



STUDENTS

1. Help students know each other's and your strengths.

- Each week identify 3 students to get to know better (ask them questions, reach out to them on a personal level).
- As you get to know them, ask them who you should reach out to next and why (this will help you learn the social networks in the classroom).
- Hug, smile, and/or shake hands with your students (of course checking with them to make sure it is OK). Encourage students and pat them on the back. Stand close to your students so that each student receives some form of touch or a word of encouragement from you.
- Create a "get to know you" bag (one for teacher and one for each student), inserting characteristics, and then each Monday share one characteristic about yourself and one about a student. Be sure to check how comfortable students are sharing their characteristics and show them ways to share their own characteristics without being vulnerable.
- Brag about the work of students weekly, showcasing their efforts on a "braggin' wall" or using a *Braggin' Dragon* character to do that.
- Set up a classroom talent show monthly or quarterly, making sure each student has something special to share. Rehearse with those students who need extra support to identify and practice their talents.
- Make time for your students. Stay after school. You can play a sport or game with them or help them with homework. Have a book club where you read about topics that interest your students (cars, sports, hip hop, science fiction, comic books, clothes, dancing, celebrities, art, music, etc.). Ask them to help you or another teacher in the building. Visit them in their specials/encore classes or at lunch. Converse with them about their interests and share yours. Eat lunch together and have music playing while you eat. **Be available.**

2. Convey attentiveness to students and excitement about learning.

- Animate your teaching every day (change tone, volume of voice, move about room).
- Smile frequently throughout the day and laugh often.
- Use cooperative groups in all classes and celebrate when groups add new ideas to each learning concept.
- Use different teaching modalities to match learning styles every day (visual: graphics/pictures; auditory: music/chants/sounds; and kinesthetic: actions/motions/movement).
- Inspire students to have a great day or great class by using inspiring statements such as, "*Today you are going to learn more about factors. I know you have worked hard on this and are making great progress. You are my best class (or use student's name) for factoring. Let's figure out this next level of factoring together.*"

3. Build a strong relationship with each student.

- Find some unique interest about each student and ask about it at least weekly (music, sports, outside activity). Ask them about their goals, dreams, and desires. Ask them what college they want to go to. Ask them what they'd like to be when they're 30 years old. Remind them of their goals throughout the year. Ask them, "*How are you today?*" "*How was your morning/afternoon/evening/bus ride?*" "*How did you sleep last night?*" "*How was your breakfast/lunch/dinner?*" "*How is your family doing?*" "*How was your football/basketball game/dance/piano/guitar lesson?*" "*How is that book you're reading?*" **Listen** to your students (not only what they say, but also their body language and behavior). Learn about the music and culture of your children.



Strategy Tool: Charting Tool for Building Authentic Relationships

Strategies to Build Authentic Relationships with Students and Families

- Spend free time with your students (lunch, before school, or after school). Start with groups of 2 or 3 each week.
- Contact parents with good news (phone call or a note home) at least monthly. Visit the homes and/or neighborhoods of your students to get a good idea of where they live. Hold monthly parent meetings in your room and serve a potluck dinner. Food is an excellent way to attract parents. Your students can be involved in academic activities—playing chess, checkers, dominos, and computer activities—while you meet with parents.
- If a student is angry with you:
 - Have the student tell you why they are angry; **listen without judgment.**
 - Affirm their right to feelings.
 - Give a smile, word of encouragement, or a hug. It is difficult to stay angry when someone is smiling at you.

4. *Increase student engagement when presenting classroom activities.*

- Use technology every day and whenever possible in lessons, linking the content to methods they know.
- Have students lead the activities in one lesson per week.
- Use cooperative learning work groups in every class, with specific expectations you want each group to report out.

5. *Involve students in planning, problem-solving, identifying issues, and assessing curriculum in the classroom.*

- Ask for input from students when topics need review and reteaching, at least weekly.
- Give students choices on how to meet a learning goal (brainstorm, develop options, vote to decide) daily.
- Use "I messages" as a communication tool for problem-solving every day.
- Reinforce student problem-solving by talking through problems and solutions. Demonstrate and model this for students whenever a problem presents itself.

6. *Involve all students in chores and responsibilities in the classroom.*

- Assign jobs and rotate them, asking students their preferences each week.
- Ask a student individually to help you out, being honest about the help you need. Pick a new student every week.
- Use songs and music to complete chores every day, especially for duties that are less attractive such as cleaning up, setting up, etc.
- Set up classroom chores together every day, so that students know what has to be done, why, and what rewards are in place (can and should be intrinsic rewards).

7. *Promote cooperation over competition. Post everyone's best work. Offer opportunities for the class to work together to help everyone achieve their levels of excellence.*

- Set up groups every day so that students are both comfortable and challenged by their group mates. Assign tasks to challenge group members to overperform. Rotate group members at least weekly.
- Set up games and challenges every day so that students strive to do their personal best, not "beat someone."



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Strategies to Build Authentic Relationships with Students and Families

8. Integrate concepts about discipline and respect through instruction.

- Review the PBIS school and classroom rules daily at the start of the school year and weekly thereafter. Discuss and decide which behaviors are OK in your classroom and which are not and explain why.
- Teach respect as a classroom topic, integrating into subjects like literacy, social studies, and health.

FAMILIES

- At the beginning of the school year, send a letter (or e-mail or text message) introducing yourself to your students' parents.
- Call parents with good news and make a positive phone call home before making a call to discuss problems with the student.
- Send postcards home with good news if you can't reach parents by phone.
- Send group e-mails to parents with reminders about meetings at school or upcoming assignments. Create a (secure) wiki or a blog that highlights class successes.
- Ask parents to volunteer (particularly if you have a big project coming up).
- Send home a list of topics you will cover in class and ask parents if they can come in and talk about any of the topics listed or provide relevant material.
- Send home an interest survey to get to know your parents.
- Ask parents to come in for a "chat n' chew" during lunch time or schedule a time in the afternoon to meet with parents just to establish rapport and build a positive relationship.
- Host a book club (coffee house style) where both parents and students read a book (a book that has been suggested by the group and voted on) and have a parent-student-teacher discussion with tea, coffee, and sweets.
- Plan a "Talent Fair" where kids get to share a portfolio of their work in your class.
- Present a play that demonstrates a concept that you have taught your students and invite parents to come in and watch.
- Host a potluck dinner where parents bring in a dish to share with other families from your class.
- Host a sports activity (e.g. basketball, badminton, softball, etc.) that involves teachers, parents, and students. You could hold a tournament or do a Round Robin.

Adapted from Blum, B. November 2007. A summary of his School Connectedness and Student Learning presentation to the Association of Alaska School Boards, Anchorage. Retrieved November 3, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM1gEAVSwyI>. Includes insights from teachers in Anne Arundel County MD (Fall 2011) and elements of the PBIS Check In Check Out intervention.