



School Climate Strategy Resource Guide

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School Climate Strategy Resource Guide

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This guide was created by the School Climate Transformation Project team at the Center for Applied Psychology, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, in collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and Student Support Services at the New Jersey Department of Education. Please share any feedback or recommendations at schoolclimate@doe.nj.gov.

The publications and resources cited or listed in this guide may not represent the opinions, claims, or recommendations of the New Jersey Department of Education or Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Research cited in this guide as evidence of strategy effectiveness is based on the most recent and widely accepted supporting evidence in each strategy area. This guide will be continuously reviewed and revised as new research becomes available. The user is responsible for determining if the linked materials are appropriate for application in a given school community and should adhere to local policies and district approval processes prior to implementing school climate strategies.

Introduction and Overview of School Climate

Welcome to the School Climate Strategy Resource Guide. The purpose of this guide is to support school personnel, particularly administrators and members of School Safety/School Climate Teams (SS/SCT), to be better consumers of programs and services designed to improve school climate. This guide supports specific tasks in a data-driven process to improve school climate, including:

- Identifying a range of evidence-based strategies to address school climate improvement;
- Selecting strategies that are aligned to school climate needs and goals that represent a good fit with the culture and context of school;
- Designing a comprehensive plan for school climate improvement in which strategies are coordinated and connected; and
- Implementing strategies to the highest quality using research-based core components.

School climate is a multi-dimensional concept relating to physical, academic, and social aspects of school life (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments). Students, staff, and families experience school climate, which “reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures” within the environment (National School Climate Council, 2007).

There is growing evidence that school climate influences various aspects of student academic, social and emotional life. Recent studies have shown connections between positive school climate and a number of positive student outcomes, including student engagement, motivation to learn, academic achievement, increased self-esteem and student self-concept, as well as reductions in substance use, aggression, absenteeism, and suspension rates (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2013). Therefore, addressing school climate supports the conditions needed for student learning and positive development.

Assessing school climate is an important first step in planning for improvement, and the [New Jersey School Climate Survey \(NJSCS\)](#) is a tool for measuring conceptual domains, or categories, which together represent a school’s overall environment. The NJSCS is used to collect and analyze objective information from diverse school populations (students, staff, and parents) about perceptions of the school environment (e.g., safety) and the quality of relationships at the school-wide level. These school-wide conditions for learning promote a positive school climate where students and adults feel safe, connected, and supported. The domains, or conditions for learning, are:

Relationships

Parental Support and Engagement

Emotional Environment

Morale in the School Community

Safety

Teaching and Learning

Inclusion and Diversity

Physical Environment

Administration Support (staff only)

(See [Appendix A](#) for full description of these domains.)

How to Use This Guide

The School Climate Strategy Resource Guide supports schools in exploring the most common research-based strategies used to improve school climate, in response to the needs identified through data. This guide supports any school's implementation of the School Climate Change Process included in [Appendix B](#), and could be utilized by Title I schools when developing their [Annual School Plans](#) or as a reason to implement [NJTSS](#). The guide supports schools in assessing the quality and comprehensiveness of strategies currently in place, as well as designing new interventions to address needs indicated through data collection (i.e. survey administration, focus groups, observation data). The strategies described in this guide have been determined to be promising based on existing research, and are expected to lead to positive school climate outcomes when implemented with fidelity and with careful consideration of a school's context.

Strategy Menu Pages

The Strategy Menu pages include a list of strategies grouped by focus or desired outcome (which align with the New Jersey School Climate Survey domains). Each strategy included in the menu has a specific resource page that includes a **description** of the strategy, **supporting evidence** for its effectiveness, and key **"Look Fors,"** or core components, of effective and comprehensive implementation of the strategy. In addition, each strategy-specific page includes a **"Resources"** table that contains a range of web-based, open-access resources and materials. These resources can support the design and implementation of strategies within a school climate improvement plan at all stages, including:

- The exploration, identification, and selection of school climate improvement strategies;
- The process of designing the core components of a selected strategy;
- The implementation of a strategy via materials, models, and examples;
- The process of tracking and monitoring progress; and
- The identification of resources and opportunities to ensure the sustainability of efforts.

"Look Fors" and Universal Components

The **"Look Fors"** in this strategy resource guide represent core components that have been identified through a review of research literature as the practical aspects of a program, strategy, or activity that most likely account for the program's positive outcomes. Schools may use these **"Look Fors"** to design comprehensive, coordinated strategies. The **"Look Fors"** may appear as steps to follow to begin using the strategy and/or key features to be included in its design. The number of **"Look Fors"** and the level of specificity in the checklists vary by strategy.

If you are already implementing a strategy in the guide, consider the number of **"Look Fors"** currently in place in your school and whether you might expand or modify the implementation of certain aspects or activities.

If your school is considering initiating a new strategy, think about your school's context and resources in terms of feasibility and fit for quality implementation of the core components. Considering a set of common **"Universal Components"** is an important step in assessing your school's readiness to incorporate a new school climate strategy. Research supports the importance of the evidence-based components listed on the next two pages.

Universal Components

Leadership

Dedicated school and/or district leadership teams are in place that are representative of the community served, and responsive to feedback.

Example: The School Safety/School Climate Team meets regularly to guide data-driven design and implementation of school climate improvement plans.

Training

Staff training and professional development opportunities are provided to support implementation of a strategy.

Example: Social Emotional Learning training is conducted for staff to prepare them to deliver modules to students and integrate concepts and skills into instructional strategies.

Family Involvement

Family and community members are informed of initiatives, involved in meaningful ways as participants, and are given opportunities to provide feedback on implementation of a strategy.

Example: Parents receive written communication and on-site training to inform them of student attendance policies and the importance of student presence at school. They are invited to a school event to discuss and provide feedback on strategies and supports for preventing absenteeism.

Data-Informed Design

Data are collected and used to identify needs related to the selection and design of a strategy.

Example: Students and staff are surveyed to identify specific areas in need of physical improvement or maintenance within the school building.

Progress Monitoring

Data are collected and used to track progress in implementation of a strategy, make modifications along the way, and track progress toward goal achievement.

Example: The SS/SCT implements a program to reduce harassment, intimidation, and bullying and seeks to reduce the number of referrals for these behaviors. The team meets monthly to review referrals and modify implementation accordingly.

Integration

A strategy is aligned with other strategies and approaches focused on school climate improvement, and is integrated over time (e.g., built into the school schedule).

Example: Peer leaders deliver lessons on social emotional learning topics that align with monthly themes linked to school-wide core values during 40-minute weekly “advisory” meetings throughout the school year.

Resources

The necessary resources (e.g., human, financial) are in place to implement a strategy over time in a sustainable way.

Example: Funds are secured through the budget to ensure air and water in the building are monitored regularly for quality and safety.

Target Group(s)

All members of a group are supported by a strategy (Tier 1), it is implemented only for a specific sub-group needing additional support (Tier 2), and/or the strategy targets individuals with intense support (Tier 3).

Example: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports are implemented at three levels of intensity with all students receiving universal services, select groups receiving additional supports and monitoring, and individual students receive individualized interventions and supports.

Note: The majority of strategies in this resource and corresponding core components are discussed at the Tier 1 universal level; however, data may point to heightened needs within specific sub-groups or for individual students.

Strategies Connected to School Climate Domains

This guide includes a number of evidence-based strategies to promote the NJSCS conditions for learning. These strategies are organized into the following three areas:

- Strategies to **influence how members of the community interact** with one another
- Strategies related to **feelings of safety and connectedness to the school** environment
- Pedagogical practices and norms to **support teaching and learning conditions** in all classrooms

Each strategy area is described below, followed by specific NJSCS domains used to measure strategy-related school climate outcomes.

Strategies to Influence How Members of the Community Interact with One Another

This section focuses on how stakeholders in the school community get along with one another in various settings with the goal of building strong interpersonal relationships across all groups. Strategies focus on developing social and emotional competencies for students, staff, and parents in support of positive attitudes and behaviors. Strategies also emphasize equitable, inclusive and restorative approaches in response to negative behaviors and interactions.

Primary NJSCS domains used to measure progress: *Relationships, Emotional Environment, Inclusion and Diversity, Parental Support and Engagement, Administration Support (for staff only)*

Strategies Related to Feelings of Safety and Connectedness to the School Environment

This section focuses on how community members feel about their school. It includes strategies that address perceptions of the physical environment, conditions of safety and security in and around the building, as well as efforts to promote greater school pride through attendance policies and supports, student voice, and empowerment.

Primary NJSCS domains used to measure progress: *Physical Environment, Morale in the School Community, Safety, Emotional Environment, Relationships, Administration Support (for staff only)*

Pedagogical Practices and Norms to Support Teaching and Learning Conditions in All Classrooms

This section includes interconnected, research-based classroom practices that create optimal conditions for teaching and learning in any content area. Unlike the previous sections, this section is set up as a number of related practices, organized by the type of approach, each with its own set of distinct “Look Fors.”

The pedagogical practices and norms are described so that individual teachers can reference the “Look Fors” and resources to support their practice in the classroom. The descriptions are also designed to help school leaders consider the extent to which supports, such as training or mentoring, are in place to norm how classrooms should run school-wide. Strategies focus on the promotion of student engagement and motivation, teachers’ high expectations for students, and the implementation of predictable routines and procedures that maximize the time available for teaching and learning.

Primary NJSCS domains used to measure progress: *Teaching and Learning, Emotional Environment, Morale in the School Community, Physical Environment, Inclusion and Diversity, Relationships*

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Strategies to influence how members of the community interact with one another

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Note: Unlike the previous sections, the following section on “Pedagogical Practices and Norms to Support Teaching and Learning Conditions in All Classrooms” includes sets of research-based pedagogical practices organized under four primary approaches. Each practice includes a unique set of “Look Fors” to support teachers in improving classroom practices and enable school leaders to consider to what extent these classroom norms and practices are promoted school-wide.

Prosocial and Emotional Strategies for All School Stakeholders

Social and Emotional Learning

Description

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2017). SEL programs and initiatives begin with providing the definitions and examples of social skills, along with related opportunities for social skill and character development through modeling and reinforcement. It includes five social and emotional competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making, and Relationship Skills.

Progress monitoring of SEL development is a growing area of research that suggests the importance of measuring SEL alongside other data sources in a comprehensive school climate assessment. CASEL is creating an online space for SEL assessment, starting with an upcoming [SEL Assessment Guide](#). Transforming Education provides a [Policy Brief on a data-informed approach to SEL](#) to support administrators and leaders in decision making.

Supporting Evidence

There is a large and growing body of literature supporting the importance of social and emotional learning and related positive outcomes. Looking at data from 213 studies, researchers found that students who received SEL programs had better academic achievement, improved conduct and prosocial behavior, and reduced emotional distress, and that the benefits are long-lasting (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). High quality implementation is important to a program's effectiveness (Dusenberry & Weissberg, 2017). A research-based approach effective in promoting SEL is the integration of SEL skill instruction, general teaching practices, or both, as part of a broader academic curriculum (Dusenberry & Weissberg, 2017).

"Look Fors"

- Teach definitions of concepts related to emotions and skills (e.g., active listening, empathy, emotional self-management)
- Deliver professional development on "how" to enact SEL skills
- Design and deliver learning experiences (including free-standing lessons, integration of SEL skill instruction as part of academic curriculum)
- Use cooperative learning strategies (e.g., Jigsaw) to provide practice opportunities for SEL skills
- Create/modify school-wide organizational structures and policies to support SEL
- Adopt teaching practices to support SEL in classrooms and school-wide
- Address the five social and emotional competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making, and Relationship Skills
- Integrate and reinforce SEL knowledge and skills within academic curriculum, across contexts and content areas
- Integrate SEL throughout the school year (instead of a one-time approach)
- Integrate SEL outside of the classroom (e.g., cafeteria, playground, recess, school bus)
- Coordinate SEL with training and prevention/intervention for behaviors outside of school (i.e., anti-bullying approaches)

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Direct Teaching of Social and Emotional Learning Concepts

Resource	Description	Access at:
Instructional Practices that Support SEL Research-To-Practice Brief, from Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research	This tool provides definitions and examples of SEL skill competencies and instructional teaching practices to support SEL.	Instructional Practices that Support SEL Research To Practice Brief
Character Lab	This site provides tools to directly teach and measure skills including self-control, purpose, grit, etc. in the classroom.	Character Lab
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Resource Finder, from the University of British Columbia	This site provides a collection of resources to help individuals learn about SEL, apply teaching methodologies, and assess efforts.	SEL Resource Finder
Social and Emotional Learning in Practice: A Toolkit of Practical Strategies and Resources, from Youth Development Insight at University of Minnesota Extension	This toolkit is available from the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development. Include a readiness inventory, skill-building lesson plans, feedback templates, and activities.	Social and Emotional Learning in Practice: A Toolkit of Practical Strategies and Resources
Guides to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs, from Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)	Grade-specific guides (Preschool/Elementary and Middle School/High School) from CASEL provide a systematic framework for evaluating the quality of classroom-based SEL programming. The components of each program are explored to assist schools in selecting programs that best fit their unique needs and characteristics.	Guides to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs
Kindness in the Classroom Lesson Plans from Random Acts of Kindness	These are free K-12 lesson plans to teach SEL skills in a classroom, project, or club setting. The page links to educator resources, games and activities, and other tools.	Kindness in the Classroom Lesson Plans
Social and Emotional Learning Resources from New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)	This resource page includes links to NJ SEL Competencies, Sub-Competencies, and resources for schools and families.	NJDOE SEL Resources
"How Teachers Can Build Social Emotional Learning Skills," a webinar from Education Week	This is a webinar for developing and supporting SEL competencies and understanding among adults. It includes a link to teacher SEL self-assessment.	"How Teachers Can Build SEL Skills" Webinar

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Social and Emotional Learning Practice and Reinforcement

Resource	Description	Access at
“Promoting Social-Emotional Development and Physical Well-Being,” a journal issue from Educator’s Voice, New York State United Teachers Journal of Best Practices in Education	This volume provides a range of classroom practices and examples that emphasize social-emotional learning (i.e. mindfulness).	Journal on "Promoting Social-Emotional Development and Physical Well-Being"
“Integrating SEL into the Common Core Standards,” an article from Greater Good Science Center at University of California, Berkeley	This article explores examples of the alignment between Common Core standards and CASEL’s social and emotional learning outcomes.	Integrating SEL into the Common Core Standards
Incorporating Social and Personal Competencies Into Classroom Instruction and Educator Effectiveness, a toolkit from Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research	This toolkit includes an overview of classroom practices and instructional strategies to promote emotional safety and SEL application.	Incorporating Social and Personal Competencies Into Classroom Instruction and Educator Effectiveness
“You Got It! Teaching Social and Emotional Skills,” an article from Beyond the Journal at National Association for the Education of Young Children	This article provides resources for teaching and modeling social skills, including classroom strategies for modeling and reinforcement.	You Got It! Teaching Social and Emotional Skills
Twelve Games to Teach Students Social-Emotional Learning, a resource page from Playworks	This site provides descriptions of playground games tied to SEL skills from Playworks, an evidence-based organization.	Twelve Games to Teach Students Social-Emotional Learning
Grades 6-8 Worksheets for Reinforcing Social and Emotional Skills from Scholastic	These activities and supportive worksheets/graphic organizers help students in grades 6-8 understand the concepts of attitude, behavior, group membership, conflict, etc.	Grades 6-8 Worksheets for Reinforcing Social and Emotional Skills
Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement	This website includes free programs, resources, and information on SEL with students from various grade-levels.	Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
Social and Emotional Learning Resources from Preparing Youth to Thrive	This link provides SEL curriculum and supports, including a focus on after school and out of school settings.	Social and Emotional Learning Resources
The Calm Classroom Initiative	Free mindfulness training app for educators to help them teach these skills to students.	The Calm Classroom Initiative

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Prosocial and Emotional Strategies for All School Stakeholders

Build Supportive Staff-Student Relationships

Description

The quality of relationships between staff members and students, and especially those between students and their teachers, can have important long and short-term impacts. Teachers can build relationships with students by getting to know them as individuals, pursuing opportunities to check-in around student interests, and finding opportunities to encourage students and promote their success inside and outside of the classroom. Academic support techniques, disciplinary style, cultural competency, implicit beliefs/biases, and other factors may influence the quality of student-teacher relationships. School-wide strategies to build [cultural competency](#) can also support teachers in building caring relationships with students.

Supporting Evidence

Students who experience high quality student-teacher relationships have more engagement in the classroom and better academic performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Strong teacher-student relationships can help with students' relationships with other children (Elledge, Elledge, Newgent, & Cavell, 2016).

Look Fors

Inside of the classroom:

- Communicate high expectations for all students
- Involve and call on students equitably
- Build students' sense of pride in work and abilities
- Use progressive discipline approaches (e.g., restorative practices)
- Use activities to help staff uncover [implicit biases](#) and inequities or disciplinary disparities in the classroom
- Demonstrate caring on an interpersonal and individual level
- Identify shared interests between adults and students
- Greet students as they enter the classroom
- Use stress management techniques to avoid frustration responses (e.g., play calming music)

Outside of the classroom:

- Adopt school-wide structures for teachers to help support the needs of students (e.g., advisory, extracurricular activities)
- Follow up with individual students to reinforce pride/expectations or check in after using discipline
- Provide opportunities for students and staff to come together around shared interests (e.g., students vs. staff competitions, extracurricular activities)

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Build Supportive Staff-Student Relationships

Resource	Description	Access at:
Creating Opportunities through Relationships (COR)	These are five 60-90 minute-long, free online professional development/learning modules for teachers. Certificate provided upon completion.	Creating Opportunities through Relationships
"Improving Student's Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning," an article from American Psychological Association (APA)	This site provides a toolkit and teachers' modules on promoting teacher-student relationships to provide essential supports for learning, from the American Psychological Association.	Improving Student's Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning
"Strategies to Ensure Introverted Students Feel Valued at School," an article from Mindshift at	This is an interview with an author of books focused on supporting and teaching introverted students, highlighting major points of the book.	Strategies to Ensure Introverted Students Feel Valued at School
"Teaching Introverted Students: How a 'Quiet Revolution' is Changing Classroom Practice," an article from Education	This article describes Susan Cain's work and research teaching introverted students as presented in her book, <i>Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking</i> .	Teaching Introverted Students
"5 Tips for Better Relationships With Your Students," an article from National Education Association	This article, "5 Tips for Better Relationships With Your Students," includes information for building positive relationships with students, and links to other articles and tools provided by NEA.	5 Tips for Better Relationships With Your Students
"Developing Positive Teacher-Student Relations," a chapter from <i>The Educator's Guide to Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems</i>	This book chapter includes evidence-based information, tips, and tools to improve teacher-student relationships in and beyond the classroom.	Developing Positive Teacher-Student Relations

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Prosocial and Emotional Strategies for All School Stakeholders

Peer Mentoring and Peer Leadership

Description

Peer mentoring and peer leadership refer to programs in which older youth (mentor) are matched with younger students (mentee) for the purpose of developing strong bonds and trusting relationships over time. Mentors guide and support the academic, social and emotional development of mentee(s). These programs are grounded in a positive youth development framework with a focus on relationship building that involves intensive mentor training, monitoring and evaluation of peer-to-peer activities (Karcher, 2007; Garringer & MacRae, 2008).

