



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate Values School Outcomes

Students who value schooling outcomes and meet the formal rules of schooling are considered institutionally engaged. These students feel that what they are learning at school is directly related to their long-term success, and this is reflected in their school and class attendance as well as their effort in completing homework.



Why is it important?

- Many students do not believe their experiences at school have much bearing on their future and therefore fail to be engaged in their learning (Willms, 2003).
- Low levels of institutional engagement in some students may be attributed to a lack of intellectual engagement (Dunleavy, Willms et al., 2012).
- Attitudes toward learning are linked to academic success (Linnenbrink-Garcia & Pekrun, 2011; Voelkl, 1995).
- Institutional engagement refers to active participation in the requirements for school success which, beyond valuing schooling outcomes, also includes attendance and positive homework behaviour (Dunleavy, Milton et al., 2012).

In Practice

Student perceptions of the school experience help shape attitudes towards learning. School leaders can help enhance student perceptions on the importance of learning by strengthening aspects of the school climate.



What can schools do?

School climate can positively influence student perceptions or student attitudes through:

- **The learning climate** - Schools can support a climate conducive to student learning through strategies designed to maximize student engagement and effective use of instructional time.
- **Student-teacher relations** - Positive relationships can be developed by demonstrating interest in students, listening intently to what they have to say, treating them fairly and providing support when needed.
- **The disciplinary climate** - Orderly schools entail a climate where student attention and compliance are expected, and disruptions to learning are addressed.

When students hold positive attitudes about their education this, in turn, improves the climate at school (OECD, 2013).



In the Classroom

Educators can further instill positive attitudes towards schooling by:

- Developing a rapport with students by getting to know them as distinct individuals with unique preferences and perspectives.
- Ensuring curricular relevance by associating learning tasks with each student's personal goals and interests.
- Using activities and examples that help students to make connections between classroom teachings and real-world applications.
- Providing choice within class assignments to allow students to assimilate course materials in personally meaningful ways.
- Maintaining a culture of high academic expectations by facilitating individual growth and encouraging all students to perform to the best of their abilities.
- Demonstrating genuine enthusiasm and excitement for the topic or subject area(s) being taught.

References

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