FOSTERING SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

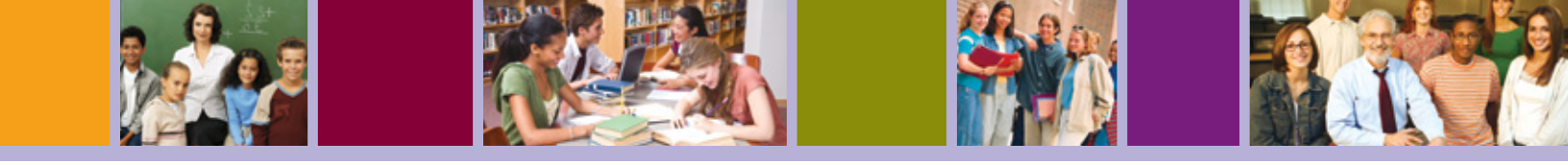
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Division of Adolescent and School Health

FOSTERING SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

For Using the PowerPoint® Slides, Pre-and Post-Viewing Activities, Materials and Resources



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To obtain copies:

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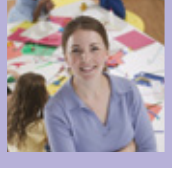
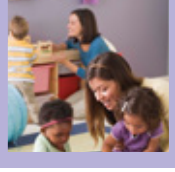

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

For Using the PowerPoint® Slides, Pre-and Post-Viewing Activities, Materials and Resources

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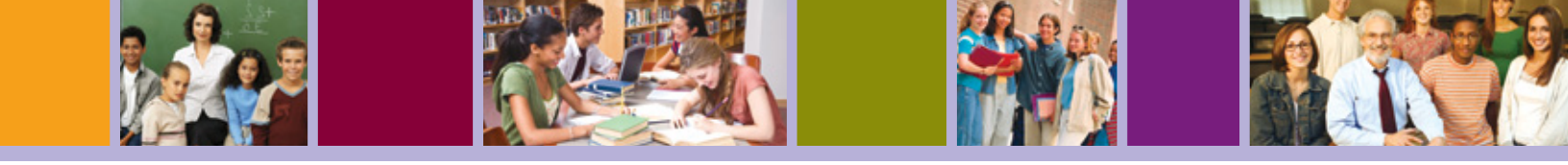

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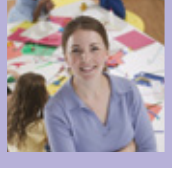
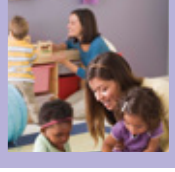
(www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/connectedness.htm)

Introduction

The purpose of the *Fostering School Connectedness Staff Development Program* is to provide teachers and other school staff with an introduction to the concept of school connectedness. School connectedness is the belief held by students that adults and others in the school care about them; they care about the students' learning as well as about them as individuals. The presence of caring relationships is increasingly recognized as a vital component of successful schools. When students feel connected to school, they are less likely to engage in a variety of risk behaviors, including tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, violence and gang involvement, and early sexual initiation; they are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, have better school attendance, and stay in school longer.

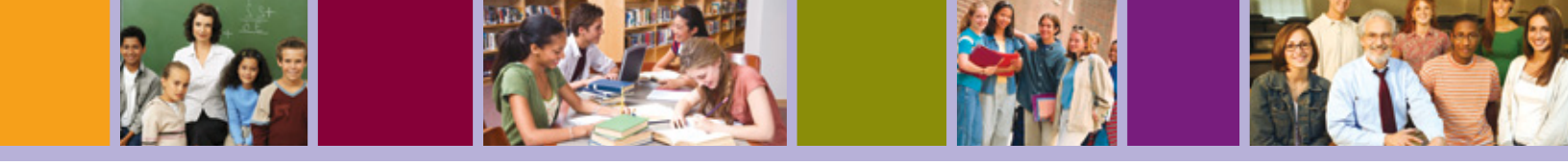
Strategies to increase school connectedness can be implemented by many people throughout the school district; almost everyone can become involved. Throughout this guide, "school staff" refers to instructional, administrative and other school staff, that can include teachers; coaches; school foodservice staff; school nurses; health assistants; instructional assistants; secretaries; facility and maintenance staff; counselors; before- and after-school staff; teacher-aides; physical education specialists; special education staff; school resource officers; and school and school district program coordinators, directors, and administrators. The *Fostering School Connectedness Staff Development Program* provides interactive activities with opportunities for participants to reflect on and apply their own knowledge and experiences related to school connectedness. It can be tailored to meet the needs and interests of school staff.