Supporting Evidence

Research suggests peers can have a powerful influence on behavior (Lui, Zhao, Chen, Falk, & Albarracin, 2017), and a well-implemented peer mentoring/leadership program that provides social and emotional supports for students can be a reliable mechanism for providing student support and learning (Johnson, Simon, & Mun, 2014). Benefits for mentees include: increased connectedness to school, feelings of competency and self-efficacy, improved academic achievement, and increased prosocial behaviors and attitudes. The primary benefits for mentors include connectedness to school, self-esteem, empathy and moral reasoning, intrapersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, and better relationships with parents (Karcher, 2009; Karcher, 2007; Garringer & MacRae, 2008).

“Look Fors”

- Support student-led development of clear and defined goals (e.g., relationship focus for peer mentoring, academic focus for peer tutoring, problem-solving focus for peer counseling, and health education focus for peer education/leadership)
- Provide training for adult supervisors of student mentors
- Create a student mentor/leader recruitment and selection process that is a combination of student/staff nominations, applications, interviews and yields a diverse mix of influential students
- Provide initial student leader training on program roles and responsibilities, leadership skills, group development theory and practice, active listening, problem solving and teamwork
- Structure ongoing supports for student mentors/leaders
- Make appropriate matches between mentor/leader(s) and mentee(s) which take into account individual characteristics (e.g., grades, race, ethnicity, interests) and potential group dynamics
- Integrate mentor/mentee meetings into the school schedule
- Schedule consistent meetings (at the proper duration and intensity) using structured curricula that encourage active engagement and opportunities for spontaneous activities
- End with closure activities that involve reflections on experiences, exploration of feelings, celebratory events, and/or plan for potential re-matching

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Peer Mentoring and Peer Leadership

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Elements for Effective Practice in Mentoring, 4 th Edition,” from MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership	This is a research-informed guide to implementing a peer mentoring program.	Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring
“Cross Age Peer Mentoring: Research in Action,” from MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership	This guide includes a series of research articles written by leaders in the field that summarize pertinent topics related to cross-age peer mentoring.	Cross Age Peer Mentoring: Research in Action
“Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs,” a guide from Mentoring Resource Center	This guide from the Mentoring Resource Center provides examples and resources for planning a peer mentoring program.	Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools
Michael Karcher Website	Michael Karcher’s website links to research and work in peer mentoring.	Michael Karcher Website
“Peer Leadership: Helping Youth Become Change Agents In Their Schools And Communities,” a guide from Partners Against Hate	A research-informed guidebook on implementing a peer leadership program. See section 3 for components of effective implementation.	Peer Leadership: Helping Youth Become Change Agents In Their Schools And Communities
“Peer Leadership Program for Students Boosts a Whole School’s Well-Being,” from the National Association of Independent Schools	An article on one school’s process of implementing a peer leadership program.	Peer Leadership Program for Students Boosts a Whole School’s Well-Being

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Staff Relationship and Collaboration Strategies

Supportive and Transformational Leadership

Description

Supportive and transformational leadership establishes norms that promote communication, trust, staff capacity and accountability (Muhammad, 2018) and involves what Moolenaar, Daly, & Slegers (2010) describe as “the leader’s ability to increase commitment capacity and engagement in meeting goals” (p. 624). Common behaviors of transformational leaders include modeling and influencing positive behaviors, inspiring and motivating others to do their best, paying attention to individual needs, and promoting innovation (Bayler, 2012).

Supporting Evidence

Multiple research studies associate supportive and transformational leadership to several positive staff outcomes such as a greater staff investment in change and innovation, as well as greater productivity and commitment (Moolenaar et al., 2010). As a strategy for school climate change, enacting supportive and transformational leadership can strengthen administration and staff relationships, leading to positive outcomes for students. Additionally, research suggests expressions of compassion from leadership and staff are associated with greater organizational commitment and emotional vigor, and can reduce burnout (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016).

“Look Fors”

- Promote norms that encourage staff input, trust, collaboration (e.g., be on time, be honest, no hidden agendas, be willing to take risks, share information openly, support without sidebars)
- Model trust and community-building behaviors consistently, such as risk-taking, openness, and feedback
- Encourage innovative thinking and creative problem solving among staff
- Use debate and dissent among staff as valuable opportunities to learn about staff needs
- Support staff autonomy in making decisions and knowing what is best for students
- Be consistent and follow through on decisions
- Be proactive in resolving conflicts
- Communicate expectations clearly
- Engage in frequent conversations with staff
- Involve staff in shared visioning and decision making
- Promote community-building activities in varied contexts (e.g., share-outs at staff meetings, lunch and learns in the faculty lounge) and encourage staff to innovate new ways to connect
- Be compassionate and understand the individual needs of staff as well as their unique talents and potential
- Use varied approaches to regularly recognize and praise colleagues for collaborative contributions (e.g., reward and recognize based on cooperation rather than competition to create greater cohesion across staff)

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Supportive and Transformational Leadership

Resource	Description	Access at:
School Leadership resource page from the Knowledge Center at The Wallace Foundation Website	Among their many resources, The Wallace Foundation website includes several guides, reports and videos focused on school leadership.	School Leadership Resource Page
“Turning Points Transforming Middle Schools: Guide to Collaborative Culture and Shared Leadership,” from Center for Collaborative Education	This guide describes the rationale for shared leadership, the roles in a shared leadership model, and the skills required of those participating.	Guide to Collaborative Culture and Shared Leadership
“Building Trusting Relationships for School Improvement,” from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NREL)	This booklet examines the issue of trust within the context of school improvement, looking specifically at teacher-teacher and teacher-principal relationships. It draws on existing research as well as the experiences of individual schools.	Building Trusting Relationships for School Improvement
“Establishing Supportive Relationships between Teachers Staff and Students,” a presentation from National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	This presentation focuses on developing supportive relationships between teachers, staff, and students.	Establishing Supportive Relationships between Teachers Staff and Students
“Improving Relationships within the Schoolhouse,” an article in Educational Leadership from ASCD	This article describes the benefits and some “how to’s” for nurturing stronger staff relationships.	Improving Relationships within the Schoolhouse
“Shared and Supportive Leadership,” an article in Issues About Change: Launching Professional Learning Communities from American Institute for Research (AIR)	This issue in a series of briefing papers on school reform covers shared and supportive leadership as a core component for launching Professional Learning Communities.	Shared and Supportive Leadership

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Staff Relationship and Collaboration Strategies

Professional Learning Communities

Description

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) involve using data and research-based information to drive dialogue and decision making with colleagues about the work of teaching. It differs from traditional forms of professional development that are less collaborative and more passive in the transfer of knowledge and information. Key research-based characteristics of PLCs include shared vision, values and norms; trust among members; data-driven dialogue; supportive and shared leadership; and open sharing with constructive feedback. At the core of PLCs is a focus on student learning and staff collaboration (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). Effective PLCs are customized to the context of the school, data-driven, research-based, and open to multiple stakeholder perspectives (Vangrieken, Meredith, Packer, & Kyndt, 2017; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

Supporting Evidence

Research shows that student performance improves when adults in schools trust each other and collaborate (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Collaborative inquiry is a practice used in professional learning communities to promote teachers working together through the use of data to solve common teaching challenges (Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006; Nelson, Slavit, Perkins, & Hawthorn, 2008). Professional learning communities promote a culture of collaboration among staff that focuses on student learning, continuous opportunities for staff professional development, shared leadership among staff and administration, and deeper understanding of current issues. When implemented using core research-based components, PLCs increase student learning, improve teacher instruction, and improve teachers' feelings of self-efficacy (Vescio et al; 2008; Pirtle & Tobia, 2014).

“Look Fors”

- Establish clear PLC goals and scope (e.g., experimental practice, problem solve a specific classroom, grade-level or student issue, address a work environment/climate issue)
- Engage in a process of examining and solving classroom challenges and explore opportunities to improve student learning
- Consider group member dynamics when forming learning communities and be aware of their influence on how those dynamics may impact member interactions (e.g., consider demographics such as age, gender, race, position at school, years of experience)
- Create conditions for success such as arranging space and time to meet regularly and access to necessary resources
- Establish group norms that build trust and promote collaboration, such as:
 - Share classroom experiences and challenges openly (e.g., invite colleagues into classroom for observation)
 - Facilitate reflective dialogue and caring, constructive conversations that involve acknowledging feelings, asking questions, giving feedback
 - Collaborate to identify evidence-based solutions that are appropriate for the classroom
 - Take risks and experiment with new research-based methods
- Use data from multiple sources (e.g., surveys, reports, interviews) to drive discussions and collaborative inquiry on a specific problem or challenge
- Use relevant research to inform discussion and decisions about areas of need or concern
- Promote shared leadership and decision making to encourage teacher confidence and sense of autonomy
- Invite external consultants/experts (if necessary) to lead further diagnosis of a problem area

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Professional Learning Communities

Resource	Description	Access at:
Professional Learning Community (PLC) Resource Page, from American Institutes for Research (AIR)	This page has links to assessments, briefs, and resources related to developing professional learning communities.	PLC Resources from AIR
“The Collaborative Teams Toolkit,” from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)	This toolkit is intended to help schools establish productive collaborative teams of teachers and administrators working and learning together using student data to drive evidence-based conversations.	The Collaborative Teams Toolkit
All Things PLC	This is a collaborative site focused on all things PLC.	All Things PLC
Tools for Learning Schools webpage, from Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association	This website provides tools, guides, and e-learning resources for leading professional learning communities.	Tools for Learning Schools
“Collaborative Inquiry: A Facilitator’s Guide,” from Learning Forward Ontario	This guide provides a four-stage model for collaborative inquiry.	Collaborative Inquiry: A Facilitator’s Guide
School Reform Initiative (SRI)	This website provides protocols and resources for facilitating productive conversations among staff in PLCs.	School Reform Initiative
Faculty Survey, from Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003	This questionnaire is designed to supplement data from the New Jersey School Climate Survey and help staff better understand the quality of staff relationships in schools to initiate a data-based dialogue.	Faculty Survey
“Norms: Put the ‘Golden Rule’ into Practice for Schools,” from National Staff Development Council’s Tools for Schools	This article outlines steps and provides tools for establishing group norms.	Norms: Put the ‘Golden Rule’ into Practice for Schools

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Staff Relationship and Collaboration Strategies

Collective Visioning on Student Learning

Description

Collective visioning is the product of an agreement among administrators and staff (with input from families) about the philosophy or vision for student learning and well-being. A shared vision is future-oriented, inspires and motivates, and connects to an organization's core values or beliefs about the work. Goals and roles are important for translating these visions and values into practical measurable targets and tasks. The use of a common language and shared problem solving among staff are common indicators of schools with enacted vision statements (Muhammed, 2018).

All stakeholders, including students, instructional staff, non-instructional staff (certified and non-certified), administration, and parents, should have an opportunity to participate in the development of a school's vision for learning and have roles and responsibilities in the delivery of activities that support it (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013; Barth, 2006). Leaders are ultimately responsible for monitoring and setting clear expectations for advancing toward a vision (Bond, 2004).

See the blue section on [High Academic Expectations](#) for supporting resources in this area.

Supporting Evidence

Leveraging stakeholders' knowledge, skills and resources in school-wide decisions and planning can lead to higher quality outcomes, more sustainable efforts over time, and greater trust among individuals in an organization. Research shows that in schools where leaders develop trust and promote collaborative relationships among staff, student performance improves. (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Tschannen & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen & Gareis, 2015; Kruse, Louis & Bryk, 1994; Hughes & Pickeral, 2013).

"Look Fors"

- Structure multiple opportunities for staff, parents and students to discuss ideas for the best ways to promote student learning in the community (e.g., parent focus groups, staff visioning sessions, student focus groups)
- Use relevant research to drive discussions about the importance of student learning for student growth and future success
- Use local data to ground the discussion in the needs of the community
- Establish effective group norms and ground rules that ensure all staff, parents and student have a voice in the discussion (e.g., share information openly to benefit whole group, listen and be open-minded before jumping to conclusions, use data to back up your point of view, use of talking sticks)
- Develop a common language among staff for problem-solving and student learning
- Emphasize how the efforts of all stakeholders (students, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, administration, and parents) are essential to achieving the vision
- Identify critical roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders in executing the vision
- Monitor progress over time to guide modifications and share and celebrate successes

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Collective Visioning on Student Learning

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Vision, Leadership, and Change,” an article in “Issues about Change: Visioning,” from American Institutes for Research (AIR)	This paper focuses on vision, its definition, and provides a process for the collaborative development of a shared vision.	Vision, Leadership, and Change
“Developing a Vision and a Mission,” a chapter from <i>How to Help Your School Thrive without Breaking the Bank</i> , ASCD	This chapter outlines the key steps and activities for developing a vision and a mission for your school.	Developing a Vision and Mission
“Shared Vision,” a chapter from <i>Assessment in the Learning Organization</i> , ASCD	This chapter summarizes how to create a collaborative vision.	Shared Vision
“Norms: Put the ‘Golden Rule’ into Practice for Schools,” from National Staff Development Council’s Tools for Schools	This article outlines steps and provides tools for establishing group norms.	Norms: Put the ‘Golden Rule’ into Practice for Schools

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Staff Relationship and Collaboration Strategies

Collegial Supports for New and Experienced Staff (e.g., mentoring, critical friends, consultation)

Description

Collegial supports reduce isolation among school staff and may include any combination of peer mentoring, consultation, coaching or teaming. New or experienced staff may engage in these connections. For new teachers, collegial supports are often a part of a new teacher induction program, while experienced staff may create less formal connections that are flexible and tailored to their ongoing growth. Topics covered often include curriculum, instruction, technology, and classroom management.

Supportive Evidence

Connecting teachers to mentors increases new teacher retention (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009) and reduces burnout among experienced teachers (Bressman, 2018). Burnout is common and is often fueled by the inherent isolation of teachers at work. Connecting with others through mentoring and consultation can be beneficial and a source of support while improving teaching practice to support students (Bressman, 2018). Research also suggests expressions of compassion from peers are associated with greater organizational commitment and emotional vigor and can reduce burnout (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016).

“Look Fors”

- Promote trust by ensuring that the mentoring relationship is separate from any formal evaluation process
- Ensure mentors possess the necessary skills and motivation to inspire mentees, and train mentors in the areas of effective coaching, observation, and feedback strategies,
- Provide sufficient release time for new teachers to receive specialized support from mentors
- Integrate sustained social and emotional supports rather than focusing only on technical aspects of teaching in the mentoring or coaching relationship
- Involve mentees in the mentor selection process to increase comfort level and compatibility
- Tailor mentoring, critical friends or consultation to needs of experienced teachers, keeping it flexible and collaborative in its design
- Mix online communication with face-to-face interactions and use technology to offer virtual visits to classrooms outside the school
- Create ad hoc opportunities for peer support at professional development trainings for idea-sharing among colleagues

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Collegial Supports for New and Experienced Staff

Resource	Description	Access at:
Educator Mentoring and Induction Support, from New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit, from NJDOE	These webpages provide guidelines and supports for teacher induction programs in New Jersey.	Educator Mentoring and Induction Support Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit
“Teacher Stress and Health,” Issue Brief from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	This report provides research and recommendations for addressing teacher stress and health from Penn State and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.	Teacher Stress and Health
“The Good Mentor,” from Educational Leadership, ASCD	This article outlines the qualities of an effective mentor.	The Good Mentor Article
WOOP Approach	An evidence-based strategy to support achievement of personal and professional goals.	WOOP My Life WOOP At Character Lab
Reflective Teacher Coaching	This site provides supports and resources to coaches of beginning teachers.	Reflective Teacher Coaching
“Teachers’ Tools for Building Productive Relationships with Paraeducators Considerations Packet,” from William and Mary Training and Technical Assistance Center	This packet focuses on resources for developing effective working relationships between teachers and paraprofessionals.	Teachers’ Tools for Building Productive Relationships with Paraeducators Considerations Packet
“Teachers’ Perspective: Improving Relationships with Paraprofessionals 5 Tips,” from Common Ground, a project of the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities	This article highlights five key elements for developing a positive working relationship between teachers and paraprofessionals for creating a supportive learning environment for students.	Teachers’ Perspective: Improving Relationships with Paraprofessionals: 5 Tips
Paraprofessional/ Paraeducator Resources from Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA)	This site provides links to training and resources for paraprofessionals.	ETCA Paraprofessional/ Paraeducator Resources

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Prevention and Positive Behavior Management

School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (e.g., NJ PBSIS)

Description

According to Horner, Sugai, and Lewis (2015), school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) “is a systems approach to establishing the social culture and behavioral supports needed for all children in a school to achieve both social and academic success” (p. 1). Sugai and Horner (2009) state that SWPBIS is not a program but a process that involves the use of evidence-based practices for classroom management and development of non-punitive discipline systems (as cited in Solomen, Klein, Hintze, Cressey, & Peller, 2012). SWPBIS is implemented at three tiers of intensity with universal Tier 1, serving all students in the school, Tier 2 serving specific at-risk groups of students, and Tier 3 serving individual needs of students (Horner, Sugai & Anderson, 2010). Some key features through all levels/tiers are the use of positive reinforcement and functional behavioral assessment, an emphasis on prevention of negative behaviors, an instructional focus on behavioral expectations, use of evidence-based behavioral practices, and infusion of the approach within the school system and existing structures (Horner et al., 2010).

The tiered system of support helps staff proactively and positively address the individualized behavior support needs of all students using a continuum of interventions to address climate, culture and social conduct in school settings over time. Typically Tier 2 and 3 supports are discontinued once a student’s needs have been met.

For examples of [positive behavioral approaches](#) to use in the classroom, refer to the blue section of this guide.

Supporting Evidence

Research connects Tier 1 implementation of SWPBIS (primary prevention for all students) to positive school climate outcomes related to improved perceptions of safety (Horner, Sugai, Smolkowski, Todd, Nakasato, & Esperanza, 2009); organizational effectiveness of schools (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009); organizational health within schools (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2009); reduction in suspensions and discipline referrals; as well as demonstrating promising links to academic achievement in some groups (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). Research also shows promising effects of SWPBIS in reducing problem behaviors at multiple tiers across demographic settings and across school contexts (classrooms and unstructured settings) (Solomen et al., 2012).

A PBIS framework requires leadership, training, and systems-level supports to be in place for effective implementation of practices. Please consult the resources and other supporting strategies in this guide as well as professionals in this area of work for guidance on the design and delivery of this framework in your school.

