It Takes a Team

I spent this week at the High Schools That Work Conference in New Orleans. As has been my experience for over 20 years, I met many dedicated middle and high school educators focused on creating the brightest possible futures for their students. This year brought a special opportunity for me, to learn when upon arriving, I was asked to be a "fill in" closing keynote speaker for the conference.

I was asked to be uplifting, preparing people to return to their schools around the country. I started my planning by reviewing the opening presentation for the conference, where director **Dr Gene Bottoms** presented the value of and strategies for creating Career Pathways for students.

The purpose of the Career Pathways is to encourage and support students in completing a program of intellectually demanding career tech and academic courses.

Here are a few quotes from Dr Bottoms, that focused my presentation:

"When you look at schools that have really turned around, the entire faculty owns the problem."

"Literacy belongs to every teacher in the building. Every teacher motivates students to read complex grade level materials and to write about it."

"Math is deeply embedded in science and career tech courses."

"Strong guidance and advisement involving parents, teachers and counselors in a common effort is essential."

"Failure of administrators to recognize the points above diminishes the school's effectiveness."

From my review of Dr Bottom's presentation emerged the plan

for my closing keynote, “**Collaboration for Student Success: Education is a Team Sport.”**

I built the keynote around three themes:

Collaboration :
Roland Barth:Teacher relationships: parallel play, adversarial, congenial, collegial
Michael Fullan:Collective Capacity supporting educator learning and commitment
My work with PLCs as teams rather than franchises.

Purpose:
Margaret Wheatly: The need for information flow, rich and diverse relationships, and a common vision.
My work with backwards planning building from a common definition of student achievement.

Optimism:
Alan Loy McGinnis’ work on the power of optimism
Denis Waitley’s definitions of approaching challenges as victims, sustainers, dreamers, or winners.
You can find the keynote Power Point on Author Stream.

A key responsibility of school leaders, administrators, instructional coaches, team and teacher leaders has to be in building a culture that produces shared responsibility and accountability for student overall success…building a team!