This Guide provides the step-by-step procedures, activities, materials, resources and PowerPoint® presentations (with facilitator narrative and notes) needed to implement two versions of the staff development program: (1) Overview of School Connectedness, and (2) Action Planning for School Connectedness, which includes and augments the Overview of School Connectedness. In addition, an e-mail template for informing school staff and promoting the availability of the *Fostering School Connectedness Staff Development Program* can be found on page 40.

Importance of Staff Development to Improve Students' School Connectedness

Staff development is critical to helping school staff strengthen their abilities to improve connectedness for students to their school. This program is designed to help school staff:

- Build enthusiasm and interest for improving school connectedness among school staff,
- Understand school connectedness well enough to feel confident about sharing information with other staff members not attending the program, and
- Initiate steps to implement a school connectedness action plan.



In this Guide

This Guide includes the agendas, learning objectives, program summary, list of materials needed, suggestions for use, and procedures for implementing the two versions of the staff development program.

Agendas

1. **Overview:** The session includes an introduction to School Connectedness in a PowerPoint® presentation, pre-viewing discussion, and pretest and posttest (a 35 to 45 minute presentation).
2. **Action Planning:** The session includes the Overview as well as Action Planning activities with corresponding PowerPoint® presentation slides and worksheets (a 2 to 2 hours 30 minutes presentation).

Objectives

Following this program, participants will be able to:

Overview

1. Reflect on personal experiences related to school connectedness.
2. Define school connectedness.
3. Differentiate between protective and risk factors.
4. Describe the relationship between school connectedness and student social, academic, and health outcomes.
5. Identify six strategies and related actions used in schools and districts to increase school connectedness among students.
6. Identify resources for assessing and promoting school connectedness in schools.

Action Planning (includes objectives 1–6)

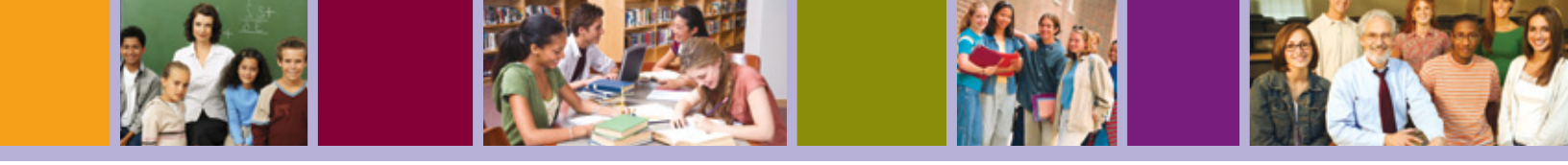
7. Determine at least one action the school or school district will take to address school connectedness and improve the climate at the school or district.

Program Summary

Elements of Program	Time (min.)	Agendas: Overview	Agendas: Action Planning
Pretest & Introduction	10	✔	✔
Optional Activity #1. Warm-up	5	✔	✔
PowerPoint® Presentation—Overview	15–20	✔	
PowerPoint® Presentation—Action Planning*	30–35		✔
Optional Activity #2. Characterizing Connectedness A–Z	10		✔
Optional Activity #3. Making School Connectedness Work at Your School	25–30		✔
Optional Activity #4. Action Planning for School Connectedness	35–50		✔
Posttest & Program Feedback Form	5–10	✔	✔
Total Time	**35–45 min.**		**2–2.5 hours**

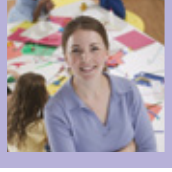
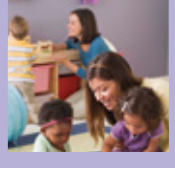
*Includes directions for implementing (optional) Activity #4 in slides #21– #26

Both program agendas require the use of PowerPoint® slides (download at www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/connectedness) and other materials. The facilitator will need to assemble the following materials prior to implementing the program. Where noted some materials will need to be printed and copied for participants.



