



# What Drives Student Success

# WHAT DRIVES STUDENT SUCCESS

The Link Between Climate, Social-Emotional  
Skills and Student Success



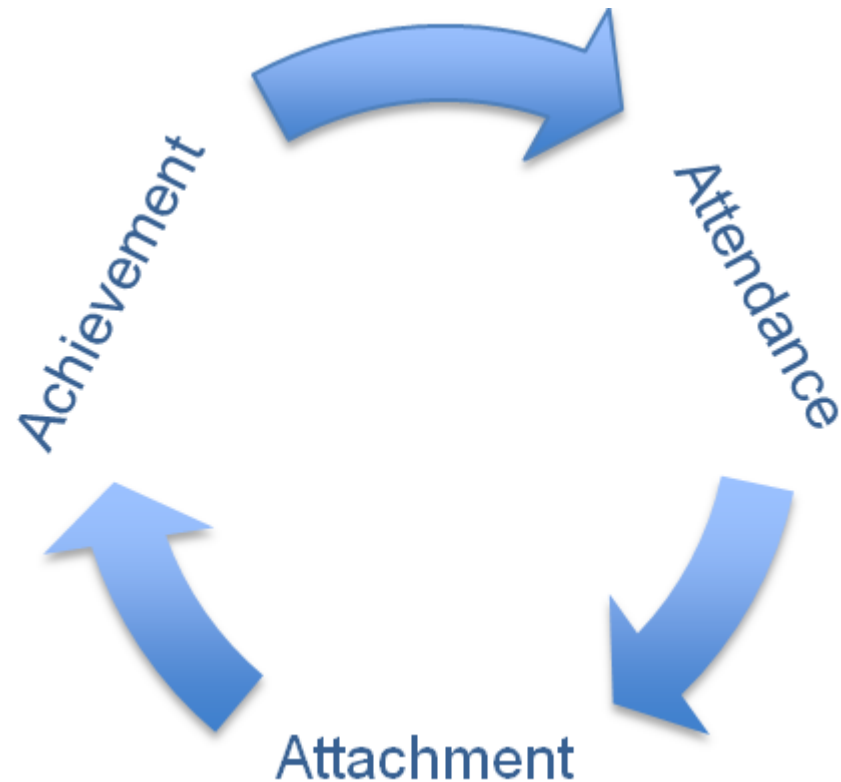
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# The Attendance Myth

1. Although it is true that for a student to be successful they need to attend, it is not true that attending school results in success.
2. Learning is not passive, it is active.
3. Learning is a function of the heart in conjunction with the mind.



# Attachment Is The Missing (and Critical) Piece



# What Do Kids Say?

**HS:** Teachers are mean, classes are boring, no body helps me, nobody cares if I'm there or not, it's too hard, it starts too early

**MS:** Teachers are tired, students are mean, it's harder than before, teachers have favorites, you get in trouble for stuff you've always done before (unfair); you're either in or you're out.

**Elem:** (85%) It was awesome. My teachers liked me. I liked my teachers. I liked the principal. The stuff we did was fun. There was recess. I had lots of friends. Lunch was good. Yeah, I really liked going to school then. It was kind of like, you know, a family.



# What Do Kids Say?

- Focus groups with Colorado high school students over the last two years surfaced the following themes:
  - ✓ Stressed out all the time
  - ✓ Nobody understands the pressure I'm under
  - ✓ Most teachers won't help you
  - ✓ High school is a lot of drama
  - ✓ The stuff we learn doesn't matter once you're out of here
  - ✓ "You can't be a freshman and not think about killing yourself at least once."



# FEELINGS



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# Feelings: Adults at work

You think you suck at your job and you have some evidence to back this up. Your supervisor reviews your performance and finds it lacking, disappointing. You don't enjoy doing the job that you also don't do very well. You don't think your coworkers like you. You're pretty sure they throw you under the bus. Your attitude is not very good and you feel negative about the whole place and the people in it. You definitely feel you don't belong there. What do you do first?

1. Come in just a little late; leave a little early
2. Don't attend any work social functions
3. Isolate; talk to as few people as possible
4. Begin a pattern of calling in sick
5. Come in later; leave earlier
6. Express negative feeling about your job to your friends and family at home





# Feelings Matter

**Peer Victimization:** It's not **WHAT** happened to you but how you **FEEL** about what happened.

## **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Best predictor of RTI success? Student motivation to change

*Source: UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools*



# Feelings Matter: Trust and Care

- Why do kids go to class?

Best predictor of attendance:

I trust my teacher

My teacher cares about me

*Source: University of Chicago, Consortium on School Research*



# Feelings and School Success: Trust

**In a study out of Chicago, the best predictors of class attendance were:**

1. whether the student trusted their teacher
2. perceived the teacher to care about them

## **Student-Teacher Trust**

- Teachers always keep their promises
- Teachers always try to be fair
- I feel safe and comfortable with my teachers
- My teachers always listen to my ideas
- My teachers really care about me
- When they tell me not to do something, my teachers have a good reason and they explain that reason to me
- My teachers treat me with respect



# Feelings and School Success: Perceptions of Care

How do students decide whether teachers *care* about them?