“Look Fors”

Universal, Tier 1 (All students):

- Develop a leadership team as a point of contact for planning, implementation, and communication with staff
- Define and review discipline policies and procedures annually, ensuring universal understanding by all
- Set 3-5 defined school-wide behavioral expectations for the entire school (students and staff) that are explicit, action-oriented, and simple; posted around the school; linked to rules across settings; and developed with input from staff

“Look Fors”

- Provide instruction on school-wide behavioral expectations to all students using a curriculum developed in collaboration with students and staff that includes a variety of teaching strategies (e.g., modeling, role plays), uses examples and non-examples of appropriate behaviors, is integrated into subject areas, and includes booster sessions as needed
- Establish a school-wide recognition system in collaboration with students and staff that monitors and acknowledges students and staff for meeting behavioral expectations and includes a variety of incentives that link directly to expectations
- Develop and teach routines and procedures that support expectations in the classroom, provide immediate, frequent praise for positive student behaviors, document behavior problems, provide immediate corrective feedback after behavioral problem, and use consistently administered continuum of behavioral consequences (See blue section of this guide for examples of evidence-based classroom management practices)
- Communicate with families and orient new staff to the process
- Collect and analyze data on the implementation of PBIS implementation (e.g., School-wide Evaluation Tool; Sugai et al., 2001) and student behavior (e.g., office conduct referrals, surveys, attendance) to inform decisions about how to best meet student needs

In addition to Tier 1, Tier 2 “Look Fors” include:

- Use data to identify and monitor students who need support beyond Tier 1
- Provide structured group-based intervention support (e.g., Check In/Check Out, social skills training)
- Increase adult feedback on behaviors
- Increase home/school communication

In addition to Tier 1 and 2, Tier 3 “Look Fors” include:

- Conduct functional behavioral assessment for individual students who need support beyond Tiers 1 and 2
- Implement individualize intervention based on assessment information to prevent problem contexts, provide more instruction, eliminate problem behaviors, and enhance reward for desired behaviors

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School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Resource	Description	Access at:
New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools	New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools (NJ PBSIS) is a collaboration between the New Jersey Department of Education Offices of Special Education and The Boggs Center, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and provides comprehensive professional development support to train school personnel to implement the tiered intervention system known as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).	New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, from United States Department of Education’s (USDOE) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center	The Technical Assistance Center on PBIS supports schools, districts, and states to build systems capacity for implementing a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional and behavior support.	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Association for Positive Behavioral Supports	This website provides resources for understanding and implementing research-based practices associated with positive behavioral supports.	Association for Positive Behavioral Supports
School Climate and Discipline page at USDOE website	This site provides tools, resources, and technical assistance to help educators create supportive school climates.	School Climate and Discipline
“School Values and Expectations – Strategy Brief,” from Building and Sustaining Student Engagement at University of Nebraska-Lincoln	This strategy brief overviews Tier 1 interventions related to establishing school values and behavioral expectations.	School Values and Expectations Strategy Brief

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Prevention and Positive Behavior Management **Violence Prevention Programs**

Description

Prevention programs focus on reducing and/or deterring negative, harmful, or high-risk behaviors. The promotion of positive behaviors is typically not the main emphasis of prevention programs and, as such, these programs are often most effective when combined with strategies that define, model, and promote desired behaviors (e.g., [Social and Emotional Learning](#) and/or [Positive Behavioral Supports](#)). Typically, prevention programs are universal approaches in that they target all members of the school, though they can be combined with more targeted interventions.

Efforts to prevent sexual harassment, sexual violence, dating violence, gang violence, and bullying are reflected in school curriculum via New Jersey’s [Health and Physical Education Standards](#). In addition to these standards, schools may integrate related lessons across content areas, or adopt prevention programs or strategies.

In terms of prevention of negative interactions and violence among students, **anti-bullying** programs have recently emerged as a common strategy type. [New Jersey’s Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act](#) defines a statutory, regulatory policy, and program framework to support the prevention, remediation, and reporting of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) in schools. Anti-bullying programs may focus on specific forms of aggressive behavior, such as verbal or physical behavior, or may be context-specific, such as focusing on cyber or digital victimization.

The prevention of school-based violence associated with gangs is another area of violence prevention prioritized in schools. **Gangs** are defined as any group of three or more members sharing a common identity, name, and symbols, who view themselves as a gang and participate together in criminal activity (Howell, 2010). Multiple personal and environmental factors influence a person’s decision to join a gang, but students who are lower performing academically or who are disconnected from school are at higher risk (Howell, 2010). Gang prevention initiatives may be more common in some communities than others, however, the presence of gangs has been documented in all New Jersey counties, with differing impacts on local schools. At the same time, it can be challenging for school administrators to recognize or acknowledge the presence of gangs in schools (Gottfredson, 2013).

Violence prevention may also focus on sexual violence or harassment. **Sexual violence** includes physical sexual acts without consent, such as sexual assault, rape, dating violence and stalking. **Sexual harassment** includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests, or conduct (e.g., groping) which may interfere with educational performance or create an intimidating climate. Mistreatment of students identifying as or perceived to be part of the LGBT+ community may also fall under the definition of sexual harassment, otherwise known as gender harassment, which occurs when a student fails to follow norms of gender performance. These forms of victimization are prevalent in schools, as nearly half of students experienced sexual harassment at school in a given year, whether online or in person (Hill & Kearl, 2011). These experiences may lead to consequences including talking less in class, having trouble paying attention, or avoiding school altogether (National Women’s Law Center, 2007).

Most violence prevention strategies include a mix of training for stakeholders, policy implementation, direct teaching through evidence-based curriculum or integrated lesson plans, and efforts to change social norms and beliefs about violence. Increasing monitoring can be helpful for preventing victimization once areas of need have been identified (Gottfredson, 2013). Another promising practice for reducing social conflict and/or promoting positive social norms among students involves directly training a group of socially influential students. Peers

Description

observe these socially “central” students for cues about acceptable beliefs and behaviors (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Paluck & Shephard, 2012; Smith & Louis, 2008). These interventions may require support from outside experts who facilitate the nomination process by conducting a peer nomination survey to identify the students with the most social connections. As an alternative, schools may use peer or adult nomination systems such as those in [Peer Leadership](#) to identify potentially influential student delegates.

On the following pages are descriptions, evidence, and “Look Fors” for anti-bullying interventions, gang prevention, and sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention efforts.

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Anti-bullying Interventions

Description

Anti-bullying interventions seek to prevent a range of aggressive interpersonal behaviors that may occur in or outside of school, as well as over digital devices (i.e., cyberbullying). These behaviors may be verbal, physical, or social in nature. Students play a variety of roles in these interactions, including being bullied, engaging in bullying, or being both bullied and involved in bullying. Students who witness these interactions may also play a role in assisting, reinforcing, or defending another student. Anti-bullying interventions seek to educate students about the definitions of bullying behaviors, to teach and model appropriate behaviors, and to educate students about the consequences and risks of being involved in bullying. Another emphasis of anti-bullying prevention is to assist stakeholders in differentiating between peer conflict, which is defined as an argument between two equal-status peers, as [conflict resolution or peer mediation](#) may be an appropriate response. [Sexual harassment](#) is sometimes considered a form of bullying, but these behaviors may require different types of responses (Hill & Kearl, 2011).

Supporting Evidence

In a systematic review of the results of 44 anti-bullying programs, Ttofi and Farrington (2010) examined a variety of anti-bullying programs that were associated with decreases in bullying and victimization. On average, bullying was reduced by 20-23% and victimization decreased by 17-20%. The authors found that the most important anti-bullying program elements in predicting effectiveness were parent trainings/meetings, firm disciplinary methods, duration (number of days), and intensity (number of hours), and playground supervision. The researchers recommended that these programs incorporate [restorative practices](#) as well.

Anti-bullying Prevention “Look Fors”

- Create and maintain clear school-wide policies to address bullying (as defined by the [Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act](#))
- Develop consistent classroom rules, norms, and conditions to prevent negative behaviors
- Communicate expectations, definitions of behaviors, and policies clearly with all stakeholders
- Teach and model appropriate interpersonal behaviors in various contexts in and out of school
- Emphasize the behavior (e.g., student who was bullied, or student who bullied) rather than applying a label suggesting the student falls in a fixed category and cannot change (e.g., bully, victim)
- Open channels of communication and encourage students to talk with adults about their experiences
- Use data to identify problem behaviors, common targets, and/or “hot spots”
- Consider how a student’s identities (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic background) impact experiences of victimization and how they are handled by the school
- Provide active adult supervision in “hot spots” of negative behaviors
- Use school conferences/assemblies to inform students about policies at the start of the program
- Develop or utilize curricular materials to teach about positive behaviors (separately or integrated into the general curriculum)
- Implement curricular content over the maximum duration of time available
- Educate extra-curricular organizations and sports teams about the dangers of hazing and related school policies and supports
- Use a carefully designed peer-to-peer component to encourage positive behaviors
- Consider that students may be reluctant to call aggressive behavior “bullying,” if they regard the term juvenile or emasculating, but that the behavior may still be harmful and need to be addressed

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Gang Violence Prevention

Description

Gang prevention in schools typically requires a collaborative approach in conjunction with other agencies. A “whole-school approach” involves establishing strict school-wide policies (e.g., dress code) and training all staff members to enforce the rules. Alternatively, an individual approach involves directing gang-involved students away from the gang through a pullout program or lunchtime program (Arciaga, Sakamoto, & Jones, 2010).

Supporting Evidence

Few rigorous studies have been conducted on gang prevention programs, and only modest effects on adolescent’s attitudes or risk factors have been found, with little to no effects on eventual gang involvement (Esbensen, 2004). However, a range of promising practices have been identified in previous research (Howell, 2010). Delinquency reduction programs must adhere to the original model with high fidelity and target high-risk offenders to be effective (Lipsey, 2009). School-wide efforts to improve climate and safety also show promise (Gottfredson, 2013).

Gang Violence “Look Fors”

- Assess and document the activity of gangs in and around the school
- Use data from relevant assessments to drive gang-related programming
- Train staff to recognize the risk factors and signs of gang involvement, as well as common behaviors preceding conflicts
- Provide a confidential reporting mechanism for students to seek help from adults or report concerns
- Create clear referral criteria and a process for referring a student to a case-management team representing various specializations (e.g., mental health, law enforcement, county departments, youth organizations, faith-based organizations)
- Create a procedure for responding to and eliminating gang displays such as gang-type graffiti
- Educate students about the risks of gang membership
- Provide social support to students in identifying and pursuing alternative opportunities to gang involvement
- Provide academic supports to students who are not performing well in school
- Design and deliver supports for gang-involved students that are aligned with community-level resources
- Facilitate information sharing across agencies to coordinate services for gang-involved students
- Determine appropriate responses for behaviors and avoid zero-tolerance in instances when less exclusionary options are possible (e.g., a student displays a gang signal, but may not be involved), including: reentry support, mental health assistance, skill development
- Share policies and procedures related to gangs with students and families
- Provide training to support parents and strengthen family bonds
- Promote [social and emotional learning](#), develop [conflict resolution](#) skills, and increase students’ [engagement](#) to school
- Integrate [trauma-informed practices](#) and [mental health supports](#) for students living in communities impacted by gang violence
- Implement after-school activities to provide youth with opportunities to socialize and develop skills in a positive setting
- Develop response plans focused on potential gang activity, including mediation for students and separating students with known conflicts
- Create safe-passage programs to address concerns in the community as students travel to and from school

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Sexual Violence and Sexual/Gender Harassment Prevention

Description

All public and private schools receiving federal funding must follow the provisions of Title IX, a civil rights law which protects students from the negative impacts of sexual harassment and assault on education (Hill & Kearn, 2011). Sexual violence prevention in schools requires efforts to intervene in both individual behaviors as well as wider social structures in the school and beyond. Reshaping gender norms, including non-binary categories, is an important aspect of preventing gender-based and sexual violence (Basile et al., 2016). Research has found some skill-based programs to be useful for reducing sexual violence. However, approaches addressing relationships and larger social forces are equally important for developing a comprehensive approach (Basile et al., 2016).

Supporting Evidence

Evidence supports the effectiveness of programs designed to empower bystanders in increasing their responses to violence and harassment (Basile et al., 2016). Efforts to mobilize men and boys as allies with positive norms and beliefs about relationships, sexuality and violence are promising. However, additional research is required to understand their effectiveness (Basile et al., 2016). Individual skill-based learning has been found to be effective in reducing perpetration and victimization from sexual violence (Basile et al., 2016). Limited research has demonstrated the impact of interventions focused on community and societal factors. However, there is support for the potential impact of interventions focusing on risk factors for sexual violence (e.g., risky sexual behavior) (Basile et al., 2016). Few studies have looked at the effects of programs or strategies with diverse populations (Basile et al., 2016). Administrators play a key role in addressing sexual harassment, and must ensure there is a clear policy that is communicated and enforced (Hill & Kearn, 2011).

Sexual Violence Prevention “Look Fors”

- Create and consistently enforce district and school-level policies to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Train staff in methods supporting protective environments and supports for students
- Assist staff in unpacking implicit biases that inform their understandings or responses to incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence in school
- Promote social norms against violence, with a focus on mobilizing males as allies
- Teach skills to prevent sexual violence, such as social emotional skills, healthy sexual behaviors, and empowerment-based training
- Empower women and girls through leadership opportunities
- Create protective environments through safety procedures and monitoring in schools
- Support victims/survivors in seeking treatment and services
- Tailor the implementation of practices to the needs of the local community
- Intervene in situations involving sexual harassment without describing the behavior as “flirtation” or minimizing it as part of normal adolescent courtship
- Create and enact protocols for intervening when inappropriate names or sexual comments are heard by or reported to adults
- Educate families and students about sexual harassment and sexual violence
- Teach students how to respond to harassment and seek assistance

Sexual Violence Prevention “Look Fors”

- Create gender-responsive classroom environments and curriculum that honor the realities of women and girls and values their perspectives
- Create gender-inclusive school environments that meet the needs of non-binary students
- Incorporate culturally relevant content into curriculum
- Take a strengths-based perspective and avoid negative labels and stereotypes in addressing females or gender non-conforming students
- Consider how a student’s identities (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic background) impact experiences of victimization and how they are handled by the school
- Consider incorporating trauma-informed practices to support all members of the community
- Create criteria for identifying and referring students who are at risk or have been victimized
- Adopt developmentally appropriate methods for assessing students’ needs and addressing them

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Anti-bullying Resources

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation’s Classrooms,” from National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	This training toolkit comprises two modules to address bullying in classrooms. Specifically, it is designed to assist teachers in cultivating meaningful relationships with students while creating a positive climate in the classroom. (description from Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources)	Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation’s Classrooms
“Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment on Our Nation’s School Buses,” from National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments	This training toolkit is made up of two modules that address bullying on school buses. Specifically, it is designed for trainers to assist school bus drivers in cultivating meaningful relationships with students while creating a positive climate on the school bus.	Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment on Our Nation’s School Buses
Engage Parents and Youth at Stopbullying.gov, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	This resource page features information on a public health approach to dealing with bullying and cyberbullying, and resources for supporting training, school-wide policy and rule development, tips for teachers, guidance on protecting vulnerable groups, and ideas for engaging students and families in prevention efforts.	Engage Parents and Youth
Community Action Toolkit from Stopbullying.gov	This research-based training module can support the implementation of a bullying prevention effort in the community. The module addresses initiating, planning, and implementing a community-wide event via PowerPoint presentations, speaker notes, a tool kit, and a supplemental guide that includes a landscape assessment, templates of community event agendas, a community engagement tip sheet, and other tools.	Community Action Toolkit
PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center	This site features toolkits of discussion questions, pledges, activities, and curricula for elementary, middle, and high school students. The page also includes a section for parents, and sections on preventing bullying for students with disabilities	PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center
NJ Civil Rights Fact Sheet on School Bullying from the NJ Office of the Attorney General	This fact sheet clarifies the potential connection between school bullying and the Law Against Discrimination (LAD).	NJ Civil Rights Fact Sheet on School Bullying

Strategies to Influence How Members of the Community Interact with One Another

Resource	Description	Access at:
Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) Resources from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)	This page from the New Jersey Department of Education features information and resources related to the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act.	NJ HIB Information
Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, from the NJDOE	This document explains best practices for prevention, intervention, and remediation of HIB in schools.	Guidance for Schools on Implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act
Stop Hazing New Jersey	This site provides data-driven strategies for hazing prevention.	Stop Hazing New Jersey
“Creating an LGBT-Inclusive School Climate,” from Teaching Tolerance	This professional development resource from Teaching Tolerance includes information on creating a safe LGBT-inclusive school climate, and links to other tools and articles to help foster diversity and inclusion in schools.	Creating an LGBT-inclusive School Climate
Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools (RIDES), from Harvard Graduate School of Education	This first website includes information to address racial bullying in schools by utilizing the tools and activities provided by RIDES. The second website links to resources to address racism and oppression and promote diversity and equity in schools.	5 Things to Keep in Mind When Addressing Racial Bullying in School RIDES Resources
Educator Resources from Cyberbullying Research Center	This page includes curricula, PDF fact sheets, and guidance related to preventing cyberbullying and building positive school climate.	Cyberbullying Research Center
Digital Citizenship Curriculum from Common Sense Education	This is a free K-12 Curriculum that educates students on digital citizenship.	Digital Citizenship Curriculum
Netsmartz	This site provides videos, presentations and lesson plans for educating students on internet safety, including topics such as cyberbullying.	Netsmartz

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Gang Prevention Resources

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Recognize the Signs: Gang Awareness Guide,” from the NJ Office of the Attorney General and Juvenile Justice Commission	A brochure designed to support parents in recognizing potential signs of gang involvement, including graphics and resources.	Recognize the Signs: Gang Awareness Guide
“Responding to Gangs in the School Setting,” from the National Gang Center Bulletin	A research brief containing research-based practices for gang prevention, and the primary source of “Look Fors” in this section.	Responding to Gangs in the School Setting
Strategic Planning Tool from the National Gang Center	A resource for communities working to assess and develop strategies to address gang issues.	National Gang Center Strategic Planning Tool
What Can Schools Do To Help Prevent Gang-Joining from National Institute of Justice	This website includes information on the role of schools, communities, and other stakeholders in preventing gang violence.	What Can Schools Do To Help Prevent Gang-Joining
Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs, from Youth.gov	This site provides key findings in research and resources for how to address gang and youth violence.	Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs

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Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Prevention Resources

Resource	Description	Access at:
Dating Matters, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	This is a training program for teachers and other school staff aimed at preventing teen dating violence. Resources to support training, assessment of capacity, and evaluation materials are included.	Dating Matters
Safe Place to Learn Resource Package, from National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments	This is a set of materials from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments materials to support schools in preventing peer-to-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence. It includes an implementation guide and online modules for staff, as well as planning tools and materials to promote trauma sensitivity.	Safe Place to Learn Resource Package
“Ending K-12 Sexual Harassment: A Toolkit for Parents and Allies,” from Stop Sexual Assaults in Schools.org	This is a toolkit for parents and allies which includes videos, training modules, fact sheets, and resources for assessing school policies related to sexual harassment and sexual assault, and for promoting positive change.	Ending K-12 Sexual Harassment: A Toolkit for Parents and Allies
“Meeting the Needs of Girls Toolkit,” from Alliance for Girls in Oakland	This resource from the Alliance for Girls in Oakland includes a tool for taking inventory of your approach to girls and understanding implicit bias by gender and race/ethnicity.	Meeting the Needs of Girls Toolkit
Lesson Plans on Consent and Sexual Assault Prevention, from Answer	This site contains lesson plans on Consent and Sexual Assault Prevention from Answer, a provider of sexuality education materials and training at Rutgers University.	Lesson Plans from Answer
“Stop SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence,” from Division of Violence Prevention at CDC	This is a compendium of strategies that have some evidence for reducing risk factors or enhancing protective factors linked to sexual violence. This resource is the primary source of information on evidence-based practices cited in the sections above.	Stop SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence
NJ Civil Rights Fact Sheet on Discrimination based on Gender Identity or Expression, from NJ Office of the Attorney General	This Fact Sheet describes how the Law Against Discrimination (LAD) protects people from discrimination based on gender identity and expression.	NJ Civil Rights Fact Sheet on Discrimination based on Gender Identity or Expression

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Prevention and Positive Behavior Management

Restorative Practices
(e.g., proactive circles, restorative conferencing)

Description

Restorative practices represent a non-punitive, community-driven process that can both proactively nurture and reactively repair relationships in response to harm or conflict. Restorative practices at the school-wide prevention level promote healthy and positive relationships and at more targeted levels involve discipline and problem-solving practices. At all levels, restorative practices hold students accountable for behaviors while keeping them connected and engaged in the school community. Some common types of practices include: restorative justice, conferencing, proactive and responsive circles, and peer mediation. Restorative practices are based on five guiding principles, or 5Rs: fostering positive **relationships**, **responsibility** and true accountability for harm that took place, inclusion of and **respect** for everyone (i.e., work with students rather doing to or for students), **repair** of harm, and **reintegration** of individuals into the community.