Materials

Materials Needed	Agendas: Overview	Agendas: Action Planning	Copy: One per participant
Fostering School Connectedness— Overview PowerPoint® Presentation slides and note pages	✔		
Fostering School Connectedness— Overview PowerPoint® Presentation handouts	✔		✔
Fostering School Connectedness— Action Planning PowerPoint® Presentation slides and note pages		✔	
Fostering School Connectedness— Action Planning PowerPoint® Presentation handouts		✔	✔
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors among Youth. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2009. (Available at www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/pdf/connectedness.pdf)	✔	✔	✔
Pretest and Posttest (pp. 20 & 21), pencils or pens	✔	✔	✔
Fact Sheets: Fostering School Connectedness: Improving Student Health and Academic Achievement Information http://cdc.gov/healthyyouth/AdolescentHealth/connectedness.htm • for Teachers and Other School Staff (and/or) • for School Districts and School Administrators • for Parents and Families (as needed)	✔	✔	✔
School Connectedness Resources list (handout) (pp. 35–36)	✔	✔	✔
Fostering School Connectedness Staff Development Program Presentation Feedback Form (p. 34)	✔	✔	✔
Activity #2. 26 small pieces of paper, mark each with one letter A through Z; paper bag; whiteboard, blackboard, chart or easel with paper, marker or chalk		✔	
Activity #3. Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheets, for Strategies 1—6 (pp. 22–27)		✔	✔
Activity #3. Facilitator's Key of Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet, for Strategies 1—6 (pp. 28–33)		✔	
Activities #3 & #4. Chart or easel paper (at least 12 pieces—1 per group for each activity -- to post on wall or easel); tape (to hang paper), markers		✔	
Activity #4. School Connectedness Action Plan forms 1 - 3 (pp. 37–39)		✔	✔

Suggestions for Use

There is a variety of staff development opportunities in which individual instructional and support staff members or school teams can participate. Some suggestions are provided below:

1. Make the program available to school staff from a single school, from several schools in one district, or representing multiple districts.

   a. For an individual school or school district, the staff development program may be offered during a faculty meeting, in an afterschool program, or in a workshop.

   b. For multiple school districts, the staff development program can be offered regionally.

   c. If offered at a district level, invite school teams who represent a variety of occupations at the school (food service, coach, afterschool, teachers, principals, secretaries, nurse).

2. Offer staff continuing education units as an incentive for participating in the program during non-work hours.

3. Give directions for Action Planning (see Activity # 4, pp. 17–19), and have participants work in teams at school, and return for follow-up sessions to share/discuss action plan and next steps.

4. Provide the Overview presentation to parents, community partners, school board or others interested in strengthening school connectedness.

5. Although all activities are optional, it is recommended that one of the two program agendas be followed, Overview or Action Planning.

Procedures

1. **Introductions** (for **Overview** and **Action Planning** agendas)

   - Introduce yourself and welcome participants to the *Fostering School Connectedness Staff Development Program.* (Note: you may want to use PowerPoint® slide #1 as a background for this introduction).
   - Distribute Pretest (p. 20), one to each participant. Ask all participants to complete the Pretest individually. Make pens or pencils available to participants. Give participants 5+ minutes for completion, then collect.
   - Tell participants that the answers to the pretest questions will be discussed throughout the presentation.

