

GUIDING QUESTIONS
BOARD/SUPT BOOK REVIEW
"RESULTS NOW" BY MIKE SCHMOKER
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1. In 2000, Harvard researcher Richard Elmore describes what he calls the "buffer", a protective barrier between educational institutions and the scrutiny of the outside world. Does the "buffer" really exist? If so, what has been the affect of the "buffer" on how well education works in American schools? What would happen if the "buffer" did not exist?
2. In a quote by Bob Eaker, a DuFour disciple and powerful ally of professional learning communities as a framework for education, he states that, "The traditional school often functions as a collection of independent contractors united by a common parking lot". Clearly, Schmoker is not a fan of isolation in teaching. What are the benefits of "de-privatizing" our instructional practices? What are the dangers of teachers/educators working solely in isolation? What difficulties do you think there are in changing the isolationist culture in American schools?
3. At Mather Elementary School in Massachusetts, the combination of four elements made all the difference in the world in their ability to move their school forward: leadership, teaming, clear standards and accountability. How important are each of these powerful elements? How are these elements visible in Parkrose School District? What else is an important element in improving student achievement?
4. Board member Ed Grassel likes to talk about not only teaching kids to read and write and become literate, he talks about teaching kids to use literacy to think. In Chapter 5, the author also talks about this concept. He states that if kids in poverty are "the way up and out" they need exposure to authentic literacy. What does the book say constitutes "authentic literacy"? Why is it important for kids in poverty and kids of color?
5. AVID, a Parkrose School District framework for learning in grades 8-10, has strategies called WICR that are taught to all students. WICR stands for: Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration and Reading. Under the "I" or Inquiry, we teach high order thinking and questioning. Chapter 6 of our book supports this practice. Schmoker thinks it is laughable how

little these higher order thinking skills are taught or practiced in American classrooms. How did this strategy turn around the school in Central Park East Secondary School in East Harlem? What impressed you about the story of these kids? What does teaching authentic literacy mean to you?