Careful and informed implementation by trained practitioners is needed to facilitate difficult dialogues and avoid stigmatization of students engaged in the restorative process. Three to five years is often needed for full program implementation, along with sustained resources (e.g., hiring a coordinator, hiring consultants, professional development for staff) and supports (e.g., leadership and key stakeholder buy-in) to shift from traditional discipline to a whole school restorative philosophy and practice.

Supporting Evidence

There is promising evidence of the effectiveness of restorative practices, but further research is required. Research suggests that people perceive restorative practices as more fair, which presumes that this will eventually lead to greater compliance to rules. Evidence also suggests an improvement in relationships between students and staff. Some studies also note impacts such as reductions in violent acts in schools, reductions in exclusionary discipline (i.e., out of school suspensions), reduction in referrals for violence, increases in attendance, and progression toward graduation (Kidde & Alfred, 2011; Fronius, Persson, Guckenberger, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016; Watchel, 2016).

“Look Fors”

Universal, School-wide Prevention (e.g., proactive circles, routines):

- Educate students, staff, and parents in restorative practice philosophy, principles, and practices such as taking responsibility, justice, and social emotional intelligence (e.g., active listening, recognizing different points of view)
- Incorporate practices into school-wide policies and procedures
- Tailor responses to behaviors that emphasize a process, underpinned by restorative principles
- Facilitate proactive discussion circles that allow small groups of students to connect with a teacher around a topic or problem using a structure that promotes fair and balanced participation (e.g., state purpose of circle, establish ground rules (e.g., confidentiality), use a talking piece, conduct rounds of questions, close the circle with appropriate activity)
- Develop routines (e.g., consensus-based classroom rules) and restorative statements/talk (e.g., “When you do this, I feel...”) in various contexts (classroom, lunchroom, playground) that promote restorative values and demonstrate social emotional skills (e.g., dialogue, empathy, sharing of feelings)
- Share responsibility for problem-solving, behavior management, and overall community well-being with students
- Adults model restorative practices in the school

Strategies to Influence How Members of the Community Interact with One Another

Targeted/Formal Interventions in Response to Incidents (e.g., Restorative Conferencing):

- Gather in dialogue circles that bring together everyone affected by a problem or incident (e.g., classroom, target/offender and family/friends) to work together to solve problems using specific guidelines and questions as a community-building framework
- Train neutral facilitators/conveners (e.g., teacher, outside person)
- Conduct pre-conferencing between facilitator and each party to prepare for process which involves getting information about what happened, setting expectations, and building rapport
- Provide opportunities for expression of feelings and perspectives by all parties during dialogue
- Support voluntary participation
- Institute restorative sanctions and appropriate consequences (e.g., apologies, restitution, community service) that reflect consensus-based decision making in support of just and fair response
- Students demonstrate understanding of restorative justice concepts through use of common language (i.e., asking for a mediation, describing harm of actions in relationship to the community)

Restorative Practices

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Access at:</i>
International Institute for Restorative Practices	The International Institute for Restorative Practices website provides up to date resources and information on the growing field of restorative practices.	International Institute for Restorative Practices
“Restorative Practices: A guide for Educators,” from Schott Foundation for Public Education	This guide and toolkit aims to help educators better understand what restorative practices are and how they foster safe learning environments through community building and constructive conflict resolution.	Restorative Practices: A Guide for Educators
“Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles,” from Center for Restorative Process	This guide provides detailed instructions for designing and leading restorative classroom circles.	Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles
Restorative Practices in Schools from Restorative Justice Colorado	This Colorado state website links school users to resources in restorative justice.	Restorative Practices in Schools
Restorative Practices (RP) Guide for Schools, from Colorado School Safety Resource Center	This resource guide includes lists and links to restorative practices programs being implemented in Colorado.	Restorative Practices Guide for Schools
Restorative Practices from Minnesota Department of Education	Minnesota has an entire set of resources from training videos to facilitator guides to administrator checklists for implementing school-wide restorative practices.	Minnesota Restorative Practices

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Prevention and Positive Behavior Management

Conflict Resolution Education

(e.g., direct skills training, peer mediation, embedded curricula)

Description

Conflict resolution education (CRE) focuses on constructive resolution of interpersonal conflicts by building capacity of participants to prevent conflict or resolve it effectively when it occurs through an understanding of what conflict is (and isn't), and responding appropriately using self-management, communication, problem-solving, and perspective taking skills (Garrard & Lipsey, 2007). These skills are developed through a combination of instruction, modeling, and practice. Common types of CRE include direct instruction, peer mediation, peaceable classrooms and schools, and embedded curricula.

Supporting Evidence

Turk (2018) cites results from several comprehensive studies on the effects of conflict resolution programs including: increased ability for students to resolve conflict, reduced aggressive and antisocial behaviors; improved school climate; increased student self-regulation, problem-solving, and communication skills; and greater academic success (Garrard & Lipsey, 2007; Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003; Jones & Kmitta, 2000; Burrell, Zirbel, & Allen, 2003). Programs with similar attributes (peer mediation, conflict resolution education), but differing foci, still have a similar impact (Turk, 2018). Program impact was more closely linked to quality implementation rather than duration/exposure (or number of hours) to the content (Turk, 2018; Garrard et al. 2007). There is conflicting research on the most appropriate age for implementation.

"Look Fors"

- Train all staff and students in conflict resolution concepts and skills, including:
 - what conflict is and is not
 - mediation and negotiation skills
 - communication skills
 - social problem-solving steps
 - situation analysis
- Understand the principles of conflict resolution, including:
 - depersonalizing the problem at hand
 - understanding motivations and interests of people's position
 - openness and creativity to multiple options for resolution
 - use of objective criteria on final agreements
- Select or modify curricula to reflect real-life, relevant examples to keep students engaged
- Emphasize quality implementation of program components over number of hours delivering content
- Incorporate role play and rehearsals in content delivery of content along with lecture, modeling, and interactive group discussions as developmentally appropriate
- Embed conflict resolution concepts into core areas of curricula (e.g., History: discuss international peacekeeping; Music: reflections on harmony; Mathematics: budget planning for community project representing conflicting interests etc.) (See page 34 of this [Conflict Resolution Education Guide](#) for more examples)
- Use cooperative learning approaches in the classroom
- Build conflict resolution strategies into school policy and educate staff and students on the process for referring cases of conflict to peer mediation versus referrals for possible bullying
- Communicate policies and information about conflict resolution to parents and the community

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Conflict Resolution Education

Resource	Description	Access at:
New Jersey State Bar Foundation	The NJSBF website provides links to register for free training sessions on a variety of topics related to conflict resolution, peer mediation, anti-bias, anti-bullying among other topics.	New Jersey State Bar Foundation
Conflict Resolution Resources from School Tools	This website provides videos and curricula for teachers to use to train students in conflict resolution and peer mediation skills.	Conflict Resolution Curriculum and Resources
“Conflict Resolution Education: A guide to implementing programs in schools, youth-serving organizations, and community and juvenile justice settings,” from U.S. Departments of Justice and Education	This is a guide to implementing conflict resolution education in schools.	Conflict Resolution Education Program Report
Conflict Resolution at School & on the Playground, from Rutgers Center for Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	This page provides an overview of conflict resolution and several links to resources.	Conflict Resolution at School & on the Playground
Quick Guide to Implementing a Peer Mediation Program, from School Mediation Associates	This page provides a summary of steps for implementing peer mediation.	Quick Guide to Implementing a Peer Mediation Program
“Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Toolkit,” from IREX, an international nonprofit organization	This guide provides multiple exercises and handouts for training peer mediators and training students in conflict resolution skills.	Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Toolkit
“Recommended Standards for School-based Peer Mediation Programs,” from Association for Conflict Mediation	This guide provides recommended standards for school-based peer mediation programs.	Recommended Standards for School-based Peer Mediation Programs
Coaching Children in Everyday Conflicts, from Responsive Classroom	This webpage provides specific guidance to teachers on how to train students in how to handle everyday disagreements or conflicts.	Responsive Classroom: Coaching Children in Everyday Conflicts

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Inclusion and Diversity Strategies

Inclusion of Students with Differing Abilities

Description

Students arrive at school with a range of diverse abilities and needs. Providing students with learning opportunities and knowledge about disabilities creates a starting point for understanding. Opportunities for interaction and communication with other students with differing abilities is also important to help promote positive inclusion attitudes. Oftentimes, schools will implement single events, such as an assembly focused on a specific disability or illness, or a disability awareness fair. However, evidence suggests that the key to changing student perspectives and increasing self-awareness requires that strategies are integrated into a comprehensive and sensitive approach over time. If disability initiatives do not involve careful consideration and thoughtful planning, as well as alignment with the core components below, they can produce harmful outcomes. Reinforcing stereotypes, oversimplifying the lived experience of others through simulation exercises, or eliciting pity for individuals with disabilities do a disservice to students by missing opportunities to emphasize the value of diversity and the adaptations individuals can make when the environment is more accommodating, supportive, and inclusive.

Supporting Evidence

Inclusion is beneficial to all students. Students with disabilities often benefit from inclusive classroom placement. For example, students with autism in inclusive settings scored significantly higher on academic achievement tests when compared to those in self-contained settings (Kurth & Mastergeorge, 2010). Kalamouka, Farrell, and Dyson's (2007) meta-analysis of inclusive education research found that including students with disabilities resulted in either positive or neutral effects for students without disabilities in the majority of cases. In addition to inclusive placement in educational settings, integrating extracurricular opportunities for interactions between students with disabilities and typical students is effective. Awareness events and activities have been demonstrated to improve student acceptance attitudes of others with disabilities (Favazza & Odom, 1997; Hurst, Corning, & Ferrante, 2012; Hutzler et al., 2007), particularly when reinforcement opportunities are provided.

"Look Fors"

- Initiate the development of a comprehensive initiative by creating opportunities for all community members to engage in dialogue about diversity issues and related data
- Integrate diversity awareness events and activities (e.g., Awareness Fairs, Mix-it-Up days)
- Provide counter-stereotype learning activities
- Use literature and media to promote diversity knowledge and positive attitudes about inclusion
- Model meaningful interactions with individuals with disabilities and provide opportunities for meaningful contact
- Emphasize abilities and adaptations of individuals with disabilities (not limitations)
- Focus on strengths of individuals facing challenges
- Encourage participation of students with disabilities in design/delivery of activities if he or she chooses (but students should not be regarded as "representative" of a group or forced to self-identify)
- Communicate the value of diversity (rather than framing disabilities as problems to be fixed)
- Partner with an organization that provides evidence-based programming
- Have the Child Study Team engage school leadership team, and PLCs in discussing how students with disabilities can be included in classes with general education peers for a greater part of the day.

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Inclusion of Students with Differing Abilities

Resource	Description	Access at:
New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Resources	This website includes information and resources related to assistive technology, positive behavioral supports, classroom interventions, assessments, and other resources for students with differing abilities.	New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Resources
Easterseals Disability Resources	The organization’s web site provides a range of useful resources including definitions of disabilities, information and support, and tools including a guide to disability etiquette to support meaningful and positive interactions and friendships.	Easterseals Disability Resources
Friends Who Care Disability Awareness Curriculum from Easterseals	A curricular tool designed to provide an awareness of disabilities and adaptations, to encourage typically developing children to accept peers with disabilities and be more inclusive. It includes guided discussions, hands-on exercises, and guidelines for hosting guest speakers.	Friends Who Care Disability Awareness Curriculum
Learning Disabilities Association of America	This website includes resources, guides, and booklets on various topics related to students with disabilities from the Learning Disabilities Association of America	Learning Disabilities Association of America
Special Olympics Unified Schools	Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is a comprehensive model for school and community climates of acceptance and inclusion through sport and student engagement.	Special Olympics Unified Schools
“Success for All Students in Inclusion Classes,” from <i>Brain-Friendly Strategies for the Inclusion Classroom</i>	This book chapter includes research, tips, and testimonials from education professionals on promoting student success in inclusion classrooms.	Success for All Students in Inclusion Classes
Challenging Ableist Language Lesson Plan from GLSEN	This is a lesson plan to help students define ableism and ableist language, and to support their role as allies.	Challenging Ableist Language Lesson Plan

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Inclusion and Diversity Strategies

Diversity and Anti-bias Initiatives

Description

Diversity and anti-bias initiatives focus on addressing diversity, discrimination, and the reduction of bias. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, native language, ability/disability, religion, and parental income level. A diversity initiative may start with activities to promote general awareness of diversity, through integrated and ongoing learning opportunities such as: counter-stereotype learning activities; retreats; classroom-based interventions; and the use of literature to promote diversity knowledge and positive attitudes about inclusion. In addition, professional development training may be provided to help staff explore their personal beliefs and develop culturally responsive pedagogy and discipline techniques, based on an inclusive curriculum integrated across subject areas. It is also important to recruit and retain diverse educators (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2002).

According to the Anti-Defamation League, anti-bias education is an approach, based on contact and cognitive learning theories, which actively challenges bias, stereotyping, and all forms of discrimination in schools. Coordinating activities based on these theories with inclusive curriculum and instructional methods, and sustaining these efforts over time, are recommended approaches for improving attitudes and behaviors related to diversity to create a “safe, inclusive, and respectful” learning community (Anti-Defamation League, 2018).

The content of interventions related to diversity can be sensitive. Understanding the experiences of others requires awareness of historical and structural factors differentially affecting the access and opportunities of members of different groups. The design of these efforts requires appropriate care, training, and cultural competency, and may require the support of an outside expert facilitator. While these issues may evoke difficult discussions or feelings for students, staff, and parents, addressing them is essential to promoting an open and inclusive school climate.

Supporting Evidence

There is emerging evidence in the literature for positive outcomes associated with improving diversity attitudes in schools. Creating more diverse and inclusive classrooms is associated with benefits including increased learning, improved social interactions, better perspective-taking, and greater racial and cultural understanding (Gurin et al., 2002). Incorporating diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness can boost individual students’ self-confidence and self-efficacy about their own performance (Gay, 1994). Comprehensive multicultural curricula and extracurricular programming possess the potential to promote positive awareness of diversity through “transformative learning experiences” (Brandwein & Donoghue, 2009).

There is also strong support for anti-bias education approaches based on empirically-tested theories. *Intergroup contact* has been found useful for disconfirming stereotypes and establishing more positive intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Also found to be effective, have been cognitive approaches which facilitate activities to help students reflect on and reframe in-group and outgroup characteristics/attributes that impact their perceptions.

There is also emerging empirical support for interventions that promote positive social norms and attitudes among students by training a group of socially influential students. Peers observe these socially “central” students for cues about acceptable beliefs and behaviors (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Paluck & Shephard, 2012; Smith & Louis, 2008). These interventions may require support from outside experts who facilitate the nomination process by conducting a peer nomination survey to identify the students with the most social connections. As an alternative, schools may use peer or adult nomination systems such as those in [Peer Leadership](#) to identify potentially influential student delegates.

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Practice: Promote Diversity Awareness

There is little evidence in the research literature to suggest that one-time awareness events or activities, such as assemblies or learning activities, significantly improve diversity attitudes. Isolated events are unlikely to promote competence or offer opportunities for participants to follow up, process, or discuss their content. Because of these limitations, isolated awareness events may even be inclined to perpetuate negative stereotypes or elicit pity for members of minority groups or historically disadvantaged groups. Therefore, schools should proceed with caution when planning these events. Research suggests that the most effective strategy for teaching students to be more inclusive is a comprehensive, sustained, and integrated approach, tying together activities and strategies in a way that combines interventions with broad training and activities such as the ones listed in the practices below. A comprehensive approach by definition should target all stakeholder groups, including students, staff, and parents, and may occur at the district-wide level.

“Look Fors”

- Initiate the development of a comprehensive initiative by creating opportunities for all community members to engage in dialogue about diversity issues and related data
- Integrate diversity awareness events and activities (e.g. Awareness Fairs, Mix-it-Up days) as part of broader efforts
- Use literature and media to promote diversity knowledge and positive attitudes about diversity
- Train staff in culturally responsive pedagogy and disciplinary techniques
- Include students, families, and the community in the development of curricular and extracurricular features of diversity awareness and anti-bias programming
- Encourage involvement of students belonging to different groups in design/delivery of activities and instruction if they choose to participate
- Integrate culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum/materials across content areas
- Check in with participants as they process emotional responses to content and follow up over time

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Practice: Staff Self Awareness and Cultural Competency

Teachers bring their own set of beliefs and life experiences to their work. Becoming a culturally competent teacher requires understanding how one's background and identity (e.g., race, religion, culture, class, sexual orientation) shapes their beliefs and interactions with others from similar and different backgrounds. For teachers, this means considering how similarities, differences, power, and privilege play a role in their relationships with students, parents, and colleagues and understanding the importance of developing culturally competent skills such as appreciating differences, listening, and empathy, flexibility, and humility to forge stronger, more authentic connections ([Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education](#)).

Activities designed to promote self-reflection on beliefs and thoughts that influence behaviors (Greenwald et al., 2002) may be led by trained facilitators.

"Look Fors"

- Recognize and appreciate the benefit of diverse points of view and perspectives
- Self-reflect on personal beliefs and experiences, and how they may impact practices in and outside the classroom (See [Self-Assessment Resources](#) in table below)
- Recognize and respect cultural characteristics of different groups including values, traditions, etc.
- Learn more about culturally competent teaching practices and how to integrate them into curriculum design by reading and discussing with colleagues through PLCs or book clubs
- Model proactive responses to bias and discrimination both in and outside of the classroom (e.g., speak up against bias-based jokes, stereotypes)
- Partner with staff and/or community members from different backgrounds and perspectives, to enrich content and delivery through the development of learning communities
- Build connections with individual students to better understand perspectives (See [Staff-Student Relationships](#))
- Hold [high expectations](#) for all students
- Design instruction that:
 - promotes critical engagement with the material through open-ended inquiry and project-based learning
 - differentiates instruction to match students' multicultural learning styles
 - taps into real-life student experiences and help them explore beyond what is familiar
 - provides multicultural examples
 - incorporates equity-driven performance assessments and grading by using scoring rubrics to reduce subjectivity and considering the varying starting points and perspectives of students
- Create a classroom culture that:
 - sets high expectations and provides instructional scaffolding to support all students
 - values diverse student identities and backgrounds through understanding and openness
 - acknowledges value of differences and similarities as a collective group
 - represents multicultural perspectives through images and texts
 - promotes collaboration through thoughtful classroom set up
 - facilitates open and honest dialogue that promote collective learning among students
 - enacts non-punitive, restorative, and equity-driven behavior management strategies
- Engage in ongoing reflection and learning about teaching practices with support and feedback from colleagues

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Practice: Inter-Group Contact Approach to Anti-bias Training

Intergroup contact approaches encourage interpersonal interaction among students from different groups (e.g., sexual orientation, racial, or ethnic groups) and cooperative learning or group projects as part of the educational process (e.g., Molina & Wittig, 2006; Walker & Crogan, 1998). In addition, having a professional facilitate intergroup dialogue and discussions about issues of diversity may help individuals better understand appreciate different points of view and strengthen connections between groups (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009).

