

3 Guiding Principles & 8 Conditions That Make a Difference

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: SELF-WORTH

Self-Worth flourishes when students and staff know they are valued members of the school community, have people in their lives they can trust and learn from, believe they have the ability to achieve, and know their efforts and hard work are recognized and celebrated in a variety of ways—academically, personally, and socially.

When students believe they have a voice they are **32%** more likely to report having Self-Worth.

Belonging

The Condition of Belonging means being a valued member of a community while still maintaining your uniqueness. It is manifested in relationships between two or more persons and is characterized by a sense of connection and support. A sense of Belonging is an important Condition for an overall sense of well-being, social engagement, competence, and a strong collegial working environment. The Condition of Belonging can enhance intrinsic motivation, for it fosters self-confidence and an investment in the community.

Heroes

Heroes are the everyday people—teachers, colleagues, students, friends, family—in our lives who inspire us to excel and to make positive changes in attitude and lifestyles. Heroes are the individuals students and teachers connect with, who have a positive influence on them, and who listen to and value their ideas. Heroes build trust in others and belief in oneself. Educators are, by definition, Heroes to their students who look up to them as people to learn from and communicate with about many things. Students are often Heroes to teachers, and everyone can be a Hero to their peers. Building positive relationships through support, guidance, and encouragement enables students and teachers to become more confident in their academic, personal, social, and collegial growth.

Sense of Accomplishment

The Condition of Sense of Accomplishment recognizes effort, perseverance, collegiality, and citizenship as signs of success. Schools have traditionally used a narrow view of accomplishment as it refers to academic achievement, innate ability, who is “best in the class”, a snapshot performance evaluation, or a checklist for participation in professional development. Sense of Accomplishment, however, is viewed in terms of personal and professional growth and effort, and is not strictly assessed through measurable outcomes and countable successes. Schools can celebrate a wide variety of accomplishments in visible ways. Taking time to recognize and support students’ and teachers’ efforts can help motivate them to persevere through difficult tasks, creating an appreciation for hard work and dedication.

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GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement takes root when schools ensure that students and staff are deeply involved in the learning process, showing enthusiasm and a desire to learn new things, as well as a willingness to take positive, healthy steps toward the future.

When students believe they have a voice they are **38%** more likely to report Engagement.

Fun & Excitement

The Condition of Fun & Excitement is characterized by being intellectually engaged and emotionally involved in our schoolwork and professional lives. Students and teachers who exhibit Fun & Excitement are usually self-confident, curious, energetic, and prepared; they are willing and able to meet the challenges of the day. To foster Fun & Excitement in schools, students and teachers need to be offered new opportunities and meaningful challenges that are connected with their individual interests and the needs of the school.

Curiosity & Creativity

The Condition of Curiosity & Creativity is characterized by inquisitiveness, eagerness, intellectual engagement in learning, and a strong desire to learn new or interesting things. Curiosity invites the question “Why?” while creativity involves taking the initiative to ask “Why not?” The intensity of Curiosity & Creativity tends to diminish over time due to the habituating effects of the environment. To sustain student and teacher engagement, schools can devote extra attention to creating environments that promote questioning, problem solving, innovation, and creative exploration.

Spirit of Adventure

The Condition of Spirit of Adventure is characterized by our ability to take on positive, healthy challenges at school and home, with family and friends. Students and teachers experience a Spirit of Adventure when they tackle something new without the fear of failure or success. When schools promote effective decision making and healthy risk taking, students and teachers can become more confident and resilient. Students and teachers with Spirit of Adventure see life as full of opportunities worth exploring for their own sake.

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GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: PURPOSE

Purpose in school is fostered when students and staff take responsibility for who and what they want to become, both in terms of professional careers and by being confident, responsible members of their community.

When students believe they have a voice they are **43%** more likely to report having Purpose.

Leadership & Responsibility

The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility means being able to express ideas and a willingness to accept the consequences of our actions. It cultivates accountability for the classroom environment and school community. Fostering leadership empowers students and teachers to make just and appropriate decisions and to take pride in their actions. Schools that promote this Condition expect their students and teachers to have a voice and be good decision makers. They provide legitimate decision-making opportunities, seek student and teacher input, and expect participants to be accountable for their actions and words.

Confidence to Take Action

Confidence to Take Action is characterized by a positive and healthy outlook on life that comes from looking inward rather than outward for approval. It is the extent to which students and teachers believe in themselves and their ability to make a difference in their schools. This Condition is at the heart of what schools ultimately strive for: instilling in students and teachers both confidence and an expectation that they will be successful. Schools can help build Confidence to Take Action by having high expectations, providing support, and encouraging independent thinking. By enhancing the quality of academic, professional and personal growth, schools empower participants to become active and involved members of the learning community.