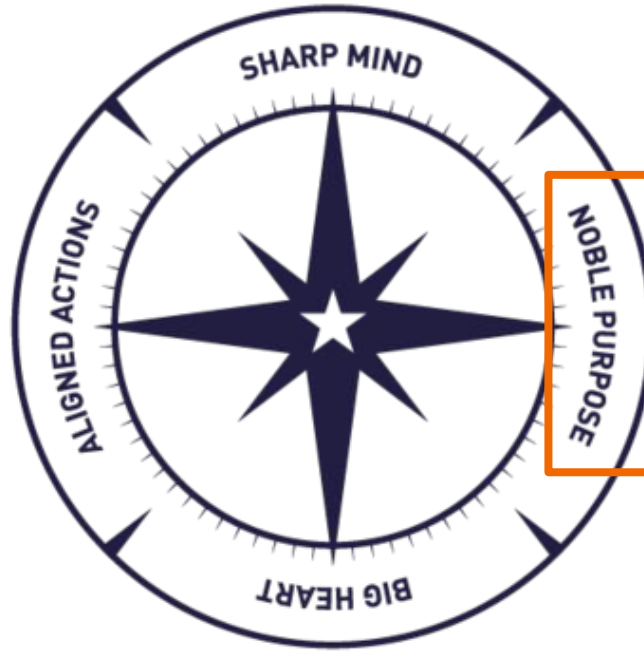
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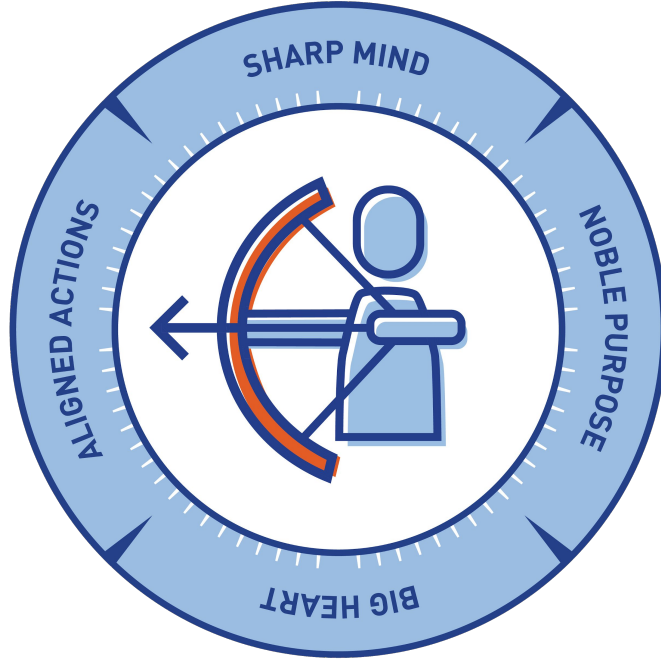




Compass Disciplines



Compass Disciplines



In any moment we can find our True North, draw upon our **Noble Purpose**, balance our Sharp Mind and our Big Heart, and Align our Actions to make a meaningful choice.



Compass Habits



Compass Habits



Noble Purpose Defined

Noble Purpose: Habits of Being



The Compass Discipline of **Noble Purpose** is defined by being connected to one's deepest values, living from one's preferred and authored self-story, and sourcing joy from living this story in the world. This discipline is brought to life through **Habits of Being - Joy** and **Identity**. Honing the discipline of Noble Purpose requires finding the balance between remaining doggedly connected to one's purpose, while allowing one's self to be impulsively joyful.



Joy: A state of full immersion - with full focus, involvement, and enjoyment - in an activity that is aligned with one's deepest values; a form of inner interpretation of events that leads to willing engagement in the full range of life experiences



Identity: A value-based self-story and meaning-making framework that drives thought, emotion, and action



Noble Purpose **Defined**



Being connected to one's deepest values, living from one's preferred and authored self-story, and sourcing joy from living this story in the world.

- Honed through bringing to life the habits of Identity and Joy



Noble Purpose Defined



Identity

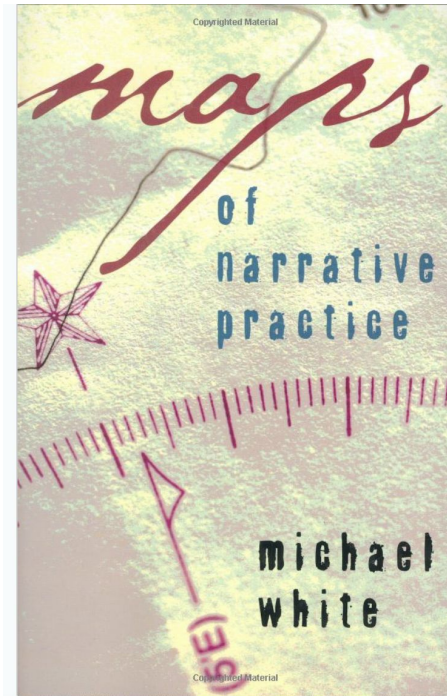
A value-based self-story and meaning-making framework that drives thought, emotion, and action



