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# Establishing a Culture of High Expectations

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## Objectives

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- To review 10 effective strategies for establishing a culture of high expectations.
- To evaluate the previous implementation of these strategies at the school site.
- To formulate an action plan to help school leaders/teachers create a culture of high expectations.

# Score Sheet

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Rank	Description
1	0-25 percent of teachers already use this strategy.
2	25-50 percent of teachers already use this strategy.
3	50-75 percent of teachers already use this strategy.
4	75-100 percent of teachers already use this strategy.

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## Overview of Strategies

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- Classroom Motivation and Management Plans
- Bell-to-Bell Teaching
- Classroom Organization
- High Expectations
- Communicating Expectations
- Actively Engaging Students
- Keeping Students on Target
- Providing Relevant Feedback
- Grading Practices
- Managing Behavior Issues

# Strategy #1

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**Help all teachers develop,  
communicate and implement  
classroom motivation and  
management plans.**

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# Classroom Motivation & Management

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- Teachers, preferably working in teams, can develop written classroom motivation and management plans.
- Plans are then communicated in writing to parents and students, explained orally and posted in classrooms permanently.
- Everyone on staff conveys the same consistent message.

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# Components of a Classroom Motivation & Management Plan

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- **Instructional goals and outcomes**
- **Classroom policies, rules and procedures**
- **Expectations for student performance and behavior**
- **Consequences and rewards**
- **Opportunities for extra help**
- **Communication plan**

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## Strategy #2

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**Develop instructional plans  
that facilitate bell-to-bell  
teaching.**

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## Teaching Bell-to-Bell

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- Place emphasis on maximizing the limited time teachers have with students.
- Communicate high expectations for on-task behavior.

## Techniques for Teaching Bell-to-Bell

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- Greet students at the door.
- Post sponge activities for students to begin immediately.
- Have materials needed by students and teachers readily available.
- Plan for smooth transitions between instructional activities.

## Techniques for Teaching Bell-to-Bell

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- Build in opportunities for movement and active student engagement.
- Check regularly for student understanding and focus.
- Have an active summary activity in every learning segment.

# Techniques for Teaching Bell-to-Bell

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- Present and link the day's objective to previous learning or homework.
- Use teacher-directed instruction to clarify or introduce new material.
- Use student-centered learning activities requiring active student engagement.

## Techniques for Teaching Bell-to-Bell

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- Use summary-reflective dialogue to check for mastery and establish links with future learning or homework.
- Plan for four learning segments of about the same length during a class period to help with pacing.

## Strategy # 3

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**Create classroom organization and arrangement that spurs productivity.**

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# Classroom Organization

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- Display samples of good student work.
- Use non-traditional seating arrangements.
- Store materials at pick-up points that are easily accessible to students.
- Establish a routine place to drop off homework and pick up graded papers.
- Minimize distractions, motion and clutter.

# Strategy #4

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**Establish high expectations.**

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# High Expectations

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This strategy addresses  
**academic expectations.**

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# High Expectations

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**“What does it take for me to earn an A or B on this assignment or in this class?”**

# High Expectations

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Ways to establish high expectations include:

- Showing students samples of well thought out solutions to mathematics problems.
- Letting students listen to a recording of an orchestra playing a new piece of music before sight-reading the music for the first time.

# High Expectations

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- Letting students watch a video of an operating four-stroke engine before teaching about the individual parts.
- Letting students hear a well-written essay read aloud and review copies of it before having them write one.
- Providing rubrics or engaging students in the development of a rubric for an assignment.

## High Expectations

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Teachers must never accept F work!

Establish a new grading criteria:

- A
- B
- C
- NY (Not Yet!)

## High Expectations

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- Warning! Engaging students in learning trivia, things they already know or things that they will not use immediately wastes precious teaching time.

# Strategy #5

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**Communicate expectations to students and parents.**

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# Communicating Expectations of Quality Work

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- Communicate that students and parents are active partners in the responsibility for producing quality work.
- Focus on how to communicate exactly what students are doing and what they need to do to produce higher quality work.



