



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

Expectations for Success

Expectations for success represent the extent school staff value academic achievement and hold high expectations for all students. When teachers maintain high expectations, students tend to have higher achievement; in contrast, when teachers have low or negative expectations, student achievement suffers (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006).



Why is it important?

- Educators can have biased expectations based on characteristics such as student gender or socio-ethnic background (Timmermans et al., 2015).
- Teachers who have low expectations for students can foster self-fulfilling prophecies that result in students underperforming (OECD, 2016).
- Students are more likely to be intellectually engaged when both the school and classroom climates reflect high expectations for success (Dunleavy et al., 2012).

In Practice

School leaders can introduce school-wide approaches to learning that set high expectations for all students.



What can schools do?

Schools can implement professional development opportunities that embed a culture of high expectations through:

- **Mixed groupings and choice:** Actively discourage ability-based groupings and introduce choice and autonomy into class assignments by allowing students to choose from a variety of options.
- **Positive classroom climate:** Ensure that learning environments enable students to feel safe and secure, and promote warm, caring relationships that clearly communicate high expectations for all.
- **Use goal setting practices:** Plainly establish the goals of a given lesson paired with detailed feedback to help boost motivation and facilitate student ownership over their own learning.

By instilling beliefs and practices that characterize high-expectation teachers, schools can help support student achievement (McDonald et al., 2016).



In the Classroom

Educators can help ensure that every student reaches their full potential by:

- Challenging personal biases and communicating confidence in and high expectations for all students through overt feedback and non-verbal cues.
- Fostering strong teacher-student relationships that are responsive to students' needs.
- Providing individualized, corrective feedback that guides students to learn from their mistakes.
- Offering differentiated instruction, not differentiated expectations, by developing learning strategies aligned with student needs.
- Using group activities as a means to expose all students to the same rigorous challenges.
- Ensuring that ones' teaching methodologies reflect rigorous, evidence-based, instructional practices (e.g., instructional clarity, targeted feedback etc.).

References

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