Noble Purpose Defined



Identity





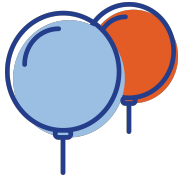
Noble Purpose **Defined**



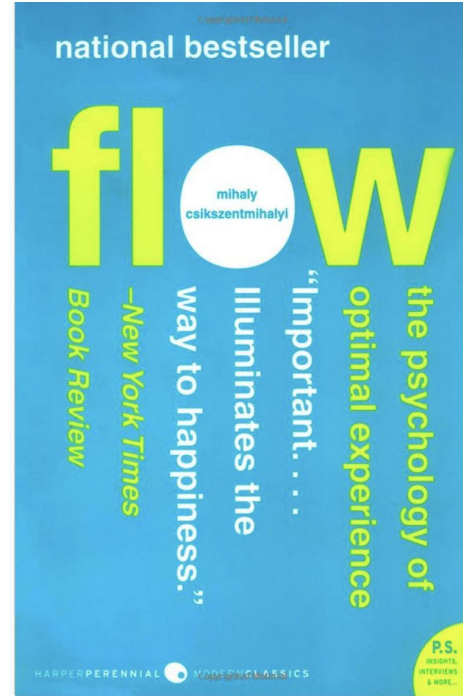
A state of full immersion - with full focus, involvement, and enjoyment - in an activity that is aligned with one's deepest values; a form of inner interpretation of events that leads to willing engagement in the full range of life experiences.



Noble Purpose Defined



Joy





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Compass Developmental Pathways



Identity



5th



12th

Scholars explore and share about their history, culture, religion, and other aspects of themselves.

Scholars develop a beginning understanding of their ability to "author" their self-story.

Scholars increase awareness, explore, and apply their signature strengths.

Scholars Intentionally weave and enact concepts of service - to self, others, and the world - into their life story within the Valor and greater community.

Scholars can envision preferred, multi-storied, self-narratives as they move into the future and are capable of describing the steps necessary to create and enact this type of life.

Shifts of our Theory of Change



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- Head to Heart
- Them to Us
- Me to We



The most fundamental unit in a culture is not an individual, it is a **relationship**.

Start Pulling!