2. **Set the Stage** (for **Overview and Action Planning** agendas)

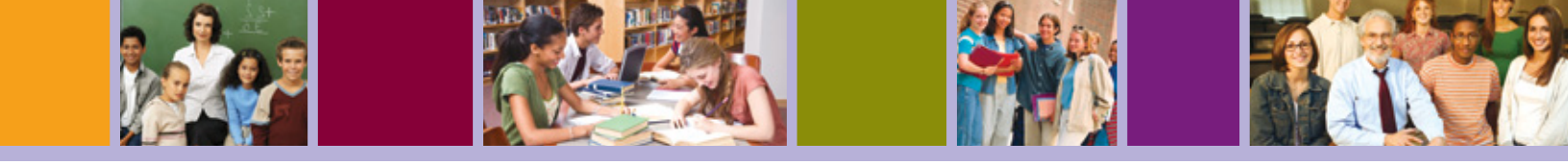
   - Enlist participants in a conversation that focuses on the topic of school connectedness by asking participants to reflect back and think about their own personal experiences in schools and consider the answers to these questions:

     ◊ Were there any specific individuals at your school, programs, or activities that played a positive role in your academic, emotional, or social development?

     ◊ Did these people or activities help you to feel connected to your school?

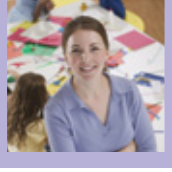
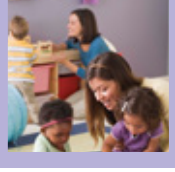
     ◊ Was there anything else that made you feel connected to your school? Was there anything that made you feel *less* connected to your school? Why? Why not?

     ◊ Based on this discussion, what does feeling connected to your school mean to you?



- Using this information, verbally reinforce that most likely everyone remembers a time at school when they felt connected (or not) to a caring adult, when they felt safe, or enjoyed learning. These types of experiences shaped their learning and development. Schools can be a place where students feel safe and connected or one where they dread walking in the front doors. Schools can implement strategies and programs to increase the extent to which students feel connected to school.
- Summarize for participants that in this program they are going to talk about what school staff can do to help students feel cared about – about their learning and about them as individuals. Emphasize the importance of adults in students' lives -- to give time and show interest, attention, and emotional support for students to engage them in school and learning.
- Explain you will start with a *PowerPoint®* presentation and then engage participants in relevant activities.

3. Distribute and refer participants to the appropriate *Fostering School Connectedness* **Overview** or **Action Planning** PowerPoint® Presentation handouts.
4. Implement Activity #1 (p. 12), and then introduce, show, and narrate the appropriate *Fostering School Connectedness* **Overview** or **Action Planning** PowerPoint® Presentation with narrative. Answer participant questions that might arise during or immediately after the presentation.
5. For **Overview** agenda only: Following the PowerPoint® presentation,
   a. Distribute the *School Connectedness Resources* list (pp. 35–36).
   b. Distribute the audience-specific *Fact Sheets: Fostering School Connectedness: Improving Student Health and Academic Achievement Information*
      - for Teachers and Other School Staff (and/or)
      - for School Districts and School Administrators
      - for Parents and Families (as needed)
   c. Ask participants to complete and submit the *Posttest* (p. 21) and *Feedback Form* (p. 34).
   d. Thank participants for attending.
6. For **Action Planning** agenda: Following the PowerPoint® presentation,
   a. Introduce and conduct (optional) Activity #2: Characterizing Connectedness A-Z (pp. 13–14).
   b. Introduce and conduct (optional) Activity #3: Making *School Connectedness* Work for Your School (pp. 15–16).
   c. Introduce and explain Activity #4: School Connectedness Action Planning Activity (pp. 17–19), distribute *Action Plan Handouts* (pp. 37–39), and use the *Fostering School Connectedness* Action Planning PowerPoint slides #22–29 to support the explanation of the activity.
   d. Distribute the *School Connectedness Resources* list (pp. 35–36).
   e. Ask participants to complete and submit the *Posttest* (p. 21) and *Feedback Form* (p. 34).
7. Thank participants for attending.

Activity #1: Warm-Up

Objective

Following this activity, the participants will be able to meet:

Objective 1: Reflect on personal experiences related to school connectedness.