➤ **Quality explanations**

My teacher explains things lots of different ways until I get it

➤ **Individualized support**

My teacher works with me alone until I get it, even though they have lots of other things they could be doing.

➤ **Monitoring and Feedback**

My teacher follows up with me to see if I'm getting it and gives me feedback on what I turn in until it's clear that I'm solid on it

\* Note: some students said that the teacher doesn't TEST me on it until they know I have it. Reflect on that a moment.



# Feelings Matter: Hope

According to the last decade of Gallup polling, one variable predicts drop out & graduation more than any other, including grades and test scores:

***The extent to which students feel hopeful about their future.***

Source: Jim Clifton, *K-12 Schools – Where Entrepreneurs Are Created*, *The Coming Jobs War*, Chapter 10, p. 133

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# SKILLS



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## Student Outcomes



**Academic:** Math, literacy, and critical thinking skills

**Professional:** Ability to collaborate, manage time, learn independently

**Personal:** Self knowledge, skills to promote one's health and wellness

**Entrepreneurial:** Ability to manage risk, learn from failure

**Civic:** Drive to contribute as a member of the community and workforce

# Social Emotional Skills and School Success

A study estimating the relative influence of **30** different categories of educational, psychological, and social variables on learning revealed that **social and emotional variables** exerted the most powerful influence on **academic performance**” (CASEL, 2003, p. 7).

Sources: CASEL. (2003). Safe and sound an educational leader’s guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (sel) programs. Retrieved from <http://casel.org/publications/safe-and-sound-an-educational-leaders-guide-to-evidence-based-sel-programs/>





# Social Emotional Skills and School Success

A meta-analysis of school-based social and emotional learning programs involving more than 270,000 students in grades K-12 revealed that students who participated in these programs improved in grades and standardized test scores by **11 percentile points** compared to control groups (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

Charvat, J. (2012). Research on the relationship between mental health and academic achievement. National Association of School Psychologists. Retrieved from <http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/Academic-MentalHealthLinks.pdf>



# Knowing myself: What bugs me?

Refer to the handout that has bugs drawn on both sides of the page.

- On the first side, fill in the bug bodies with things that “bug” you. You do NOT have to fill in all six bugs
- On the flip side, fill in the bug bodies with things about you that you know “bug” other people. You do NOT have to fill in all six bugs.

Discuss in pairs, triads or in small groups no larger than five



# MINDSETS



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# The link: feelings, skills, mindsets

Are kids who demonstrate “academic behaviors” similar?

**Yes.**

*Students who go to class, study for tests, complete homework and organize their materials share a set of character traits.*

*Self-discipline, Delayed self gratification, Self control, Grit, Tenacity*

***They persevere***



# Feelings and School Success: What do we know?

Why do students persevere?

[grit, tenacity, delayed gratification self-discipline and self-control]

Best predictor: Their academic mindset

*I belong in this community*

*My ability and competency grow with my effort*

*I can succeed at this*

*This work has value for me*

Source: Chicago Consortium on School Research, *Teaching adolescents to become learners: the role of non-cognitive factors in shaping school success.* June 2012



# Challenge: Sleep

- Research is clear: Adolescents need 9.5 hours of sleep for their brain to recharge
- Hormone in charge: Melatonin
- Adult Circadian Cycle: Light and Dark
  - Dark to retina-hypothalamus
  - **Begin Secretion of Melatonin (Sleep)**
  - Light to retina, pineal gland
  - **Decrease Melatonin levels (Wake)**



# Challenge: Sleep

- **Adolescent cycle is NOT based on light & dark**
- **Brain development cycle controls the secretion of melatonin**

11:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. **Start the melatonin! (sleep)**

...9.5 hours later....

8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m. **Stop the melatonin! (wake)**

**Where are students between 8:30-10:30 in the morning?**


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# Sleep and Stress

- Does being sleep-deprived do more than just make you sleepy?

Sleep deprivation = tremendous *STRESS*

-  Cortisol
- Impaired processing of glucose
- = **Excessive weight gain**





# Challenge: Stress

- Does being stressed out affect learning?

**Absolutely yes**

- Executive brain functions in the pre-frontal cortex go to lowest functioning level
- Memory, fact recall, comprehension and application of knowledge all suffer



# Stress: Fight, Flight, Freeze

How does your body react to stress?

- increased heart rate, increased blood pressure,
- increased glucose levels, but no processing of glucose
- Release Cortisol, low; high; flooding for 18 minutes
- dry mouth, moisture diverted
- Clammy, reddened, itchy skin—antibodies sent to the skin's surface for faster healing



# Stress, Anxiety, Fear and Learning

Best learning state: **calm** (confident, prepared, focused)

Worst learning state: **stressed** (afraid, angry, irritated)



# How do we tackle these challenges?

**Use these question prompts to focus your work in four areas:**

- 1. How do people feel?—how do we know and how can we make them feel better?**
- 2. What skills do people have? – to form positive relationships, cope with adverse situations and manage negative emotions**
- 3. What supports to people have access to? Social? Emotional? Mental health? Crisis? Academic?**
- 4. What school and classroom activities intentionally build a community of care in our school?**



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