



# **Building on a Solid Foundation: Culture in Schools**

**Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
Administrator Meeting – April 23, 2008**

**Donna Peterson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools**

## A quote to get your attention

“...no longer enough for professionals to do their work well. Today’s professionals have an ethical obligation to help transform the toxic settings in which their work is done.”

Spring 2008 National Staff Development Council  
Parker J Palmer’s article, “On the Edge”

# Culture in Webster's Dictionary

“The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.”




# Google Search of School Culture

43,100,000 entries!

# “Positive or Negative?”

A school's culture is ALWAYS at work, either helping or hindering adult learning.

Kent D. Peterson  
Journal of Staff Development  
Summer 2002

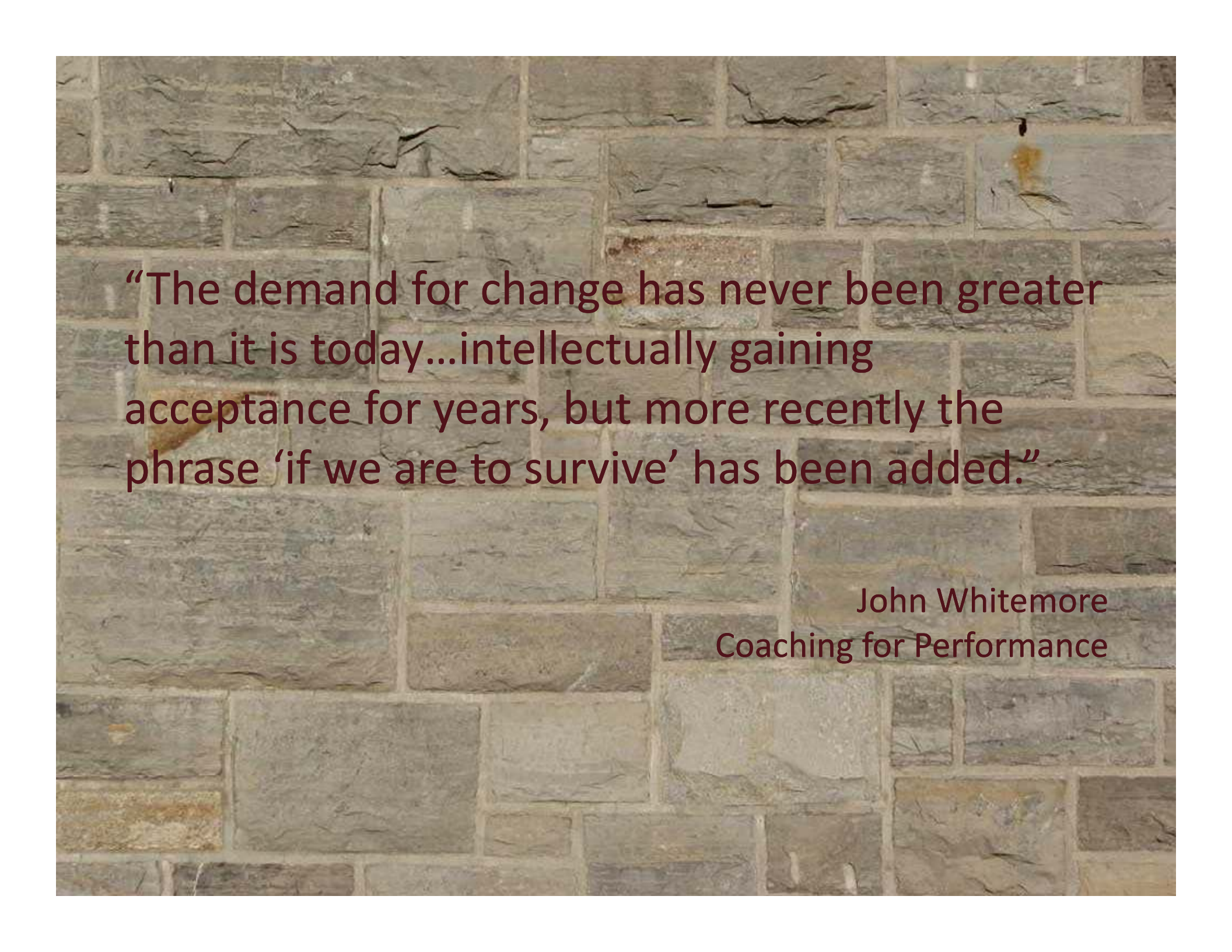


We must change  
specifically from

“Schools as a Place”

to

“Schools as an Experience”



“The demand for change has never been greater than it is today...intellectually gaining acceptance for years, but more recently the phrase ‘if we are to survive’ has been added.”