Estimated Time

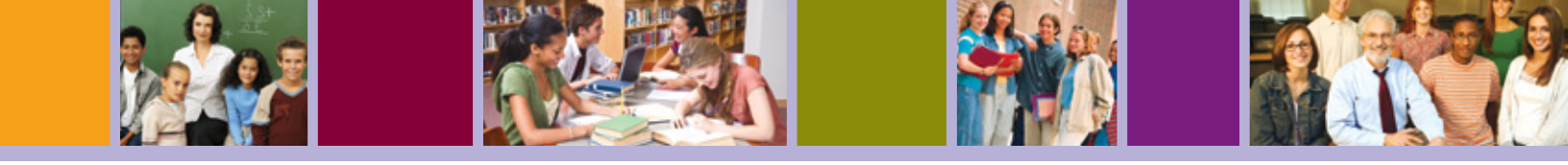
5 minutes

Preparation

none

Procedure

1. Ask participants to think about their current school or school district environments and their personal experiences related to school connectedness.
2. Explain that you will read a question about strategies and actions related to school connectedness, and they should answer by raising their hands as sign of "Yes" or "No" following each.
3. **Does anyone on the staff at your school regularly…**
   a. Engage students in helping activities such as peer tutoring, classroom chores, or service learning? (Yes? No?)
   b. Show an appreciation for student diversity and respect for all students' cultural beliefs and practices? (Yes? No?)
   c. Communicate clear expectations for learning and behavior for students? (Yes? No?)
   d. Engage parents in their child's school life? (Yes? No?)
   e. Use instructional materials that reflect the culture or ethnicity of their students? (Yes? No?)
   f. Greet each student by name? (Yes? No?)
   g. Encourage students to ask for help if there is a problem? (Yes? No?)
   h. Take timely action to solve problems reported by students or their parents? (Yes? No?)
   i. Offer praise of students' behavior to students and their parents? (Yes? No?)
   j. Models respectful behavior toward principals, other teachers, and school staff? (Yes? No?)
4. Summarize by noting that if there is someone at your school who is regularly applying at least one of these characteristics of school connectedness actions, he or she deserves to be acknowledged as a role model for other staff to learn and apply the action. If any staff are practicing a few school connectedness actions some of the time, they are on the right track, but they need to consistently practice it. Many of us are knowledgeable about some of the strategies to promote school connectedness and the actions we can take to promote it, but we do not practice them regularly. This program will provide you with some ideas to share with other school staff that can help to improve the school climate and promote students' school connectedness, health, and academic success.



Activity #2: Characterizing Connectedness A-Z

Objective

Following this activity, the participants will be able to meet:

Objective 2: Define school connectedness.

Estimated Time

10 minutes

Preparation

- Write one letter of the alphabet (A – Z), on each piece of paper. Place in paper bag.
- Have white board or easel prepared for writing. Write label – *Characterizing Connectedness A-Z* on top of board or easel paper. Down the left side of the paper write letters A, B, C, through Z.

  Note: You will use the corresponding space to the right of each letter to record participant's responses.

Procedure

1. Tell participants that they are going to participate in an activity called *Characterizing Connectedness Activity A-Z*. It is an alliteration game.

- Explain that you will pass around the paper bag that holds pieces of paper, each with a single letter (A to Z). The first participant will draw a letter out of the bag, and then use that letter as the first letter in a word or words to describe what he or she could do to promote school connectedness in his or her school.
  - ◊ Explain that participant can use 1 to 5 words to describe what they could do to promote school connectedness in their school. These can be based on personal, academic, or other professional experience.
  - ◊ Other participants can collaborate and contribute ideas to complete the alliterative example.
  - ◊ For examples: *if the letter is "C," the participant might say "communicate with students", "create an open, caring learning environment;" if the letter is "A" the participants might say "adults give focused attention to students," for "S" the participant might say "safety and support." for "R" the participant might say "recognize students by name," for "Z" the participant might say "zeal for school, learning and success."*
  - ◊ This will be a fast moving game. Once a participant has given the example, other participants may share an alliterative example for that letter.

2. Begin the activity and continue for 10 minutes.

- Have each participant draw a letter out of the bag, giving him or her time to think about school connectedness alliteration.
- Ask each participant to show their letter to the group while stating their alliteration. Write the alliterative examples on the whiteboard or easel paper. The list of examples can be displayed in the room after the activity for participants to view.
- Ask other participants to contribute alliterative examples of what they could do to promote school connectedness in their school.