< UBUNTU = “I am
because
you are.” >



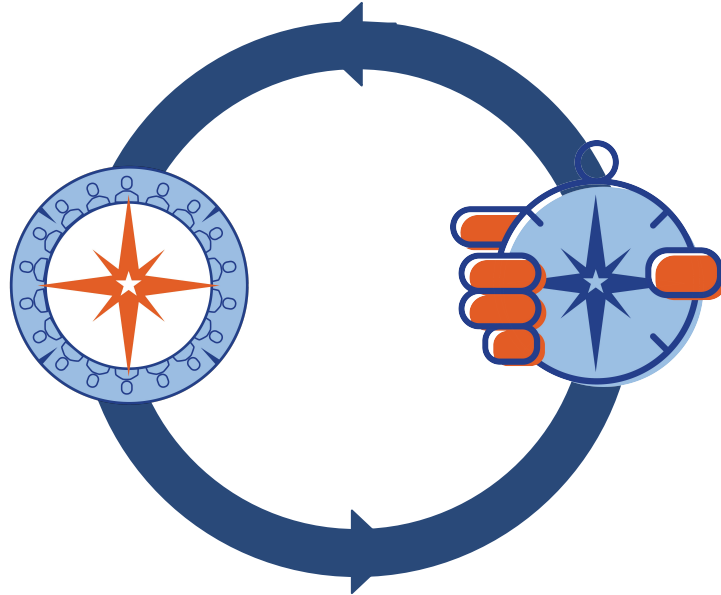
ME



WE

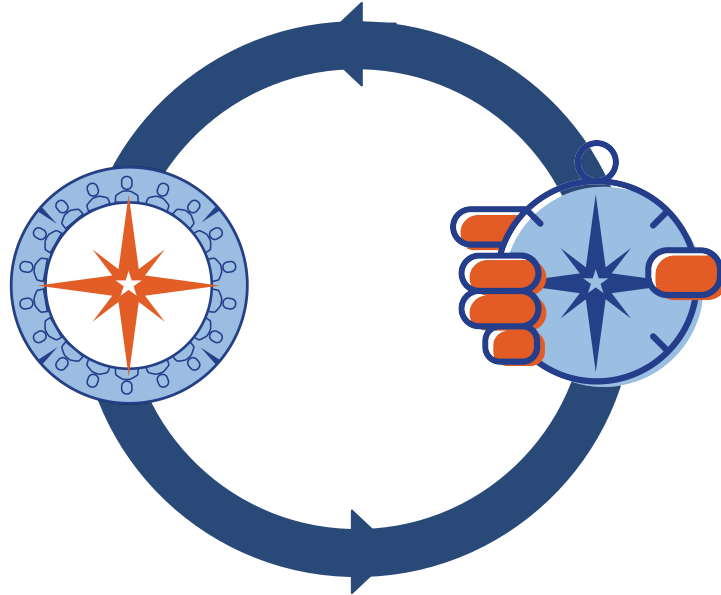


**Community
Development**



**Compass
Development**

**Compass
Circles**



**Compass
Badge Work**

Turn & Talk

What is compelling about Valor's approach to purpose learning?

How might you apply elements in your own schools?





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Compass Badge Work

Finding Purpose

Advisory Daily Schedule



Advisory Structure

M	T	W	T	F
30m	30m	30m	30m	60m
Academic Coaching	Badge Work Coaching	Mini-Circle	House Meeting	Circle

