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Establishing a Culture of High Expectations

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Objectives

- 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

- 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

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

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Classroom Motivation & Management

- 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

- **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

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

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Teaching Bell-to-Bell

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

Techniques for Teaching Bell-to-Bell

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

Create classroom organization and arrangement that spurs productivity.

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Classroom Organization

- 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

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

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

- 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

Teachers must never accept F work!

Establish a new grading criteria:

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

High Expectations

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

Strategy #5

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

- 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

- 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

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

Encourage frequent and relevant feedback that works.

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Frequent and Relevant Feedback

Provide feedback to guide students through new learning experiences.

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Frequent and Relevant Feedback

- 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

- 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.

Strategy # 9

Establish grading practices that communicate high expectations and decrease frustration.

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Grading Practices

- 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

- 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

Deal with severe behavior.

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Managing Behavior

- 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

- 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

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.

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For More Information

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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