John Whitemore  
Coaching for Performance

# Pragmatic Reasons for Change

- Increasing global competition
- Technology innovation
- Demographic changes



A close-up photograph of a stone wall with irregularly shaped, grey and brown stones. The wall has a rough, textured appearance. Overlaid on the wall is the text "So change but to what?" in a bold, orange, serif font. Below this, in a smaller, dark red, serif font, is the text "New culture will have to deliver higher levels of performance (performance driven)".

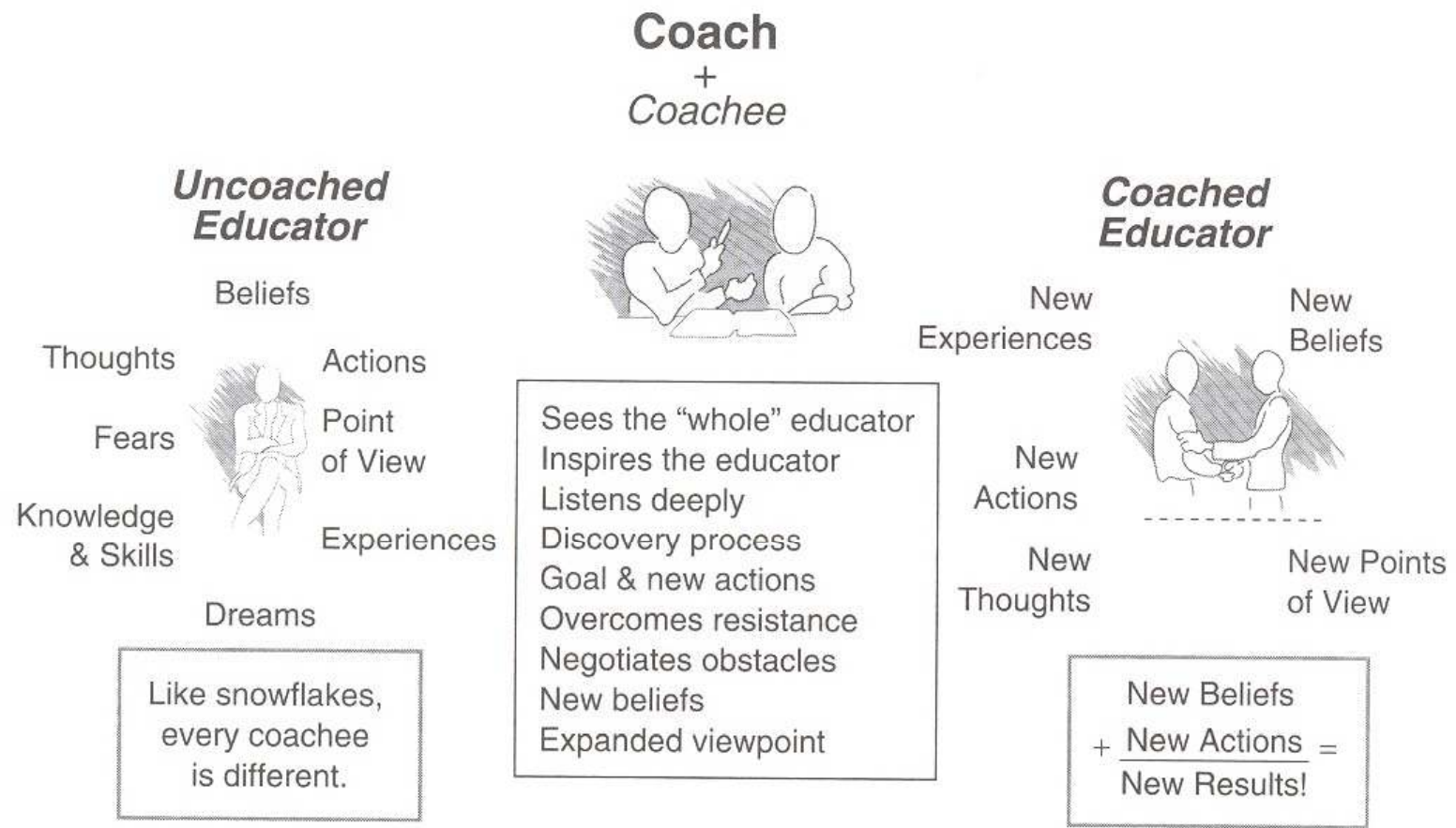
## So change but to what?

New culture will have to deliver higher levels of performance (performance driven)

# Shift from directing the culture to coaching in the culture

	New Culture
Hierarchy	Support
Blame	Honest evaluation
External motivation	Self-motivation
Protective barriers	Teams
Satisfying the boss	Pleasing the customer
Work pressure	Challenging work
Firefighting	Strategic thinking

**Figure 3.1** A Birds-Eye View of the Coach-Coachee Relationship





Demand for involvement and choice is a very broad-based change in our whole society (from push to pull)

# Change is the Norm

When much of what we know is in flux, there must be full acceptance of personal responsibility because it is a **necessity of survival.**