Advisory Daily Schedule

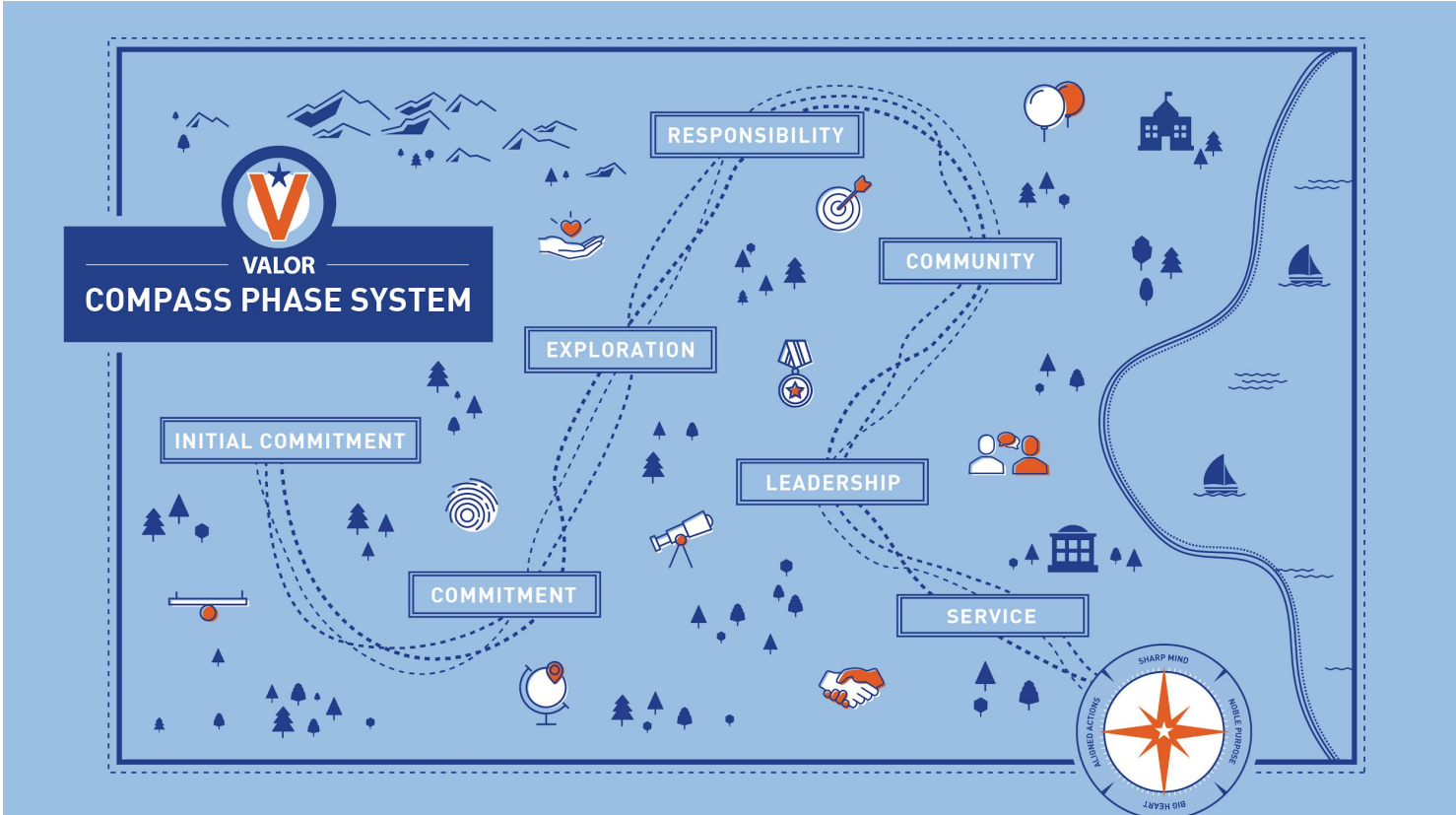


Advisory Structure

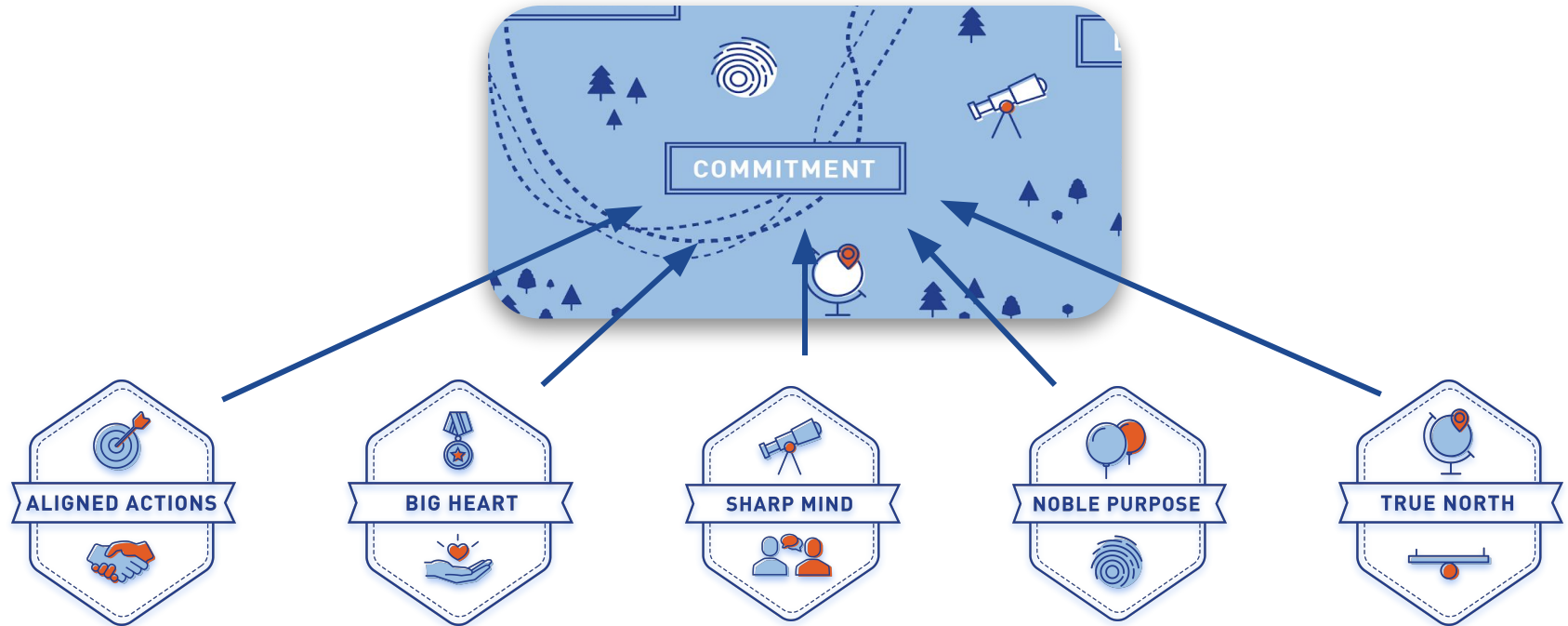
M	T	W	T	F
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BADGE WORK





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COMPASS

edutopia

TOPICS ▾

VIDEOS

OUR MISSION



NOBLE PURPOSE DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAY



5th - Life Artifact



6th - Identity Deck



7th - Signature Strengths



8th - Weathering Storms



9th - Shining a Light



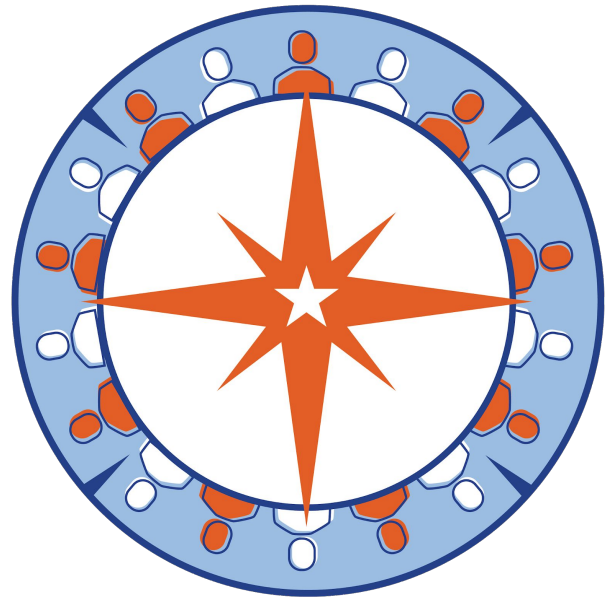
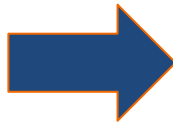
10th - Compass Stance



11th - Anchor Team



12th - Carrying the
Compass



Advisory Daily Schedule



Advisory Structure

M	T	W	T	F
30m	30m	30m	30m	60m
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Turn & Talk

What is compelling about Compass Badge Work as a purpose-finding strategy?