“Look Fors”

- Engage students in cooperative learning opportunities (e.g., Jigsaw) in any content area where teacher selects groups to intentionally promote positive contact
- Promote intergroup contact in school- or community-based learning opportunities through:
 - attention to settings that promote equal-status between individuals and groups
 - institutional support for intergroup interactions
 - common goal-setting across individuals
 - opportunities for intergroup collaboration
- Guided by a trained facilitator, promote intergroup dialogue among students and staff:
 - Develop a shared meaning for dialogue and establish trust
 - Discuss identity on a personal and group level, sharing differences and similarities in experiences within and across groups and exploring privilege, structural racism, and social justice
 - Work through controversial and current topics and conflicting beliefs
 - Consider opportunities to engage in productive inter-group collaboration
 - Check in with participants as they process emotional responses to dialogue and follow up over time

Practice: Cognitive Approaches to Anti-bias Training

Cognitive approaches to anti-bias training are typically provided by trained facilitators and/or built into curricular programming. They are designed to promote reflection about implicit or unconscious biases that influence thoughts and behaviors (Greenwald et al., 2002). They focus on reducing bias among students and school staff by reflecting on ingroup and outgroup characteristics/attributes (e.g., Paluck & Green, 2009). The appropriate methods for engaging in cognitive approaches vary by context and should be determined by examining local needs (prejudices or biases present) and the cultural competence of staff. Consider the “Look Fors” below when selecting a provider/curriculum.

“Look Fors”

- Provide structured opportunities for self-reflection about unconscious biases that influence thoughts and behaviors
- Engage in opportunities to challenge individuals' perceptions about “outgroup” members via activities following these steps (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006):
 - de-categorization, whereby similar individual characteristics are emphasized over group-affiliated differences during an activity
 - a focus on awareness of group differences to foster appreciation
 - re-categorization, whereby, students recognize an overarching category in which they share membership (i.e., “we are all Tigers” as per the school mascot)

Practice: Group-Norms Approach to Anti-Bias Training

Within a group norm-based framework, students' social norms are shaped by observing others (social referents) who provide cues about acceptable beliefs and behaviors. Student leaders/delegates are trained to model inclusive language and to engage as advocates for others to promote the reduction of bias (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Paluck & Shephard, 2012; Smith & Louis, 2008).

"Look Fors"

- Train student delegates with leadership potential to model inclusive language and serve as advocates for others
- Include students in school-wide events where delegates engage in public behaviors (e.g., speaking out against a racial bias incident)
- Provide opportunities for student groups lead by delegates to establish and execute plans of action for addressing bias-related concerns and responding to bias-related incidents

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Diversity and Anti-bias Initiatives

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide: Resources for Trainers and Coaches from Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support,” from Office of Special Education Programs at USDOE	Field guide outlining an integrated framework to embed equity efforts into school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports by aligning culturally responsive practices to existing efforts.	PBIS Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide: Resources for Trainers and Coaches
Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education, from Teaching Tolerance	This web page from Teaching Tolerance links to a guidebook and other materials that describe implementation of effective anti-bias education, including professional development materials, webinars, resources to support instruction and classroom culture, and strategies for engaging families in anti-bias education initiatives.	Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education
Self-Assessment Resources: “Common Beliefs Survey: Teaching Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students,” from Teaching Tolerance	This activity helps staff explore their commonly held beliefs about teaching to improve learning for all using a self-reflective survey and discussion approach.	Common Beliefs Survey and Activity for Staff
Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools (RIDES), from Harvard Graduate School of Education	This website links to resources to address racism and oppression and promote diversity and equity in schools.	RIDES Resources
“Creating an LGBT-inclusive School Climate,” from Teaching Tolerance	This professional development resource from Teaching Tolerance includes information on creating a safe LGBT-inclusive school climate, and links to other tools and articles to help foster diversity and inclusion in schools.	Creating an LGBT-inclusive School Climate
Lesson Plans on Bullying, Bias, and Diversity from GLSEN	This site provides several LGBTQ-inclusive curricular resources for improving the climate around diversity.	Lesson Plans on Bullying, Bias, and Diversity
NJ Civil Rights Fact Sheet on Discrimination based on Gender Identity or Expression from NJ Office of the Attorney General	This Fact Sheet describes how the Law Against Discrimination (LAD) protects people from discrimination based on gender identity and expression.	NJ Civil Rights Fact Sheet on Discrimination based on Gender Identity or Expression
Culturally Responsive Teaching Resources from the Anti-Defamation League	The following links lead to a short article laying out steps for creating an anti-bias learning environment,	Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment Anti-Bias Tools & Strategies

Strategies to Influence How Members of the Community Interact with One Another

	and a list of anti-bias resources for educators.	
COR (Creating Opportunities Through Relationships) Module, from University of Virginia	The modules are designed to strengthen student-teacher relationships through teacher self-reflection and discussion exercises.	COR Modules
The Jigsaw Classroom from the Social Psychology Network and Elliot Aronson	The Jigsaw Activity is an evidence-based cooperative learning structure that “reduces racial conflict, promotes better learning, improve student motivation, and increases enjoyment of the learning experience.”	The Jigsaw Classroom

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Building Maintenance and Scheduling Strategies

School-wide Maintenance and Improvement Plan

Description

The quality of the school’s physical environment sends an important message to members of the school community. From the overall appearance of the facilities, to cleanliness, and the timely maintenance of small but important details (i.e. working doors and door locks, fully stocked restrooms), coordinated systems are required to ensure that all aspects of the physical environment are attended to on a regular basis. Open communication and opportunities for feedback between custodial staff and other members of the school community are central to the cooperative maintenance of facilities. Districts and schools can use a number of web-based, free checklists, and data collection tools to determine where targeted improvements and regular maintenance are needed most in their schools. In addition to making sure areas of the school are clean, updated, and functional, equal attention may be paid to ensure the school and its facilities are inclusive by design. Finally, it is recommended that school-wide physical environment maintenance and improvement plans consider the core components associated with a [school health plan](#), in order to mitigate risk factors for health problems such as the use of harsh chemicals in cleaning products.

Supporting Evidence

A growing body of research suggests that school facilities have significant effects on student outcomes and teacher recruitment. School facilities affect students’ health, behavior, engagement, learning, and growth in achievement. For staff, facilities affect recruitment, retention, commitment, and effort. Researchers generally conclude that without adequate facilities and resources, it is extremely difficult to serve students well and account for their needs (Pennsylvania State University Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis, 2015). Maintenance and physical environment are linked to questions of equity in education (Uline, Wolsey, Tschannen-Moran, & Lin, 2010). Researchers have also found positive effects related to the involvement of teachers and students in school renovation projects (Uline et al., 2010).

“Look Fors”

- Design the building and common spaces to be inclusive and accessible
- Maintain a neat and welcoming entry
- Ensure doors are in working order
- Keep inside and outside of building free of graffiti and vandalism
- Ensure student bathrooms are in working order with supplies, stall partitions, doors
- Keep locker rooms clean and supervised when they are in use
- Make sure floors in stairs, offices, and classrooms are clean and free of litter or hazards
- Maintain operations of communications systems such as Public Address Systems and classroom phones
- Ensure water fountains are functional and clean, and water meets safety standards
- If applicable, maintain hallway and classroom lockers and check that they are functional
- Keep cafeteria and kitchen clean
- Update and organize bulletin boards and student displays
- Put systems in place to regularly inspect and repair aspects of the building
- Involve students, parents, families, and communities in building improvement efforts

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School-wide Maintenance and Improvement Plan

Resource	Description	Access at:
Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS), from Technical Assistance Center SITE ASSESS Tool, from the U.S. Department of Education	REMS provides resources, tools, and virtual trainings to help schools protect, prevent, mitigate, respond, and recover. SITE ASSESS, a free web-based mobile application that enables school personnel to document safety, security, accessibility, and emergency preparedness during a walk through. The tool generates to-do lists for short and long-term improvements.	<u>Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools</u>
Sustainable Jersey for Schools	Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a certification program for New Jersey public schools that want to go green and conserve resources. They offer events and training, a certification program, and grants and resources.	<u>Sustainable Jersey for Schools</u>
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities	The clearinghouse includes resource lists organized by topics, including maintenance and operations, school construction, and school grounds.	<u>National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities</u>
“Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities,” from School Facilities Maintenance Task Force, National Forum on Education Statistics	This guide helps better understand why and how to develop, implement, and evaluate a facilities maintenance plan. It includes checklists and resources for improving or maintaining school facilities.	<u>Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities</u>

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Building Maintenance and Scheduling Strategies

Classroom Arrangements and Physical Conditions

Description

Students spend the majority of their day in classrooms, yet the quality and comfort of those classrooms can vary greatly. A variety of factors related to building age, quality, and maintenance may affect the classroom’s physical environment. These factors include the size of the room, ventilation, and items related to a school’s [health plan](#), such as mold prevention. The class enrollment and room capacity also influence students’ ability to learn comfortably, as do factors including the appearance and cleanliness of the room, the arrangement of the furniture, and the comfort of desks and chairs. The availability of supportive technology and other necessary materials is another important aspect of the classroom’s physical environment.

Supporting Evidence

The condition of both school buildings and classrooms have a direct effect on educational outcomes. Inadequate school physical environments negatively impact student learning outcomes (Earthman, 2004; Higgins et al., 2005). How well teachers can teach depends on having quality facilities and the flexibility to control aspects of the classroom setting (Uline et al., 2010). A multi-level analysis of school classrooms found seven classroom setting qualities that can significantly impact student learning: light, temperature, air quality, ownership, flexibility, complexity, and color (Barrett, Davies, Xhang, & Barrett 2015).

Research on multi-sensory environments (MSEs) suggests that sensory rooms may be particularly helpful for creating a safe learning environment for students with disabilities (Carter & Stephenson, 2012). There is also promising research on sensory-based interventions like sensory rooms for children and youth who have experienced trauma (Fraser, MacKenzie, & Versnel, 2017).

“Look Fors”

- Use natural lighting
- Check air quality and ventilation
- Provide temperature control in each classroom
- Manage noise level and acoustics
- Provide sufficient classroom size and space to allow teacher to reach all students easily and avoid overcrowding
- Check that classrooms are accessible for learning (all students can move around, see the board, communicate)
- Use ergonomic furniture
- Consider mood and tone of color choices
- Consult with appropriate staff and outside consultants when designing spaces to include students who need accommodations.
- Ensure teachers have access to materials to support learning (e.g., technology is up-to-date and functioning)

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Classroom Arrangements and Physical Conditions

Resource	Description	Access at:
The Physical Environment of Your Classroom Module, from Sanford Inspire	30-minute module discussing the importance of the classroom environment to student outcomes, and focusing on best practices in classroom layout, materials, and décor.	The Physical Environment of Your Classroom Module
Classroom Setup and Organization Tips from Scholastic	Classroom design tips and guides for grades PK-12 and various content areas.	Classroom Setup and Organization Tips Classroom Setup and Physical Environment Tips
“Guide to Classroom Set-up for 4 th Grade,” from Responsive Classroom	While this guide is tailored for the needs of 4 th grade classrooms, it contains a variety of topics that apply to any classroom, including: seating configurations, classroom libraries, organizing supplies, and displaying student work.	Responsive Classroom Guide to Classroom Set-up for 4th Grade
Sensory Rooms 101, from Edutopia	This website includes basic information on sensory rooms, including information on design and equipment	Sensory Rooms 101

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Building Maintenance and Scheduling Strategies

School-wide Operations and Procedures

Description

Research supports the use of innovative school schedules to consider the optimal use of time and space throughout the school day. These schedules take into account time for planning and collaboration among teaching staff, flexible blocks to provide differentiated content according to students' needs and considering a shift from direct instruction to opportunities for small group instruction or student-directed learning. The time schedule may take into account the time needed for instructional blocks, and the need to balance instruction with planning time. In addition, the time schedule may consider the developmental needs of students as well as logistical considerations depending on student travel time to school. Additional timing considerations include the length of the school day and the school year. It is recommended that procedures for accessing the media center, engaging in recess, eating lunch in the cafeteria, and using the restroom be clear, consistent, and regularly taught and practiced to save time and ensure students have equitable access to the fulfill their needs (biological and material) throughout the day.

Supporting Evidence

Improving the school schedule to accommodate more planning and collaboration can increase the likelihood of teacher retention and improve instructional outcomes. The effects of school timing on students, particularly older students, suggest that adjusting school start times to be later for students in grades 6-12 can improve performance (Jacob & Rockoff, 2011). Research also supports the positive outcomes associated with extending the school day and the school year (Farbman, 2015).

“Look Fors”

- Involve stakeholders in ensuring current time schedules and operations (such as length of day, length of classes, start time) are efficient, ensure safety, and meet students' needs.
 - Outline clear arrival and dismissal procedures for maximizing safety and efficiency
 - Develop or revise efficient procedures for students in the following areas:
 - Hall-passing procedures (i.e., hall passes, elevator passes, between classes, lateness/cutting, transition timing)
 - Use of the library and library resources (i.e., taking and returning library materials, nurturing responsible use of technology, self-management in the library)
 - Recess and school yard procedures (i.e., establish rules, provide ample and active adult supervision, model appropriate recess behaviors, develop routines for beginning and ending recess)
 - Cafeteria procedures (i.e., avoid overcrowding, set appropriate time to eat, ensure cafeteria space is clean, provide appropriate adult supervision, dismissal/ cleanup procedures in place)
 - Communicate clearly and consistently about procedures and expectations
 - Enforce procedures consistently and equitably
 - Regularly assess the effectiveness of procedures and modify accordingly
- Involve staff in ensuring the procedures and operations support their work and optimize their time (i.e., planning time, collaboration time, coverages and duty management)

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School-wide Operations and Procedures

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Reimagining the School Day,” from the Center for American Progress	This link shares examples of innovative schedules for teaching and learning.	Reimagining the School Day
“Order in the Cafeteria: Tips for Improving Behavior and Supervision,” from Education World	This link provides advice from principals for managing cafeteria logistics and rules and systems for improving behavior.	Order in the Cafeteria: Tips for Improving Behavior in the Cafeteria
“The Cafeteria: Creating Positive Mealtime Experience Information Sheet,” from the American Occupational Therapy Association	This set of guidelines provides a selection of sample Tier 1-3 interventions for promoting well-being in the cafeteria and recess.	The Cafeteria: Creating a Positive Mealtime Experience
“Setting Up a School Library,” from American Library Association	This website includes information and guidelines for operations in school libraries.	Setting Up a School Library
Responsive Classroom Playground Guidelines	This link provides information on the “recess first” movement to put recess before lunch when possible, along with routines, procedures, and strategies to improve the recess experience.	Responsive Classroom Playground Guidelines
“The Power of Innovative Scheduling,” from Educational Leadership, ASCD	This link includes tips and models for various approaches to innovative school scheduling as well as links to books on managing classroom time.	The Power of Innovative Scheduling

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Health and Safety Strategies

School Environmental Health Programs

Description

A school environmental health program is a comprehensive and actionable strategy to promote the health of community members and minimize potential health risks. A component of any school environmental health program is the selection of regular cleaning methods that support human health. Using green cleaning products (see resource list) and practices can help avoid health problems such as eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches, and asthma attacks. Additional factors including air ventilation, dampness and moisture, mold conditions, HVAC maintenance and general cleaning practices are associated with respiratory infections, allergies, and asthma, which affect students' abilities to attend school, learn, and perform. A holistic school environmental health program can take all of these factors into account as part of a plan for keeping school facilities safe and well-maintained.

Supporting Evidence

Good physical conditions can reduce absenteeism, improve test scores, and improve teacher retention rates (Schneider, 2002). Poor indoor air quality and other forms of pollution in buildings can cause illness and increase absenteeism ([Environmental Protection Agency](#)) and impact student performance (Mohai et al., 2011). According to the CDC, asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism, resulting in nearly 14 million missed school days annually nationwide.

“Look Fors”

- Establish a district or school environmental health team or committee
- Identify priorities and goals (e.g. reduce contaminants) using data
- Develop an action plan to improve environmental factors and procedures
- Practice effective cleaning and maintenance practices
- Prevent mold and moisture prevention
- Reduce chemical and environmental contaminant hazards
- Ensure good ventilation
- Prevent pests and reduce pesticide exposure
- Consult with students and school personnel for feedback on school environmental conditions

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School Environmental Health Programs

Resource	Description	Access at:
New Jersey Health Environmental and Indoor Health Assessments	This website includes information on environmental indoor health qualities (air, water, mold, etc.) as well as assessments for child care and educational facilities.	New Jersey Health Environmental and Indoor Health Assessments
“Managing Indoor Air Quality,” from Environmental Protection Agency	This link provides resources to support schools in adopting IAQ practices, including an action kit and mobile assessment application, and a professional training webinar series.	Managing Indoor Air Quality
School Environmental Health Programs, from the Environmental Protection Agency	This link includes tips for successful program design and implementation.	School Environmental Health Programs
Green Clean Schools, from the Healthy Schools Campaign	This link includes tools and resources to support green cleaning initiatives and give students access to a healthy learning environment. You can also find PowerPoint presentations for various audiences and a guide to healthy disinfectant products and other supplies.	Green Clean Schools
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities	This link includes resource lists organized by topics, including healthy schools.	National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
Environmental Protection Agency Healthy Schools and Indoor Air Quality	This link includes research and resources on maintaining a healthy school environment.	Environmental Protection Agency Healthy Schools and Indoor Air Quality

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Health and Safety Strategies

School Safety Plans

Description

School districts in New Jersey are required to have a school safety and security plan designed in conjunction with local law enforcement and other emergency officials ([School Safety and Security Plans Minimum Requirements](#)). Plans must be reviewed and updated each year. Safety plans may include components of violence prevention, emergency management, crisis planning, and crisis response and recovery (i.e. bereavement supports). It is recommended that the plan be supported by leadership, driven by data, comprehensive, and sensitive to the diverse needs of the community. It is also recommended that the plan be practiced often by stakeholders who are trained in implementation through drills or other exercises. The plan may be continuously reviewed, revised, and maintained.

As of 2017, New Jersey state law (P.L. 2017 c. 162) requires an administrator to be designated and serve as a School Safety Specialist. Please visit the following website for updates on school security legislation and related trainings: [NJDOE School Preparedness and Emergency Training](#).

Supporting Evidence

Any school could experience an emergency at any time. Reducing risk and improving response can minimize damages and injuries and provide a speedier return to learning objectives. There is evidence to suggest that schools overestimate their level of confidence in relation school safety and emergency preparedness (Kano et al., 2007). It is imperative that schools prepare all students, school personnel, and parents and the larger community (as applicable) to improve school safety and emergency preparedness. Research suggests that schools focus on minor, day-to-day emergencies, as these are most common, and also help schools prepare for larger emergencies or natural disasters (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008; Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010).