# Communicating Expectations of Quality Work

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- Communicate progress with students and parents at least weekly.
- Stop the cycle of “surprise reports”.
- Use as many details as possible.
  - Benchmarks and Standards
  - State Assessment Categories
  - Rubrics

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## Strategy # 6

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**The student as worker:  
Implement instructional  
activities that actively  
engage students.**

# Actively Engage Students

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**The best motivational tool for students is personal involvement in something that produces a clear result and is interesting to them.**

# Ways to Actively Engage Students

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- Plan for and expect writing of more than one page each week.
- Read with and to students.
- Use reading as the primary homework activity.
- Survey students to compile a list of common interests that can be incorporated into lessons.

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# Ways to Actively Engage Students

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- Use a variety sources for every unit of instruction.
- Use cooperative and project-based learning that requires students to develop group process, time management, planning and communication skills along with content mastery.

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# Strategy # 7

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**Keep students on target.**

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# Keeping Students on Target

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**Students will choose to do those things that they deem of interest to them and have definite value.**

# Keeping Students on Target

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- Use quality homework assignments facilitate the learning necessary to attain required knowledge.
- Eliminate “skill, drill and overkill” practice.



# Keeping Students on Target

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Teachers should plan class time for students to proof and give feedback on the work of peers to improve the quality of what teachers read and grade.

# Keeping Students on Target

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## Using Assessment Results:

- To chart student progress.
- As a tool to promote advanced courses.
- To establish what is needed for extra-help sessions.
- To create individualized learning plans.
- To celebrate success.

## Strategy # 8

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**Encourage frequent and relevant feedback that works.**

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# Frequent and Relevant Feedback

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**Provide feedback to guide students through new learning experiences.**

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# Frequent and Relevant Feedback

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- Begin and end every instructional segment with a review of past learning and the big picture.
- Use good questioning feedback techniques to keep students focused and directed.
- Inspire students to probe “why?” and “how do you know that you know?”
- Require students to express their thinking and learning through speaking, writing and designing new solutions.

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# Frequent and Relevant Feedback

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- Provide students with opportunities to give feedback on the quality and effectiveness of assignments.
- Ask students how they would like to receive help and participate in the learning process.
- Give students opportunities to help construct the classroom activities.

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## Strategy # 9

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**Establish grading practices that communicate high expectations and decrease frustration.**

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# Grading Practices

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- Use scoring guides that clearly define what the expectations are for earning top grades (As, Bs); acceptable grades (Cs); and Not Yet! (NY) for work that is not accepted.



# Grading Practices

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- Use resources to communicate to parents and students areas of strength and weakness.
- Give students more than just a number or letter grade.
- Communicate standards and benchmarks that have been mastered on assessments and those that need extra work.

# Strategy # 10

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**Deal with severe behavior.**

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## Managing Behavior

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- Have clearly defined policies.
- Communicate discipline policies to all stakeholders (parents, students and teachers).
- Ask for input from all stakeholders in the development of policies.
- Communicate policies and consequences on a regular basis. Once is not enough.

# Managing Behavior

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- Be proactive. When there are actions that appear minor, but hold the potential of inciting more serious behaviors, act accordingly.
- Apply consequences, no matter who the violator is.
- Build and maintain close relationships with law enforcement agencies and utilize their expertise when appropriate.
- Consider consequences that remove the student offender for the least amount of time from instruction.
- Include parents in the disciplining of repeat offenders and development of behavior improvement plans.

**The Final Word on Behavior...**

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**Consistency**

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## In Closing

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Motivation, instructional planning, parent engagement, teacher efficacy and consistency of high expectations are irrevocably intertwined.

A climate that fosters and values respect, decency and success for EVERY student and staff member is what schools should strive for in their policies and practices.

## For More Information

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[www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org)

Publications for *High Schools That Work*

Ten Strategies for Creating a Classroom  
Culture of High Expectations (Site  
Development Guide #13)

## Contact Information

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