How might you apply it in your schools?

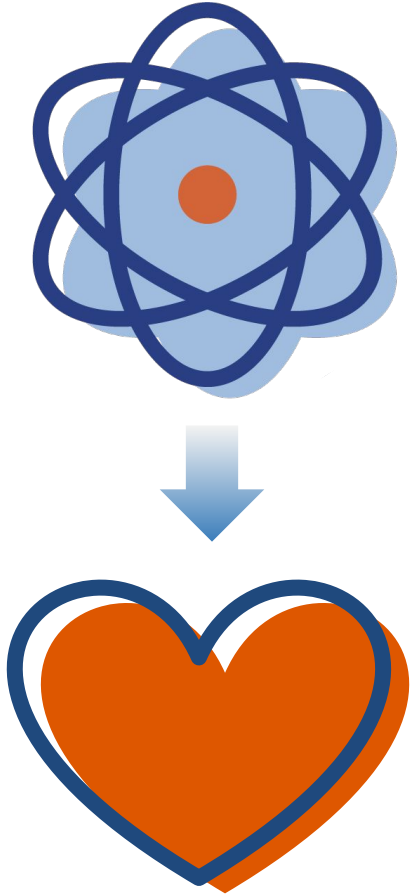




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Compass Circles

Enacting Purpose





vulnerability



capacity

connection

need



Principles of Circle



Commitments



Ritual



Work



Principles of Circle



Commitments



Ritual



Work

VALOR COMMITMENTS



I COMMIT TO
KEEPING MYSELF
AND OTHERS SAFE.



I COMMIT TO
SPEAKING FROM MY HEART,
BUT USING MY HEAD.



I COMMIT TO
LEAVING NO COMMUNITY
MEMBER BEHIND.



I COMMIT TO
WORKING THE COMPASS.



I COMMIT TO
SEEKING DIVERSITY
OF PERSPECTIVE.



I COMMIT TO
WALKING MY TALK.



I COMMIT TO
SPEAKING TO THE PERSON,
NOT ABOUT THE PERSON.



I COMMIT TO
SHOWING UP WITH VALOR.



Principles of Circle



Commitments



Ritual



Work



Principles of Circle



Commitments



Ritual



Work



Circle Components

True North

Check-In & Check-Back

Work (and Resonance)

Appreciations

Closing

Advisory Daily Schedule



Advisory Structure

M	T	W	T	F
30m	30m	30m	30m	60m
Academic Coaching	Badge Work Coaching	Mini-Circle	House Meeting	Circle

Weekly Faculty Circle



Faculty
PD
Structure

Wed

4:05-5:00pm

- Each School has their own Circles
- Network Team has their own Circle
- Network join School Circles 1x/month



Turn & Talk

What is compelling about Compass Circles as a purpose-deepening strategy?

How might you apply it in your schools?



A group of young women are sitting in a circle on a dark blue and black patterned carpet. They are engaged in a discussion or activity. The text "YOUR TURN" is overlaid in the center of the image. The women are dressed in casual attire, including hoodies, sweaters, and jeans. Some are looking towards the center, while others are looking towards each other. The background shows a large orange square on the carpet. The overall atmosphere is collaborative and focused.

YOUR TURN



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COMPASS

Workshop Experience

Badge Work

Resonance



WHAT RESONATED?



**WHAT DOES THAT
TELL YOU ABOUT THEM?**



**HOW DOES THAT
MOVE YOU?**

Resonance



WHAT RESONATED?

"I was really struck by..."

"What stood out to me was..."

"I felt _____ when you shared..."



**WHAT DOES THAT
TELL YOU ABOUT THEM?**



**HOW DOES THAT
MOVE YOU?**

Resonance



WHAT RESONATED?

"I was really struck by..."

"What stood out to me was..."

"I felt _____ when you shared..."



**WHAT DOES THAT
TELL YOU ABOUT THEM?**

"And it made me realize..."

"It reminded me that you..."

"That says so much about how you value..."



**HOW DOES THAT
MOVE YOU?**

Resonance



WHAT RESONATED?

"I was really struck by..."

"What stood out to me was..."

"I felt _____ when you shared..."



**WHAT DOES THAT
TELL YOU ABOUT THEM?**

"And it made me realize..."

"It reminded me that you..."

"That says so much about how you value..."