“Look Fors”

- Balance efforts to promote physical and psychological safety
- Involve parents and make them aware of upcoming safety drills and procedures
- Outline clear entry and exit procedures for the purposes of school safety (including dealing with late entry, dress code violations, and detecting dangerous materials or weapons)
- Establish visitor procedures and implement them consistently
- Coordinate security systems and monitoring/surveillance and supervision procedures (including hall monitoring)
- Incorporate emergency readiness (e.g., lockdown notification procedures)
- Incorporate crisis planning (e.g., dealing with bereavement)
- Incorporate plans for response and recovery (e.g., natural disasters)
- Create procedures to monitor bathrooms, locker rooms, and other locations not regularly supervised
- Practice coordination of emergency response/management with local and community support agencies
- As appropriate, review emergency responses of students, staff, and community members to reflect on and improve future emergency response

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School Safety Plans

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans,” from the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center	REMS provides resources, tools, and virtual trainings to help schools protect, prevent, mitigate, respond, and recover. This guide is designed to assist schools in planning for potential emergencies and implementing an Emergency Operations Plan by collaborating with community partners and emergency responders.	Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities	This link includes resource lists organized by topics, including safe schools.	National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
“Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Virtual Toolkit,” from U.S. Department of Education	This website includes free resources and trainings related to emergency management.	Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Virtual Toolkit
NJ School Safety and Security Plan Review Checklist	This link includes a checklist featuring components of a comprehensive school safety plan.	NJ School Safety and Security Plan Review Checklist
“Conducting Crisis Exercises & Drills: Guidelines for Schools,” from National Association of School Psychologists	This website includes best practices for conducting crisis exercises and drills in schools.	Conducting Crisis Exercises & Drills: Guidelines for Schools
Massachusetts Task Force Report on School Safety and Security	This link provides guidance on promoting coordination and collaboration, and focuses on how to incorporate effective school resource officers into safety planning efforts.	Massachusetts Task Force Report on School Safety and Security
Webinar on the 3 “P’s” of Safety Plans (Policy, Plan, Process), from K12 Insight	This is a 25-minute webinar discussing the connections between bullying and safety, and the steps to designing and implementing a successful school safety plan.	Webinar on the 3 “P’s” of Safety Plans (Policy, Plan, Process)
“Helping Victims of Mass Violence and Terrorism: Planning, Response, Recovery, and Resources,” from Office for Victims of Crime	This toolkit is designed to aid in developing a comprehensive victim assistance plan for responding to incidents of mass violence, however, components may also apply to other emergencies such as natural disasters.	Helping Victims of Mass Violence and Terrorism

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Health and Safety Strategies

Physical and Mental Health Supports

Description

School districts vary greatly in how they deliver physical and mental health supports and services. Some districts hire school-based clinicians, provide access to [prevention programming](#), engage in early identification, and partner with community health organizations to provide targeted interventions. Other schools universally implement developmentally appropriate prevention programs to reduce risky behaviors such as dating violence or substance abuse. Some districts are able to provide a multi-tiered approach to promoting student health that includes systems-level and individual-level changes. It is recommended that implemented programs be evidence-based, foster early intervention, and train staff to engage in early intervention through a referral process that gives all students equal access to services.

In a 2015 report, the [New Jersey Task Force on the Impact of Health and Wellness on Student Achievement](#) recommended that school districts implement Coordinated School Health programs that promote the health and well-being of all students by uniting stakeholders to assess needs, plan, implement, and evaluate health promotion efforts across interrelated components, including: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, and mental health services.

Supporting Evidence

There is increasing evidence of the linkage between physical health and mental health, and schools play a vital role in facilitating and improving both areas for children and youth. For example, efforts to promote physical activity through structured extracurricular activities (SEAs) can positively influence both mental and physical health (Miller, Gilman, & Martens, 2008). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends children ages 6-17 receive 60+ minutes of physical activity daily ([CDC Physical Activity Fact Sheet](#)). Such physical activity can improve students' concentration, memory, focus, self-regulation, and behavior, which has various implications for teaching and learning. Research suggests high levels of improvements in school physical environments and adult supervision can boost physical activity for both male and female students (Sallis et al., 2001). Healthy students are more likely to be ready to learn, engage, and connect with others in school.

Schools play a critical role in students' mental health as early signs of mental health concerns typically emerge at school (Richardson, Morrissette, & Zucker, 2012), and there is research to suggest that teachers and educators understand the school's important role in prevention and intervention for mental health concerns (Reinke et al., 2011). The Center for Mental Health in Schools estimates that between 12-22 percent of school-aged children have a diagnosable mental health disorder. Students in schools with comprehensive school mental health programs experience a range of positive outcomes such as higher test scores, higher grade-point averages, better attendance rates, and lower behavioral issues in school (Durlak et al., 2011).

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Physical and Mental Health Supports

“Look Fors”

- Establish a school health council or team to review and revise school health physical and mental health supports (as appropriate)
- Implement age-appropriate comprehensive school health education on a variety of health-related topics (i.e., nutrition, personal health and wellness, sexual health, substance abuse, [violence prevention](#), etc.)
- Adopt proactive school nutrition programs based on students’ needs (i.e., develop a school breakfast program, provide choices such as fruit, vegetables, and dairy products).
- Give students a voice on offerings for physical activities and exercises to empower them to be active and involved.
- Offer a variety of extracurricular physical activities to encourage student participation.
- Adults model positive physical and mental health behaviors
- Implement and refine systems and individual-level programs to support physical and mental health
- Ensure the availability of appropriate mental health supports (e.g., program supports, staff supports, appropriate training of counselors, school psychologists, administrators, etc.)
- Integrate suicide prevention programming
- Connect social-emotional learning to suicide prevention and mental health
- Use least restrictive methods for discipline
- Provide early identification and support for at-risk students (i.e., children of active military, homeless students, etc.)

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Physical Health Supports

Resource	Description	Access at:
The New Jersey Task Force on the Impact of Health and Wellness on Student Achievement Report, from the New Jersey School Boards Association	This link includes lists of suggested practices for school districts in establishing a Coordinated School Health program focusing on health education, nutrition services, and other aspects of physical environment and school climate.	The New Jersey Task Force on the Impact of Health and Wellness on Student Achievement Report
School Health Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	These are resources and guidelines to support schools in the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity levels of students through the creation of policies and practices.	School Health Guidelines
Youth Physical Activity Toolkit from CDC	This resource includes a host of activities to promote physical activity for youth in schools, at home, and in the wider community.	CDC Youth Physical Activity Toolkit
SHAPE America from Society of Health and Physical Educators	This website includes free resources, books, and toolkits for promoting physical and health education in schools.	SHAPE America

Strategies Related to Feelings of Safety and Connectedness to the School Environment

Resource	Description	Access at:
American School Health Association	This website includes a broad range of resources related to physical and school health.	American School Health Association
CDC School Health Tools	This resource includes links to school-based programs and tools concerning child and youth nutrition, physical activity, and obesity.	CDC School Health Tools
Advocates for Youth	This website provides sex education information along with a broad range of tools and resources to promote sexual health equity for all youth.	Advocates for Youth
AMAZE	This website features free age-appropriate (ages 10-14) videos on a range of sexual health topics, including puberty, personal safety, and sexual orientation.	AMAZE

Mental Health Supports

Resource	Description	Access at:
National Institute of Mental Health - Child and Adolescent Mental Health	This website includes information on news, research, and resources concerning child and adolescent mental health.	National Institute for Mental Health
Mentalhealth.gov	This website includes resources on mental health for educators, parents, and community members	Mentalhealth.gov
“How Teachers Can Help Students Who Are Homeless,” from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction	This resource from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction provides strategies for supporting students experiencing homelessness.	How Teachers Can Help Students Who Are Homeless
National Center for Homeless Education	This site provides resources and training (self-paced tutorials and webinars) to support schools and educators working with children experiencing homelessness.	National Center for Homeless Education
“Connecting Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) with Mental Health,” from the Education Development Center	This publication discusses the need for policies to connect SEL with students’ mental health needs, including a list of strategies for staff and community mental health providers.	Connecting SEL with Mental Health
Suicide Prevention Resource Center, from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA)	This site features links to free toolkits on topics including suicide prevention referral and tracking. The second link provides an order form for a free suicide prevention toolkit for high schools from the SAMHSA.	Suicide Prevention Resource Center Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools

Strategies Related to Feelings of Safety and Connectedness to the School Environment

Resource	Description	Access at:
NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) Suicide Prevention	Statutes and resources related to suicide prevention from the NJ Department of Education.	NJDOE Suicide Prevention
Resources to Support Children of Active Military from U.S. Department of Education	This resource provides educators with information on the deployment process, impact, and intervention strategies for students.	Resources to Support Children of Active Military
“Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-wide Positive Behavior Support”	The Interconnected Systems Framework is described as a way to integrate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with school mental health systems.	Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-wide Positive Behavior Support
A Framework from Safe and Successful Schools, from the National Association of School Psychologists	This provides a framework for improving school safety and delivering mental health supports as part of a multi-tiered system of support.	A Framework from Safe and Successful Schools
Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey	This site provides an overview of free school-based programs designed to supplement existing health curricula.	Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey
National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens (NIDA)	This website features fact sheets and resources for teachers, as well as blogs, games, and videos aimed at educating young people and reducing drug abuse.	National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) <i>Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents</i>	This free e-book contains information on substance abuse prevention programs for all school levels, as well as examples and resources from various research-based programs.	NIDA Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents
Substance Abuse Prevention Resources from Youth.gov	This website includes guides, tools, and training resources for youth substance abuse prevention.	Substance Abuse Prevention Resources
Underage Drinking Prevention from SAMHSA	This website includes materials that were created specifically to help teachers and staff members reach parents about underage drinking.	Underage Drinking Prevention
The Calm Classroom Initiative	Free mindfulness training app for educators to help them teach these skills to students.	The Calm Classroom Initiative

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Health and Safety Strategies

Trauma-informed Approaches

Description

The pervasiveness and impact of trauma on children and youth has gained increased attention in recent decades, and such attention has allowed trauma to be recognized as a public health concern. Many school-age children face traumatic circumstances outside of the school environment that can make a significant impact on learning and development. However, there is evidence that those experiences can be overcome through deliberate design of evidence-based practices. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), childhood trauma is defined as an acute event that poses a threat that the child feels is physically and/or emotionally harmful (or potentially harmful) ([Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)). These traumatic events may be acute or chronic, and may include circumstances such as domestic violence, community violence, sexual abuse, physical abuse, or experiences during natural disasters ([The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)) (NCTSN). Increasingly, researchers and practitioners are working with schools to be trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive, and to recognize and mitigate the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). As an individual's number of ACEs increases, the higher the risk for a number of health outcomes including (but not limited to) asthma, depression, smoking, and diabetes ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)). It is important that strategies utilizing trauma-informed approaches be research-driven and evidence-based to ensure appropriate supports are in place to avoid re-traumatization.

Supporting Evidence

Children with a history of trauma are more likely to do poorly in school and have chronic health conditions as adults. Trauma affects students' attention, processing, memory, and learning, and affects the overall environment because students experiencing stress may be easily triggered. It is also important to recognize that children's individual reactions to traumatic events shape the interpretation and impact of trauma (Chafouleas, Koriakin, Roundfield, & Overstreet, 2018).

Given that trauma-informed approaches should develop holistically and in collaboration with various stakeholders, there is no fixed strategy for a trauma-informed approach. However, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, any trauma-informed approaches should include the following key elements:

- Safety;
- Trustworthiness and Transparency;
- Peer Support;
- Collaboration and Mutuality;
- Empowerment, Voice and Choice; and
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues.

Schools looking to implement trauma-informed approaches should consider both school-wide and individual level efforts. That is, schools should look to incorporate trauma-informed practices throughout the school environment to foster a safe, supportive, and collaborative space for all while providing behavioral interventions for individuals facing significant traumatic events who may need more extensive treatment (Chafouleas et al., 2018). While the impact of trauma on school-specific outcomes remains a growing area of interest, a study using a national sample of students (ages 6-17) found that higher

Supporting Evidence

instances of adverse family experiences led to increased mental health diagnoses, lower levels of school engagement, and a higher placement and retention in special education services (Porche, Costello, & Rosen-Reynoso, 2016).

It is important to recognize that there is evidence that individuals who have experienced trauma have the capacity to overcome traumatic experiences with appropriate services and supports. The research and resources presented here should be consulted carefully as there are still many questions with regard to school-wide trauma-informed implementation plans and their overall impact of school-based outcomes (Chafouleas et al., 2018).

“Look Fors”

- Ensure that school leadership recognizes and supports trauma-informed approaches and invests appropriate resources to oversee trauma-informed strategies
- Ensure that all school personnel across all areas of the school environment have a basic realization about trauma and understand how trauma can impact individuals, families, groups, schools, and communities
- Craft policies and procedures to establish and sustain trauma-informed principles, with clear guidelines outlined for each level of the school (i.e., students, staff, administrators, etc.)
- Ensure that the school’s physical environment fosters a sense of safety, openness, and transparency in line with trauma-informed approaches
- Involve (as appropriate) students, parents, families, and community members in decision making around trauma-informed practices and policies
- Provide on-going training for school personnel on trauma-informed approaches
- Provide information on local and community resources to families (as appropriate)
- Monitor the effectiveness and implementation of trauma-informed approaches throughout the school. Reflect and improve strategies as appropriate based on assessment and evaluation
- Recognize how certain behaviors, classroom strategies, and school-wide procedures may serve as “triggers” for both students and school personnel
- Provide school and community resources that recognize trauma as widespread and far-reaching
- Ensure the availability of adequate mental health supports with professionals available who are trained in trauma-informed approaches
- Ensure clinical staff build competencies in assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning, engagement, implementation, and quality monitoring for trauma-informed interventions (based on recommendations from National Child Traumatic Stress Network)
- Recognize the stigma of seeking mental health services for students in schools and make efforts to address this stigma and reduce barriers to care

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Trauma-informed Approaches

Resource	Description	Access at:
Guidance for Trauma-Informed Approaches, from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	This resource includes an overview of the concept of trauma and guidance for implementing trauma-informed approaches.	Guidance for Trauma-informed Approaches
Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services from the Administration for Children and Families	These resources provide an overview of key concepts relate to trauma and a guide to resources, highlighting recent advances in our understanding of trauma and explaining how this understanding may inform program design.	Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services
“Resources to Help Children Affected by Trauma Learn,” from the Wisconsin Department of Education	This resource list from the Wisconsin Department of Education provides school-wide resources, resources for educators, and clinical information.	Resources to Help Children Affected by Trauma Learn
“Helping Traumatized Children Learn,” from Trauma Learning and Policy Initiative	This resource includes a range of research and writing, policy information, and strategies to help schools with trauma-informed approaches.	Helping Traumatized Children Learn
Traumatic Experiences, from Sesame Street in Communities	This website includes articles, activities, and tools related to working with children (ages 0-6) who have experienced trauma.	Traumatic Experiences from Sesame Street In Communities
<i>The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success</i> , from Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	This free e-book contains research, resources, and strategies for developing a trauma-sensitive school.	The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success

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Attendance, Participation, and School Pride

Attendance Policies, Procedures, and Supports (e.g., Truancy/Chronic Absenteeism Reduction)

Description

Chronic absenteeism has both immediate (e.g., missed academic milestones) and far reaching effects (e.g., poor adult outcomes) on youth development ([USDOE](#)). Therefore, truancy and chronic absence prevention programs provide multi-tiered systems of support to increase student attendance in order to avoid negative developmental outcomes. Components include non-punitive approaches to discipline, policies and procedures that support positive student and staff connections, and supports that remove barriers to attendance and promote stronger sense of belonging to school. A range of factors affect student attendance and holistic, data-driven solutions are found to be most promising.

Supporting Evidence

Students missing 10 percent or more of school — whether absences are excused, unexcused or due to suspension — predict lower performance levels by third grade, class failure in middle school, higher levels of suspension, higher likelihood of high school dropout and lower levels of persistence in college. The most effective and sustainable approaches are those that use data to identify where the problem is and target where additional resources are needed. Research suggests that strategies and solutions aimed at family, community and school partnerships are effective in increasing attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism (Sheverbush, Smith, & DeGruson, 2000 as cited in [USDOE](#)). The purpose of school climate change strategies addressing attendance should be to change behavior, not to punish. For instance, schools should reconsider the use of zero tolerance policies such as suspensions for truancy and instead consider less severe consequences such as community service or in-school detentions (Skiba & Kesting, 2001). It is recommended that solutions align school and community resources and be tiered, starting with universal approaches that prevent chronic absenteeism leading to customized approaches for at-risk students.

“Look Fors”

- Adopt common definitions of terms such as chronic absenteeism, unexcused absences, and what constitutes a full day
- Cultivate an accurate system of data (quantitative e.g., truancy, average daily attendance and qualitative) collection, monitoring, and reporting
- Disaggregate data by grade, neighborhood, and subpopulation (e.g., race, gender) to develop an understanding of disproportionate attendance issues.
- Communicate with entire community about attendance data and work to unpack and dispel myths about attendance
- Adopt non-punitive policies that specify use of data, communication with and engagement of parents, and/or any use of incentives
- Coordinate policy alignment across district
- Disseminate positive messages about attendance to community through posters, flyers, campaigns
- Cultivate caring connections with adults (e.g., advisories, high expectation setting, daily feedback)
- Practice [culturally responsive](#) and personalized learning

“Look Fors”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implement adult-student mentoring programs within the broader community (e.g., My Brother’s Keeper Success Mentor Initiative) <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a point of contact at schools for families to connect with regarding attendance issues <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate safe and reliable transportation options for students <p>Provide coordinated support through home visits, intensive case management, or alternative schooling (if needed)</p>

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Attendance Policies, Procedures, and Supports

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Getting Students to School: Strategies for Improving Attendance and Reducing Chronic Absenteeism,” from New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)	This document provides schools and districts with proactive ideas and strategies to engage educators, families and the community in an effort to improve student attendance.	NJDOE Getting Students to School
Guidance for Reporting Student Absences and Calculating Chronic Absenteeism from NJDOE	This document provides guidance on reporting and calculating chronic absenteeism.	NJDOE Guidance for Reporting Student Absences and Calculating Chronic Absenteeism
Attendance Works	This website provides resources, toolkits, and videos for educators, parents, and community members.	Attendance Works Attendance Works - Evidence-Based Programs Bringing Attendance Home Attendance Works
“Every Student, Every Day: A community toolkit to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism,” from U.S. Department of Education	This toolkit provides data on absenteeism and action guides for key stakeholder groups (educators, parents, community, and juvenile justice).	Every Student, Every Day
Every Student Present from New York State Council for Children and Families	This site provides tailored resources to educators and parents for engaging children in school.	Every Student Present Educator Section Every Student Present Parent Section

Strategies Related to Feelings of Safety and Connectedness to the School Environment

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Showing Up Matters: The state of chronic absenteeism in New Jersey,” from Advocates for Children of New Jersey	This brief provides a snapshot of chronic absenteeism in New Jersey along with strategies for addressing it.	Showing Up Matters
“Increasing Student Attendance: From Research to Practice,” from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory	This guide provides educators with information about why chronic absenteeism occurs, strategies for preventing it, and school case studies.	Increasing Student Attendance: From Research to Practice
The National Mentoring Partnership	This site provides guidance for starting a mentoring program in the community.	The National Mentoring Partnership
Absences Add Up Campaign, a coordinated effort among U.S. government agencies	This webpage links to resources for encouraging attendance using several strategies including Tier 2 and 3 mentoring strategies.	Absences Add Up
“Toolkit for Creating Your Own Truancy Reduction Program,” from Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	This webpage links to resources for developing a truancy prevention program.	Toolkit for Creating Your Own Truancy Reduction Program
National Network of Partnership Schools	This site provides resources for parent and community partnerships.	National Network of Partnership Schools

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Attendance, Participation, and School Pride

Parent/Family Involvement and Engagement

Description

This strategy focuses on increasing engagement and collaboration with parents and community groups. Increasing parental and family involvement in education can have a range of positive outcomes for students, teachers, and parents. This may involve diverse communication with parents, educational opportunities, home outreach initiatives, as well building support networks for parents and families through the school. Overall, parents are a school’s main source of support for getting children to school and play a vital role in education and student success.