**HOW DOES THAT
MOVE YOU?**

"That makes me feel..."

"That makes me want to support you..."

"You have inspired me to..."

"I feel more closely connected to you..."

Reflection

A monochromatic blue-toned photograph of a person's hands writing in a notebook. The person is wearing a light-colored jacket. The notebook is open, and the left page has some faint, illegible text. The right page is blank. The word "Reflection" is written in a large, white, cursive font across the top of the image, partially overlapping the person's hands and the notebook. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Q & A



Training



Resources

www.valorcollegiate.org/compass



COMPASS
OPEN HOUSE

COMPASS

COMPASS-INTEGRATED ACADEMICS

DIVERSITY

SHARING

GET INVOLVED

This 'scope and sequence' lays out the developmental trajectory of the Valor Compass Disciplines and Habits and is used to align our Compass curriculum.

▶  [DOWNLOAD SPREADSHEET](#)

▶ True North Overview

This resource details our approach to integrating contemplative practices (called

▶ Student Compass Badge Work Curriculum

The Compass Badge Work is the competency-based, self-directed SEL curriculum used in our Compass model used by both scholars and adults in the Valor community. Each phase includes Compass Discipline-based signature experiences, which are experiential and reflection-based and a tracking sheet.

▶  [DOWNLOAD DOCUMENT](#)

▶ Circle Handbook

This resource is a comprehensive handbook of our Circle model, with embedded videos of Circle in action.

▶  [DOWNLOAD DOCUMENT](#)

▶ Faculty Compass Badge Work Curriculum





Daren Dickson, LMFT
darendickson@valorcollegiate.org

Thank you.

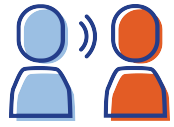




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Commitment-Based **CULTURE**



Turn & Talk

Before adults are going to even think about bringing their whole selves to work, what conditions would need to be in place?



People can only grow so much individually. True growth happens in community. But, communities need to be safe, productive and affirming before people will **show the vulnerability required to truly grow.**

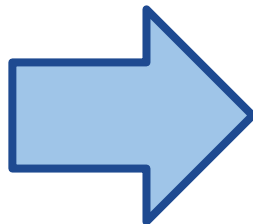


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Building a vulnerability-friendly community

Inputs

- **Commitments**
- **Norms**
- **Routines & Rituals**



Outcomes

- **Safe**
- **Productive**
- **Known**



What does
safe, productive, and known
mean to you?



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People who feel...

Safe



- Know what is expected of them and what to expect from others
- Trust the intentions of others and give goodwill
- Participate in routines and live up to norms in a harmonious manner
- Feel safe to explore, connect with others, and learn

Productive



- Want to do their best for themselves and for others
- Believe they can succeed
- Work their hardest

Known



- Feel like they belong
- Feel like they can be themselves and are valued for who they are
- Are invested in their relationships with others
- Feel like they matter



Think, Pair, Share

Take 5 minutes to self-assess how safe, productive and known you think the adults in your community feel with each other

At our school, how safe, productive and known do people feel?

Safe



Productive



Known





How do we create
safe, productive, and affirming
communities?



Relationship-Based
Communities

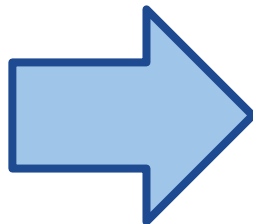


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COMPASS

Building a vulnerability-friendly community

Inputs

- **Commitments**
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Outcomes

- Safe
- Productive
- Known

VALOR COMMITMENTS



I COMMIT TO
KEEPING MYSELF
AND OTHERS SAFE.



I COMMIT TO
SPEAKING FROM MY HEART,
BUT USING MY HEAD.



I COMMIT TO
LEAVING NO COMMUNITY
MEMBER BEHIND.



I COMMIT TO
WORKING THE COMPASS.



I COMMIT TO
SEEKING DIVERSITY
OF PERSPECTIVE.



I COMMIT TO
WALKING MY TALK.



I COMMIT TO
SPEAKING TO THE PERSON,
NOT ABOUT THE PERSON.



I COMMIT TO
SHOWING UP WITH VALOR.

**VALUES
BELIEFS**



COMMITMENTS



**NORMS
RITUALS**

VALUES BELIEFS



COMMITMENTS



NORMS RITUALS

We believe all things can be done with **kindness**.

We commit to speaking to the person, not about the person.

We commit to speaking from the heart, but using our heads.

- Relationship Work
- "Connect and Correct"
- Re-Commitments

VALUES BELIEFS



COMMITMENTS



NORMS RITUALS

We believe all things can be done with **kindness**.

We commit to speaking to the person, not about the person.

We commit to speaking from the heart, but using our heads.

- Relationship Work
- "Connect and Correct"
- Re-Commitments

We believe it takes **valor** to be the best you can be.

We commit to Working the Compass.

We commit to showing up with valor.

- Badge Work
- Circles

Effective Commitments are...

- ✓ A set of agreements on how we will “be” in our relationships and community in order to thrive. These are aspirational and should challenge us to bring our best to how we work together.
- ✓ Aspirationally describe what this would look like at the highest levels, knowing every individual will have to make a conscious effort to live out these agreements
- ✓ Concisely written so that they are easy for all to reference frequently
- ✓ Consistent between students & adults so that you operate as one cohesive community

Misconceptions

- ✓ The commitments are not a set of goals or achievement based commitments (“e.g. I will achieve 80% mastery”) or end mission statement (“We will close the opportunity gap in our school”)
- ✓ Commitments are generally not character traits or habits (“I will be determined and show grit”) - though they can be inspired by them!



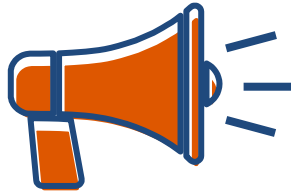
Pro-Tip: Flipping Complaint to Commitment

Reflecting on your self-assessment, write an honest list of complaints, frustrations, or disappointments you're feeling about your community.

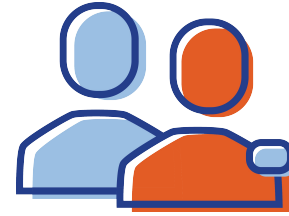
**There's no need to hold back here.
This is a safe space.**

distress
as
testimony

Pro-Tip: Flipping Complaint to Commitment



“I slept terribly last night”



“I am committed to my health and being my best to start each day.”

GIFTS + PASSIONS + IMPACT = PURPOSE

IMPACT

If you had a magic wand, what would you change about the world around you? What problem calls to you? What connections to the world do you feel?



GIFTS

What are your natural skills? These could be things you can't remember learning, that people observe you doing well, and that you lose track of time while doing.