Supporting Evidence

Research suggests that parental and familial engagement in education is vital to student success. Establishing a contact at school for family members to work with is key for increasing parental involvement (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Parental and family involvement in education promotes higher academic achievement and attendance rates and improves social and emotional skills (Anderson & Minke, 2007). These positive effects have been found across elementary and secondary schooling. Positive parent-teacher relationships have also been found to positively influence teacher’s self-perception and job satisfaction (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

“Look Fors”

- Recruit and organize parental help and support
- Designate parents leaders and representatives to take part in decision making
- Maintain regular use of notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, other types of communication
- Value respectful and trusting relationships between families and professionals (i.e., promote two-way communication)
- Send home materials that promote reading, writing, and discussions between students and family members
- Offer parent education or training (specifically for skills that may be brought into the home)
- Ensure that all family engagement opportunities are culturally and linguistically responsive (i.e., provide language translators as needed)
- Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with curricular and co-curricular activities
- Ensure resources and services from the community strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
- Coordinate home visits and intensive case management (if needed)
- Provide family counseling (if needed)

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Parent/Family Involvement and Engagement

Resource	Description	Access at:
Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement from Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools	This link connects users to a framework for promoting parental involvement for students across grade level.	Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement
School/Family/Community Involvement from New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)	This webpage includes information on parental and family involvement in student success and links to a number of resources on parent and community involvement.	NJDOE School/Family/Community Involvement
“Parental Involvement in Schools: Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being,” from Child Trends Data Bank	This report includes a summary of research on the importance of parental involve in education.	Parental Involvement in Schools: Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being
Family Engagement Toolkit from Teaching Tolerance	This link includes a variety of readings, resources, and downloads for welcoming linguistically and culturally diverse parents.	Family Engagement Toolkit
“Promising Partnership Practices,” from National Network of Partnership Schools, Johns Hopkins University (2017)	This collection includes over 75 ideas to improve school programs of family and community engagement and to sharpen district and organization leadership on partnership program development	Promising Partnership Practices
<i>Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships</i> from The New Press	A practical, hands-on primer on helping schools and families work better together to improve children’s education	Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships

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Attendance, Participation, and School Pride

School Connectedness and Community Identity

Description

School connectedness refers to the characteristics of the social relationships and a sense of belonging in school communities. Across the school environment, school connectedness may also refer to the nature of the relationships among students, staff, parents/families, and the broader community (Rowe & Stewart, 2011). The strategies listed here involve classroom and school-wide activities that help students to feel connected to school, teachers, and other students; committed to a common cause rather than individual interests; and recognized and valued as unique contributors to the school community.

Supporting Evidence

School connectedness promotes positive educational outcomes such as increased attendance rates, improved academic performance, and greater sense of confidence and self-value (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). There are also positive health outcomes associated with promoting school connectedness such as lower risk behaviors like violence or substance abuse (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). School connectedness and community identity can be communicated and reinforced through curriculum and teaching, classroom-specific strategies, school-wide activities, and broader community supports (Rowe, Stewart, & Patterson, 2007). Students' feelings of school connectedness may be influenced by interactions with adults as well as peers. Despite students' backgrounds and the heterogeneity of the school composition, schools can make changes to influence school connectedness.

"Look Fors"

- Create meaningful and relevant overarching goal(s) which all students and staff can rally to achieve together
- Involve students and adults in decision making processes that promote academic success and facilitate community engagement
- Designate special places to meet and socialize and have shared experiences (e.g., events, seating areas)
- Promote the interests of diverse groups in the school and in the broader community
- Cultivate a sense of openness and belonging among all different kinds of people
- Ensure there are opportunities for students to link educational goals to service learning and civic engagement.
- Recognize shared interests and talents among community members
- Create symbolic and artistic representations of community identity that promote pride, dialogue, and establish institutional memory (e.g., murals)
- Adopt rituals and routines that promote unity, collective identity, and to address healing in response to negative events

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School Connectedness and Community Identity

Resource	Description	Access at:
“Creating a School Community,” from Educational Leadership, ASCD	This is a brief article that provides some tips and resources for promoting belonging among students.	Creating a School Community
“School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth,” from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	This is a guide for increasing protective factors and school connectedness among youth. Six key strategies and actions are outlined.	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth
“Building Students Sense of Belonging,” from Education Northwest	This article provides insight into sense of belonging as it relates to inclusion and diversity.	Building Students Sense of Belonging
“5 Ways to Build School Community: Creating a Sense of Unity Benefits Students, Teachers, and Families,” from PTO Today	This article provides simple strategies for promoting school community.	5 Ways to Build School Community
“Students’ Sense of Belonging in School is Important. It starts with Teachers,” from Education Week	This article highlights student-teacher relationships as important influence on sense of belonging to school.	Students’ Sense of Belonging in School is Important. It starts with Teachers
“Helping Students Feel They Belong,” from eJournal of the International Child and Youth Caring Network (CYC- Net)	This article provides strategies for student belonging.	Helping Students Feel They Belong
“Best Practices for Effective Schools,” from the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute	This reading includes research and examples for promoting school connectedness.	Best Practices for Effective Schools

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Student Voice and Empowerment Strategies

Service Learning and Youth Participatory Action Research

Description

Service learning promotes citizenship through planned community service projects that incorporate reflection to support learning from the experience. For example, students could participate in a service learning project by cleaning up a park as an introduction to an environmental science lesson. Youth participatory action research (YPAR) is a type of service learning that incorporates a research component into the design of the program. Youth Participatory Action Research allows young people to participate in a process of identifying a practical problem in their communities or schools that they wish to address, take part in data collection around particular concerns, analyze the data, and use the results to inform action (Voight & Velez, 2018). Through this process, students are able to engage in their communities, gain experience through hands-on learning, and take action toward social change. Student voice and empowerment are central to these strategies, and generate positive academic and behavioral outcomes for youth involved in such projects. Youth are also able to better develop communication and leadership skills.

Supporting Evidence

Research suggests several positive outcomes for students involved in service learning and YPAR projects, including a sense of empowerment and voice, academic engagement, positive relationships with adults because of shared leadership, a stronger sense of interdependence among students, respect for diversity, and greater sense of community for all students. A meta-analysis of service learning studies found positive effects for students in five key outcomes: attitudes toward self, attitudes toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic performance (Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011). Research suggests that service learning projects may highlight self-empowerment and community engagement, especially for marginalized students (Winans-Solis, 2014). YPAR also promotes higher levels of school attendance (Voight & Velez, 2018).

“Look Fors”

- Engage in frequent integration of research and action
- Provide training and practice in research skills such as problem identification, data collection, data analysis
- Identify community resources to integrate with curricular goals
- Practice strategic thinking skills (such as leadership, critical thinking, time management) and strategies for influencing change
- Ensure that student voice and engagement are central to the research and change process
- Build supportive networks between school and community
- Share power between teachers and student in action process
- Connect and embed project into curriculum to reinforce skill development

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Service learning and Youth Participatory Action Research

Resource	Description	Access at:
Youth.gov	Youth.gov (formerly FindYouthInfo.gov) is an Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, which is composed of representatives from 20 federal agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth. It houses strategies, tools, and resources to help promote effective community-based efforts addressing youth risk and protective factors.	Youth.gov
Service Learning and Volunteer Opportunities from United States Department of Education	Provides links to service learning opportunities (e.g., Americorp, Peacecorp, Corporation for National and Community Service)	Service Learning and Volunteer Opportunities
Research for Action: A Guide for Facilitating Action Research for Youth	This guide provides instructions and resources for launching a youth action research project.	Research for Action
Service Learning Resources from National Education Association (NEA)	This article provides links to resources for successful service learning opportunities.	NEA Service Learning Resources
National Youth Leadership Council	This site provides resource in service learning including standards for quality practice.	National Youth Leadership Council
National Service Learning Clearinghouse	This site offers a library of free online resources for service learning.	National Service Learning Clearinghouse
Service Learning Resources from the American Psychological Association (APA)	This page provides links to several resources in service learning	APA Service Learning Resources
Youth Participatory Action Research HUB from the University of California, Berkeley	This site provides resources for implementing Youth Participatory Action Research initiatives.	Youth Participatory Action Research HUB
Youth Participatory Action Research Curriculum from The Institute for Community Research	This site includes links to a modular program for schools to design YPAR curricula and a free webinar for getting started with a YPAR curriculum	Youth Participatory Action Research Curriculum Youth Participatory Action Research Webinar

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Student Voice and Empowerment Strategies

Student Advisory Committees

Description

Student advisory committees are comprised of students who are often nominated by adults and students and represent student interests on issues targeted by the committee (e.g., school climate committee, graduation committee). The group meets with adult leaders in the school to discuss current school issues and generate ideas for improvement. Ensuring equitable representation on committees is vital as advisory committees can serve to improve student relationships and inclusion and diversity in the school.

Supporting Evidence

Student advisory committees come out of research on increasing student voice to improve school outcomes (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Student advisory committees help students to be actively engaged in school decision-making procedures. Efforts to increase students' voice positively influences agency, belonging and competence, which all have implications for positive youth development (Mitra, 2004).

“Look Fors”

- Announce the creation of the student advisory committee throughout the school and be sure all groups know they have an opportunity to join
- Establish procedures for selection of students and inform the student body of the selection process (e.g., teacher, administration, self, peer nominations)
- Select students using an equitable process that is representative of your community which **may** include representation from different grades, homerooms, special and general education, gender identity groups, racial and cultural groups, and other important group identities in your school and community
- Write and designate roles for members and procedures for meetings (i.e., the purpose of the council, setting an agenda, chairing and minutes of meetings, decision-making procedures)
- Encourage student-led agenda development
- Help set clear, achievable aims for students
- Plan frequent, regular meetings for the year, during school hours while avoiding conflicts with other activities
- Support and allow students to agree upon ways for communicating between the committee and student body, to access views of students and provide feedback to classes as well as communicate with the principal and other key stakeholders
- Respect students' voices and give enough power to students to make a difference
- Follow through on student ideas and action items

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Student Advisory Committee

Resource	Description	Access at:
Building an Effective Advisory Committee, Mentoring Resource Center Fact Sheet, from United States Department of Education	This fact sheet provides information for building an effective advisory committee.	Mentoring Resource Center Fact Sheet
“Changing Systems To Personalize Learning: The Power of Advisories,” from Brown University	This resource includes research, assessments, and activities designed to help schools form student advisory committees in collaboration with adults.	Changing Systems To Personalize Learning: The Power of Advisories
“Soundout: Student Voices in Schools”	This document contains information about student participation on school boards.	Soundout: Student Voices in Schools
Youth on Board	This site contains a number of readings and resources regarding student empowerment and student participation in student committees, with particular emphasis from the Boston Student Advisory Council.	Youth on Board
Beaverton Student Advisory Committee Application	This document provides an example of a student advisory committee.	Beaverton Student Advisory Committee Application
“How-to Guide to School Climate Committee” from the Making Caring Common Project at Harvard University	This document includes ideas, examples, and tips for forming a student committee focused on school climate change.	Making Caring Common Project

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Student Voice and Empowerment Strategies

Student Council/Government

Description

Student councils/government are comprised of students who are elected by their peers as representatives to serve in a student government organization. Student representatives meet regularly with adult advisors and influence school-wide decision making. Student councils can exist at all school levels, although middle and high schools have more active programs. Student government/councils provide a key avenue to support student voice and participation in schoolwide processes and procedures.

Supporting Evidence

Student representatives benefit by learning how to take responsibility, communicate effectively, make decisions, and lead. They also learn about organizations and the democratic process. Research suggests participation in student councils can increase students' sense of agency, confidence, teamwork and communication skills, academic performance, and adult-student relationships (Griebler & Nowak, 2012), as well as positively influencing students' and social and emotional well-being (Weare and Gray, 2003). Encouraging students to speak openly about their concerns at school and participate in school decision-making processes can contribute to a more positive school environment (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Student councils also positively influence on students' future civic engagement, particularly those students serving on the student council (McFarland & Starmanns, 2009). The process of participation is useful for providing feedback to administration about student issues and influencing policies, practices and systems that may positively influence the school as a whole. For schools looking to improve student participation and positively influence student empowerment, it is important to consider how student councils involve the entire student body and make an impact on the wider school community. Consider utilizing resources under "student advisory committees" (as appropriate) for planning school-wide school climate changes.

"Look Fors"

- Establish procedures for election and transition of members that is administered by students
- Conduct an election that ensures council members are representative of the school as a whole
- Maintain the right size council (not too big or too small) that builds camaraderie and a sense of team spirit
- Encourage interested students to participate
- Allow council members to serve long enough to get experience and make change, while giving many students a chance to participate
- Select students using an equitable process that is representative of your community which **may** include representation from different grades, homerooms, special and general education, gender identity groups, racial and cultural groups, and other important group identities in your school and community
- Write procedures for meetings into a constitution (i.e., purpose of council, setting an agenda, chairing and minutes of meetings, decision-making procedures, and roles within the council)
- Encourage student-led agenda development

“Look Fors”

- Help set clear, achievable aims for students
- Attend meetings to support, listen, and build in rewards for council members
- Evaluate the work of the council
- Plan frequent, regular meetings for the year, during school hours while avoiding conflicts with other activities
- Support and allow students to agree upon ways for communicating between council and student body, to access views of students and provide feedback to classes as well as communicate with principal and other key stakeholders
- Give enough power to students to make a difference
- Provide independent council budget or allow for fundraising for council budget
- Train student council members on their roles, expectations, and responsibilities as well as skills for representation and reporting (can be done by former members)

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Student Council/Government

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Access at:</i>
New Jersey Association of Student Councils	This website provides supports and resources for developing student councils.	New Jersey Association of Student Councils
National Association of Student Councils	This website includes resources for building student councils in schools. Includes blogs, videos, and information on student voice and empowerment.	National Association of Student Councils
California Association of Student Councils	This document contains information on best practices for forming and maintaining a student government	California Association of Student Councils

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Proactive Routines and Positive Behavior Management

Description

Classroom management refers to all teacher actions designed to support effective teaching and learning, including aspects such as space, time, activities, materials, and interactions (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011). Teachers carefully plan lessons and develop proactive routines and procedures to streamline administrative tasks and the management of materials. These procedures ensure that sufficient time is allocated to student learning. Behavioral management techniques support students' adherence to guidelines and expectations for their behavior.

Supporting Evidence

There is empirical support for the proactive use of classroom routines and procedures for time management in schools. Clear expectations, consistent routines, and efficient use of time have been found to be critical components of effective classroom management (Conroy, Alter, & Sutherland, 2014) and related to student achievement (Gage, Scott, Hirn, & MacSuga-Gage, 2018). A meta-analysis found that classroom management increases academic outcomes and decreases problem behaviors (Korpershoek, Harms, de Boer, van Kuijik, & Doolard, 2016). Research also highlights the importance of allocating time strategically to promote student learning (Borg, 1980).

Practice: Time management strategies

The teaching and learning environment is shaped by the teacher's time management behaviors and procedures (Ratcliff et al., 2011). Lesson plan design can ensure an appropriate balance of instructional time, guided practice, and independent practice. The teacher should adhere to the timing as much as possible, while building in flexibility. The ways in which teachers communicate the day's objective and agenda, combined with the structure and predictability supported by routines and procedures (see next practice), communicate a sense of urgency to students and maximize the time available for learning.

"Look Fors"

- Increase allocated time by preparing materials, equipment, and supplies in advance
- Prioritize the most important concepts, ideas, and/or skills students should master
- Anticipate and prepare for students' questions, and build flexibility into the lesson plan
- Increase time on task by strategically structuring classroom activities and emphasizing instructional relevance (see [Relevance of Instruction](#))
- Provide brisk pacing to promote engagement and a sense of urgency
- Design and practice efficient transitions by preparing students, bringing activities to closure, and prompting students prior to and during transitions
- Consider building repetitive independent practice opportunities into homework
- Provide a procedure for how to use extra time if tasks are finished early (i.e. students work on extra credit assignments)
- Use physical proximity to make sure students are on task during group or independent work
- Design instructional plans for bell-to-bell teaching

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Practice: Predictable classroom routines

Carefully established routines and procedures create a sense of predictability. Teachers should identify common events including administrative procedures, instructional tasks, and interactive routines, and establish clear procedures, which enable students to know what is expected in a given situation (Burden, 1999). Effective classroom management is related to student time-on-task (Ratcliff, Carroll, & Hunt, 2014), academic performance, and behavior (Wong & Wong, 2009).

“Look Fors”

- Establish predictable patterns and routines to open the class and get students on task right away
- Establish clear signals for timing and transitions (i.e., a timer to provide auditory cues)
- Outline steps for completing specific activities
- Consider how the organization of the physical classroom supports procedures (see [Classroom Arrangements and Physical Conditions](#))
- Teach routines and procedures directly
- Post reminders to reinforce routines and procedures
- Practice routines and procedures regularly
- Acknowledge students’ successful adherence to procedures using positive narration to name and notice behavior
- Connect use of procedures to successful task completion
- Promote self-managed/student guided routines
- Assign responsibilities for maintaining the classroom procedures and routines to students on a rotating basis

Practice: Positive behavioral expectations and supports

In the classroom, the routine use of strategies to communicate positive behavioral expectations and provide redirection may be used for individual students needing additional support in staying on task. (For more information on school-wide positive behavior intervention and supports using a multi-tiered approach, refer to [School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports](#).)