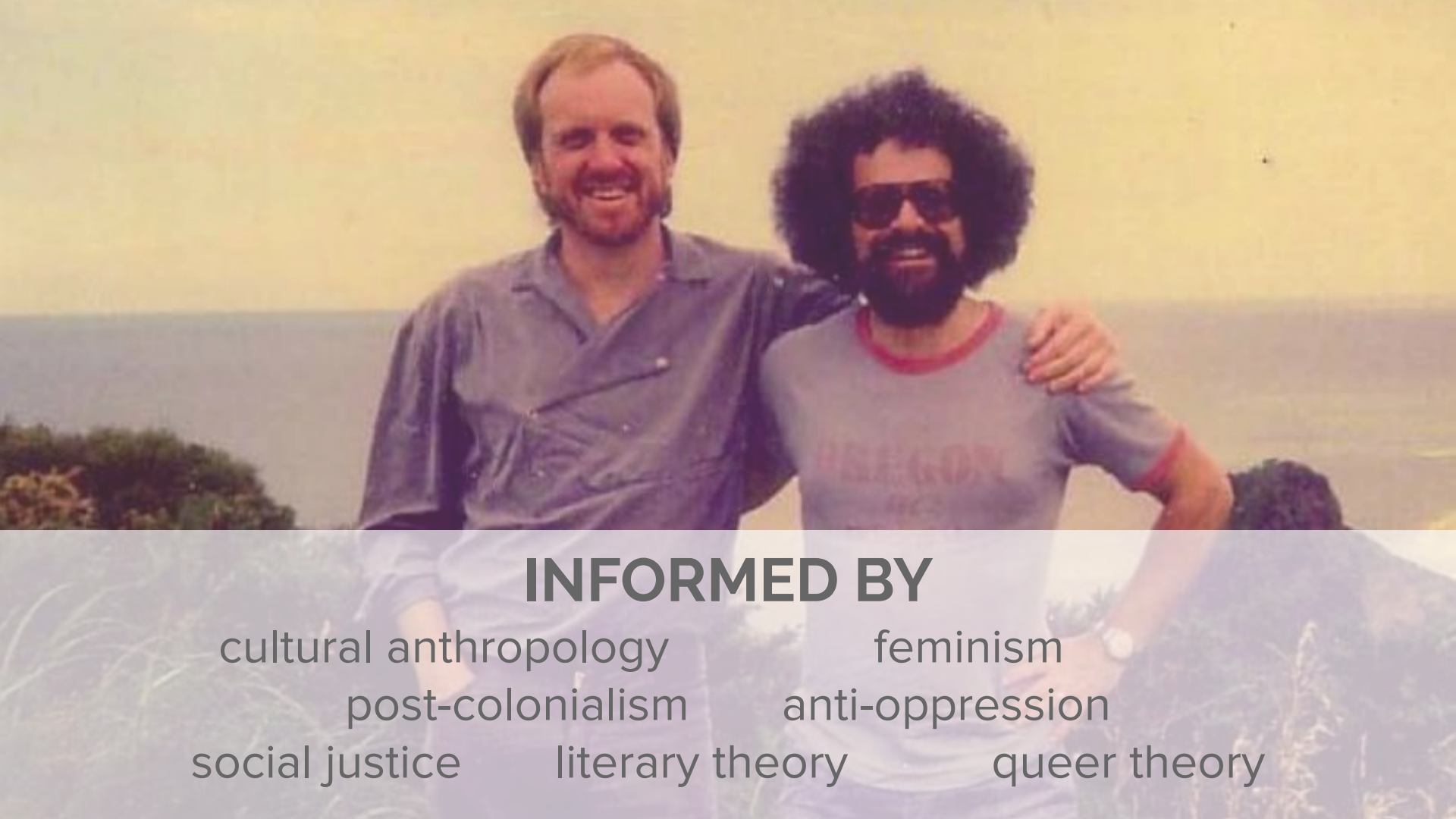
PASSIONS

What are things you love to do? How do you spend your free time? What would be your dream job?





NARRATIVE



INFORMED BY

cultural anthropology

feminism

post-colonialism

anti-oppression

social justice

literary theory

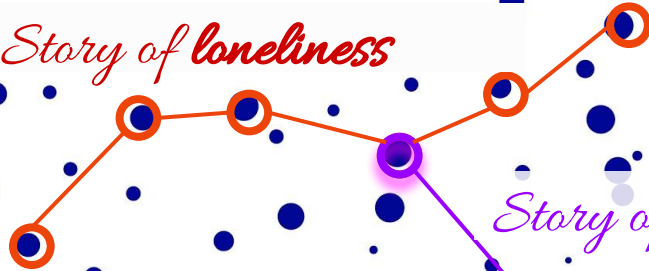
queer theory

IDENTITY is not fixed.

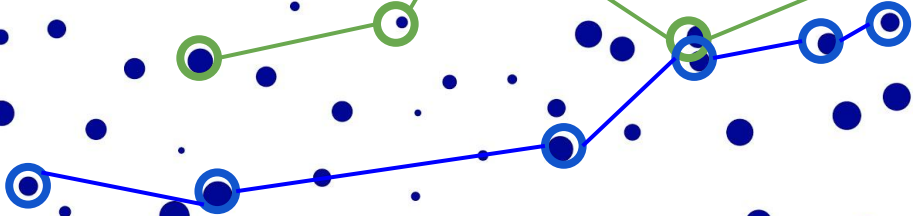
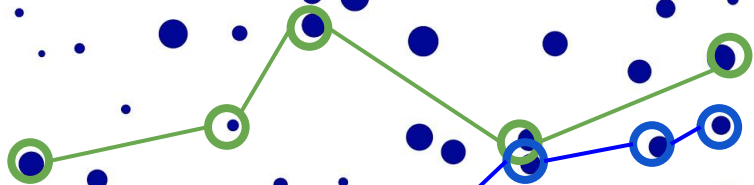
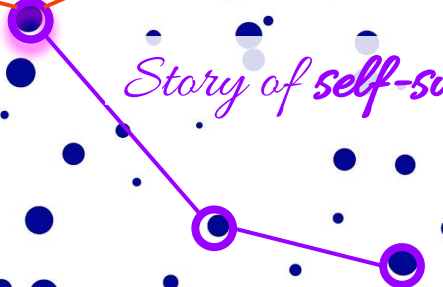
IDENTITY is **negotiated**.

Narrative practices invite a re-engagement
with one's history.

Story of loneliness



Story of self-sufficiency



HEALING



JUSTICE

STORY-TELLER RIGHTS

1. **Everyone has the right** to define their experiences and problems in their own words and terms.
2. **Everyone has the right** to have their life understood in the context of what they have been through and in the context of their relationships with others.
3. **Everyone has the right** to invite others who are important to them to be involved in the process of reclaiming their life from the effects of hardship.
4. **Everyone has the right** not to have problems caused by trauma and injustice located inside them, internally, as if there is some deficit in them. The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem.
5. **Everyone has the right** to have their responses to hard times acknowledged. No one is a passive recipient of hardship. People always respond. People always protest injustice.
6. **Everyone has the right** to have their skills and knowledge of survival of hard times respected, honored and acknowledged.
7. **Everyone has the right** to know and experience that what they have learned through hard times can make a contribution to the lives of others in similar situations.

What if we were vulnerable enough to invite others to be involved in this process?

What if we were privileged enough to witness this process happening in others?



connection

THE VALOR COMPASS



Our Compass model is a comprehensive human development model that is grounded in the foundational elements of what it means to be human. **“Working the Compass”** means growing in body, heart, mind, and spirit in pursuit of excellence in every dimension.



CIRCLE





Circle is the public enactment
of organizational and school
culture.