“Look Fors”

- Define behavioral expectations, along with predictable rewards and consequences
- Communicate what is expected of students by posting expectations
- Review and reinforce behavioral expectations regularly
- Model and practice expectations
- “Active supervision” of students through scanning, interactions, and reinforcement of acceptable behaviors
- Provide “pre-correction” in settings where misbehavior is likely to happen
- Provide opportunities for students to monitor themselves and take responsibility for their behavior
- Provide positive feedback that is specific in terms of describing the behavior being commended
- Use strategies to redirect behavior, such as relocation or alternative activities
- Use proactive strategies (e.g., Check In, Check Out, Think Time)
- Support functional behavioral assessment and implementation of individualized intervention to address student-specific needs
- Teacher maintains leadership of the classroom in response to challenges to authority and always ensures compliance with directives

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Proactive Routines and Positive Behavior Management

Resource	Description	Access at:
Classroom Management Guide from University of Northern Colorado	This website at the University of Northern Colorado provides descriptions of approaches and strategies for effective classroom management.	Classroom Management Guide
“11 Research-Based Classroom Management Strategies,” an article from Edutopia	This link from Edutopia provides a list of strategies and tips to promote effective classroom management.	11 Research-based Classroom Management Strategies
Time-on-Task: A Strategy that Accelerates Learning, from Florida Education Association	This web page from the Florida Education Association describes research-based considerations for strategic management of time in the classroom.	Time on Task Resource
Time Management Resources from ASCD (Formally Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)	Overview of concepts related to time management in the classroom and considerations for scheduling and classroom strategies.	Time Management Resources

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Mindset and Motivation Strategies

Description

An emerging trend in the field of education is the awareness and adoption of growth mindset to improve student attitudes and restructure the nature of instruction. Growth mindset strategies are based on theories that a student’s views of characteristics as fixed versus malleable play a critical role in learning. When students believe their intelligence can grow and change, this belief impacts traits and outcomes that could lead to greater outcomes (Dweck, 2000; Sisk et al., 2018).

Previous research has suggested that mindset interventions might be most effective when combined with other interventions designed to improve students’ motivation. At the same time, creating the conditions for growth mindset is critical to efforts promoting student motivation and engagement. In order to feel that they can learn and succeed, students must think of their talents and intelligence as able to grow and change.

Supporting Evidence

Research is currently underway to evaluate the impact of increasingly popular growth mindset interventions, yet it is challenging to measure the effects of mindset on various student outcomes. Currently, there is little evidence that growth mindset interventions are significantly related to achievement outcomes. Mindset interventions have been found most effective for students with lower socioeconomic status (SES) or those who are academically at-risk (Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2016; Sisk et al., 2018). However, since “mindset interventions are relatively low cost and take little time,” there may be a net benefit for achievement (Sisk et al. 2018, p. 568), behavior, and sense of well-being associated with efforts to shift both students and teacher’ mindsets.

Practice: Growth mindset

Strategies to develop a growth mindset include recognizing and encouragement of effort and developing resilience and the belief that struggle leads to growth. The growth mindset is modeled by adults through language and the framing of problems and assignments. Growth mindset interventions focus on “the power of yet,” as in, “I don’t know how to do that yet.” Growth mindset can be viewed as a cultural shift or norm of practice and can become enacted in the language used to describe daily objectives, assignments, and assessment techniques.

“Look Fors”

- Adults model growth mindset beliefs and behaviors by taking risks
- Use language that focuses on effort over innate ability
- Frame setbacks as opportunities
- Create opportunities to “fail fast” and improve through practice
- Students describe errors as part of the learning process and work to overcome mistakes
- Recognize students for taking risks in learning
- Implement additional practices to build academic tenacity (see next section) or develop social-emotional skills enabled by growth mindset (i.e. self-regulation)

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Practice: High Academic Expectations

Students of teachers with high expectations are more likely to strive to fulfill those expectations, which leads to increased self-esteem, confidence, and performance (Brophy, 2008). Teachers' expectations and students' motivation have been found to be linked (Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2006). Creating high expectations requires that teachers adopt a belief that all students can learn and engaging in specific actions to demonstrate they believe their students can complete rigorous and high quality work (Williamson, 2012).

A culture of high expectations is communicated at the school-wide level and enacted through classroom-level practices. "Academic press" is another term used to describe school environments that push students to achieve through leadership practices, curricula, and instruction focused on high expectations for all (Cannata, Smith, & Haynes 2017).

"Look Fors"

- Define clear, consistent, and high academic standards
- Communicate expectations to students and their families
- Ensure opportunities for every student to experience success
- Engage students in self-reflection by using rubrics and other scoring guides
- Build opportunities for intrinsic motivation and emphasize the value of learning (see Relevance of Instruction)
- Provide adequate support to match increased expectations, including instructional scaffolding (i.e. using graphic organizers to scaffold content)
- Adopt grading practices that clearly communicate standards for high quality performance
- Instill the belief that goals can be achieved through promotion of growth mindset
- Explicitly show students the "inputs" or steps to achieve goals, and focus on incremental challenges
- Revise grading scheme to not accept "failing" work (i.e. "A, B, C and NY – Not Yet")

Practice: Academic Tenacity and Student Investment

Academic tenacity is defined as a student's sense of belonging in school and ability to look beyond short-term academic or social challenges to work toward longer-term goals (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014). Also referred to as "student investment," students who are invested in long-term goals and academically tenacious see the relevance of school to their future goals and are able to remain engaged in content over time. It is less likely that invested students will get derailed or distracted, particularly when explicit classroom strategies build academic tenacity and investment in goals.

"Look Fors"

- Focus on cultivating students' understanding of postsecondary options and pathways and senses of "future self"
- Students believe that school is a route to achieving long-term goals
- Ensure students can describe the relevancy of what they are learning
- Students are able to set meaningful [SMART goals](#) for their own achievement
- Students are absorbed in the learning task
- Students maintain substantive conversations that are focused on learning
- Students set and articulate personal goals, and update them periodically as a result of assessment results
- Support students in developing and practicing [social and emotional skills](#) such as self-regulation and self-control
- Engage in "values affirmations" which encourage students to bring the attributes they value in themselves to the school setting, which increases sense of belonging
- Improve students' sense of belonging through supportive relationships with peers and teachers

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Mindset and Motivation Strategies

Resource	Description	Access at:
The Mindset Kit from Stanford University	A free set of online lessons and practices to help teach growth mindset from the Project for Education Research that Scales at Stanford University.	The Mindset Kit
“Growth Mindset for 9 th Graders,” from Stanford University	This is a free evidence-based online program including survey questions, readings, and reflection exercises on malleable intelligence from the Project for Education Research that Scales at Stanford University.	Growth Mindset for 9th Graders
“How to Increase Student Investment in Learning,” an article from Corwin Press	This article provides descriptors from the Student Investment in Learning Survey and sample observation criteria and interview questions to measure the extent to which individual students are “invested learners.”	How to Increase Student Investment in Learning
“Establishing a Culture of High Expectations,” a chapter from <i>Culture Reboot: Reinvigorating Culture to Improve Student Outcomes</i>	This is an excerpt from <i>Culture Reboot: Reinvigorating Culture to Improve Student Outcomes</i> , on setting high expectations, including sample activities and a discussion-based assessment tool (Kaplan & Owings, 2013).	Establishing a Culture of High Expectations (Book Excerpt)
“SMART Goal Setting with Your Students,” from Edutopia	This is a step-by-step process for setting SMART goals including practical examples.	Goal Setting with Students

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Student Engagement Strategies

Description

Strategies for promoting engagement focus on modes of instruction and practices designed to increase students' involvement behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively. *Behavioral engagement* is defined as complying with behavioral norms (e.g., attendance); exhibiting effort, persistence, and attention; and participating in school-related activities. *Emotional engagement* is defined as affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment, or sense of belonging. *Cognitive engagement* is defined as students' level of investment in learning (e.g., Fredericks, Blumefield, & Paris, 2004).

Supporting Evidence

Engaged students have been found to demonstrate more effort and pay more attention in class (Fredericks, Blumefield, & Paris, 2004). School-based practices found through research to be associated with increased student engagement and motivation include: encouraging supportive student-teacher relationships and interactions, offering opportunities for students to explore and to challenge ideas, promoting the relevance of instruction, and using assessment to guide student learning (Willms, Friesen, & Milton, 2009; Dunleavy & Milton, 2009).

Practice: Relevant Instruction

Relevance refers to a student's perception that an objective will satisfy personal needs or goals, and fuels a student's motivation (Brophy, 1986). When tasks are connected to students' lives and interests, engagement and performance improve (Meier, 2008). Connections are made between content and students' experiences, interests, or knowledge in a way that creates a "need to know" and a reason for completing a task (Bae & Kokka, 2016).

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- Start and end class with a review of past learning, overview of objective(s), and explanation of how it fits into the big picture
- Direct students to access prior knowledge and experience in preparing for a task (e.g. Know, Want to Know, Learned or KWL charts)
- Designs tasks based on scenarios or examples that are relevant to students' interests and "real-world" experiences
- Staff assess students' personal interests and learning preferences and use collected data to drive instruction
- Communicate general utility value of a task to students; if needed, communicate the personal value of a task to engage individual students
- Integrate culturally relevant, real-life scenarios, authentic problems, and community issues into instruction
- Tasks require realistic problem-solving processes used by practitioners

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Practice: Engaging and Challenging Instructional Techniques

Instructional techniques to engage students include providing autonomy and decision-making to students, providing opportunities for student collaboration, and engaging students in challenging tasks that require higher-order forms of learning. These techniques and practices have been found to increase intrinsic motivation for a task (Bae & Kokka, 2016).

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- Provide inquiry- and problem-based learning opportunities that allow for exploration (e.g, [YPAR and service learning](#))
- Introduce learning tasks that require deep thinking and intellectual rigor
- Require students to use higher-order thinking skills to analyze, interpret, and manipulate information
- Create learning experiences that are active and collaborative
- Enable students to challenge and debate ideas
- Create challenging and enriching opportunities for students to extend their academic abilities
- Provide student autonomy and choice
- Incorporate physical movement as part of exercises
- Encourage students to explain their work rather than focusing on the “right answer”
- Set communal and cooperative goals rather than promoting individual competition

Practice: Active Student Response and Ongoing Assessment

Opportunities to respond (OTR), or active student response (ASR), is when students are expected to provide a visible and timely response to ongoing instruction by saying an answer, writing an answer, or engaging in another signal. These opportunities to measure student participation and understanding provide direct and meaningful data to the teacher. Low-tech strategies such as choral responding, response cards, and guided notes can be used (Heward, 1994; Tincani & Twyman, 2016), along with high-tech strategies. Having many opportunities to respond during instruction improves the likelihood that students are engaged (Hattie, 2012), and increase classroom participation, on-task behavior, and correct responding (Tincani & Twyman, 2016). Research indicates that about three to five OTRs per minute are predictive of increased student engagement (MacSuga-Gage & Simonsen, 2015). OTR/ASR can be used along with other teacher-led and student-led opportunities for formative assessment and summative assessment.

“Look Fors”

- Shift from “volunteering” language to “engaging” language when delivering instructions (e.g., instead of saying “Who would like to...” and selecting a volunteer, say “Everybody be ready to...”)
- Use a mix of active student response methods to formatively assess student learning (including low-tech options such as “thumbs up, thumbs down” or high-tech options like cell-phone polling)
- Use a brisk instructional pace to move through question – response – feedback sequences, which increases practice opportunities
- Define tasks clearly and develop instructions and tools to enable students to monitor their own work relative to a high-quality standard
- Engage students in self-assessment regarding their own products, work process, and explanations
- Utilize formative assessment to measure progress towards goals
- Ensure assessments are linked to relevant skills
- Provide guidance and timely, relevant, and specific feedback to students based on assessment results

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Student Engagement Strategies

Resource	Description	Access at:
Engaging Students in Learning, from the Center for Teaching and Learning at University of Washington	This web page from the University of Washington provides links to strategies and quick start guides for promoting student engagement.	Engaging Students in Learning
“Ten Steps to Better Student Engagement,” an article from Edutopia	This link from Edutopia provides a list of strategies and tips to promote better student engagement in the classroom.	Ten Steps to Better Student Engagement
Instructional Strategies Motivate and Engage Students in Deeper Learning, from Advance Education	This web page from Advance Education provides an overview with references and links to best practices for promoting student engagement.	Instructional Strategies to Motivate
“Enhancing Engagement Through Active Student Response,” from Center on Innovations in Learning	This guide from the Center on Innovations in Learning provides an overview of active student response strategies and concrete examples.	Enhancing Engagement Through Active Student Response

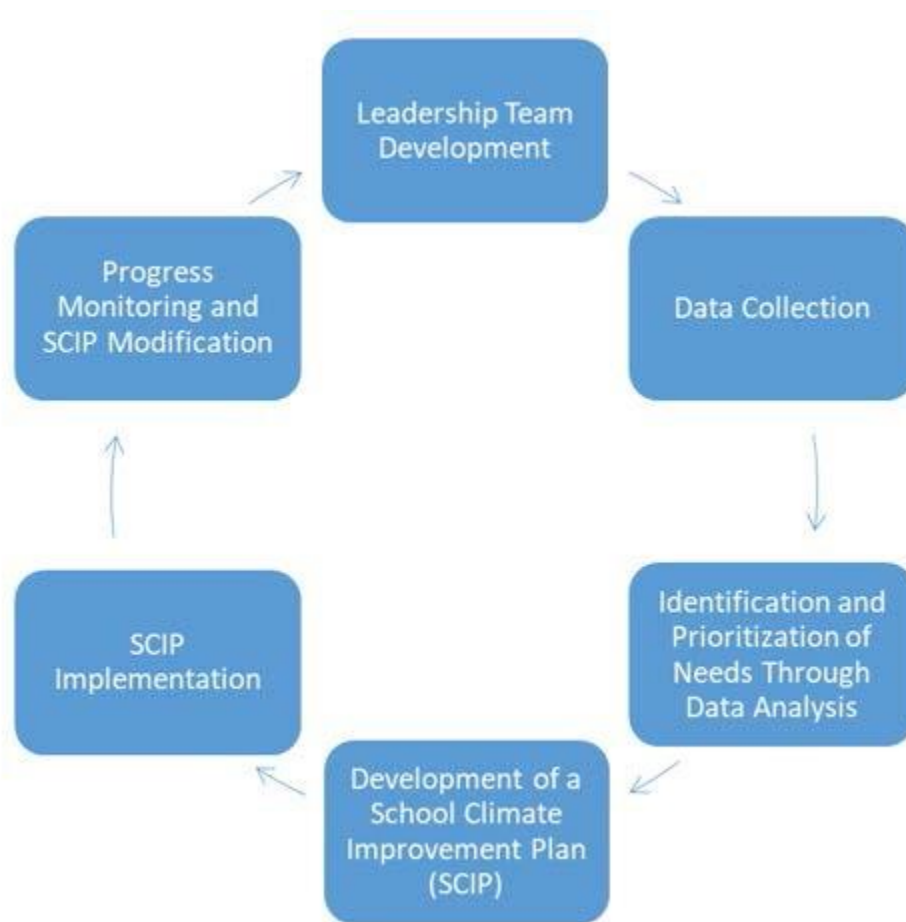
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New Jersey School Climate Survey Domains

<u>School Climate Domains</u>	Description
Relationships	This domain assesses the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts. For students, this domain focuses on relationships between students and includes positive outcomes rather than negative, preventable outcomes, such as bullying, harassment, and intimidation. For parents, it includes the fairness of the administration of the school's academic and social environments.
Parental Support and Engagement	This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic fabric of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning, and for parents, the degree of satisfaction with the school.
Emotional Environment	This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave as well as the general fairness of the school. For parents, this domain is combined with safety.
Morale in the School Community	This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school. For students and parents, by considering the school as a "common cause," this domain assesses the school leadership's ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes.
Safety	This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school. For parents, it addresses attitudes toward physical safety and is combined with the emotional environment.
Teaching and Learning	This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and learning and personal pride in successfully achieving academic objectives by students of learning and teachers of teaching. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.
Physical Environment	This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.
Perception of Administration Support (for staff only)	By considering the school as a "common cause," this domain addresses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes in terms of quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.
Inclusion and Diversity	This domain addresses attitudes towards the issues of tolerance, diversity, and respect. This includes attitudes and perceptions related to inclusion and tolerance of differences in others.

The School Climate Change Process

Research suggests that student achievement improves in positive and healthy school environments (Kraft & Marinell, 2015; McNeill, Prater, & Busch, 2009), and that meaningful school improvement requires sustained, systemic changes over a period of at least three years (Cawelti, 1999; Protheroe, 2011). The following school climate change process involves a range of [critical steps for success](#) over time that are typically led by a leadership team through an established School Safety/School Climate Team (SS/SCT). The team collects and analyzes school climate data, prioritizes needs and establishes goals, develops a School Climate Improvement Plan (SCIP), and continuously monitors progress toward goal achievement while making modifications to strategies as needed. ***Teams engaged in the school climate change process continuously cycle through these steps as they work toward goal achievement, at times moving in a linear direction as reflected in the graphic below, and when necessary returning to (or expanding upon) steps in response to new and emergent needs.***



To better understand each step of the School Climate Change Process, see the next page, [Understanding the Steps in the School Climate Change Process](#).

Understanding the Steps in the School Climate Change Process

Leadership Team Development

The first step in the school climate change process is to assess the capacity of your School Safety/School Climate team (SS/SCT) to lead efforts for achieving positive school climate outcomes. SS/SCTs are responsible for examining and understanding the current school climate using data, planning strategies to address prioritized needs, and monitoring progress over time to make necessary modifications and improvements. The team represents a point of contact for school climate efforts and is an essential structure for communication with and motivation of key stakeholders. A high-functioning team often represents a diverse mix of individuals and establishes clear roles (e.g., facilitator, recorder), responsibilities (e.g., collect data, write plans), and norms (e.g., meet regularly) in order to maximize team talents and opportunities for planning. (See SS/SCT description at [N.J.S.A. 18A:37-21](#))

Data Collection

Schools may administer the [New Jersey School Climate Survey](#) (NJSCS) or another valid instrument to measure climate at a consistent point in time each year. In addition, schools should consider local data sources (e.g., school records, results from past surveys, focus groups) alongside survey findings to support identification of priority needs and strengths in relation to school climate improvement. Considering these sources of information together can reveal patterns at the school-wide level, or among specific groups.

Identification and Prioritization of Needs Through Data Analysis

Setting measurable goals based on priority needs requires time to review data, communicate results to key stakeholders, integrate their feedback, and draw conclusions through a consensus-building process. When writing goals consider the following:

- ***What are we hoping to achieve with this goal, and which group(s) does it impact?***
- ***When do we hope to have achieved our goal?***
- ***What will we observe, and what evidence can we collect, that will indicate we have achieved our desired outcome?***

Answering these questions helps clarify the overall intent of goals and ensures they are measurable. Each goal should state clearly what change is to be achieved through effective implementation of strategies using both measurable indicators (e.g., “Relationships” domain score) and targets (e.g., increase domain score by 10 points by June 2020) of success.

Development of a School Climate Improvement Plan (SCIP)

When selecting specific strategies and developing a comprehensive plan for school climate improvement, consider whether each of the [“Universal Components”](#) are addressed in the design and implementation of each strategy. Then, ensure individual strategies are aligned with specific research-based “Look Fors” contained in this resource guide.

SCIP Implementation

High quality implementation refers to the effective delivery of a program or strategy's core components while accounting for school context (e.g., school setting, target audience) in order to achieve optimal outcomes. Staff document activities during implementation and consider implementation data alongside outcome data. If benchmarks are not met, staff can modify or add components to make strategies more effective, or consider adding new strategies to address a specific need. Documentation of implementation activities is essential for attributing outcomes to school climate strategies versus other potential factors in the environment.

Progress Monitoring and SCIP Modification

Tracking and monitoring implementation provide data to measure what actually happened. This feedback ensures continuous improvement and possible replication in other contexts within the school or community and supports staff in drawing reliable conclusions about program outcomes.