  Note: depending on the participants' spontaneity and quickness, not all letters in the bag may be used.

3. Summarize the activity, using the following points as a guide:

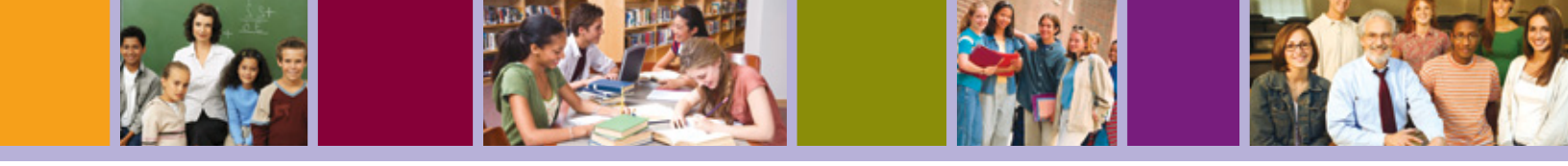
- When limited to a single letter, one has a more difficult time identifying characteristics of or strategies to promote school connectedness, and what he or she could do to promote school connectedness.
- Using all the letters, more options become available, and descriptions can better characterize what school staff could do to promote school connectedness in their school.

- The *Characterizing Connectedness A-Z* activity serves as an analogy to the challenge of working together to achieve school connectedness. Just one strategy or activity will not bring connectedness to students at your school. Schools need to utilize multiple and collective strategies to make school connectedness work.

Notes to facilitator:

- Post the list of *Characterizing Connectedness A-Z* examples provided by participants.
- Ask participants to add words or phrases to letters that were not addressed during the activity, or write additional alliterations next to the written ones.
- The facilitator can record the A-Z ideas on the list and distribute these to the participants after the meeting.

4. Thank all of the participants for their thoughtfulness and active participation in the activity.



Activity #3: Making School Connectedness Work at Your School

Objective

Following this activity, the participants will be able to meet:

Objective 5: Identify six strategies and related actions used in schools and districts to increase school connectedness among students.

Estimated Time

25 – 30 minutes

Preparation

- Copy *Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness* – Worksheets 1 – 6 (pp. 22–27). For each strategy group (1-6) make one copy for each group member.
- Write Strategy 1, or Strategy 2, or Strategy 3, etc. (1– 6) on each piece of chart paper.
- Hang chart paper in six separate sections of the room.
- Make available one marker for each group.
- Consider how to organize participants into a minimum of six groups. It is recommended that groups consist of 4-5 participants each. For ideas on organizing groups of participants, see "Suggestions for grouping participants," below.

Suggestions for grouping participants:

a. Assign each participant a number from 1 – 6 (or more depending on the size of the group). The advantage of this method is that it allows for group contributions from a variety of school staff, schools, and/or districts.

b. Organize participants into job-alike groups (teachers, administrators, after-school staff, etc.). If this approach is used, it is recommended that each group be given the Strategies and Actions to *Promote School Connectedness Worksheet* that best matches their job responsibilities (i.e., Strategy 4 would be given to the group of teachers).

Procedure

1. Organize participants into a minimum of six groups. Assign each group one of the six strategies. Direct each group to sit adjacent to the corresponding chart paper (on wall, or easel).

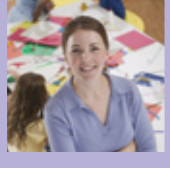
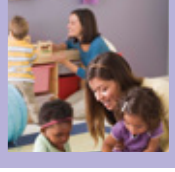
Note to facilitator:

If you have more than six groups, you will need to assign some groups the same strategy.

2. Explain that each group will review the strategy assigned to them and identify examples of specific actions their school or district is **already taking** to promote school connectedness. Then each group will share their examples with the other groups.

3. Ask each group to select one member to serve as the Recorder (note-taker), another as the Timer, another as Group Facilitator/Reporter.

4. Distribute one of the six *Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet* (Strategy Worksheet, pp. 22–27) to each participant of the corresponding numbered Strategy group (1 – 6).

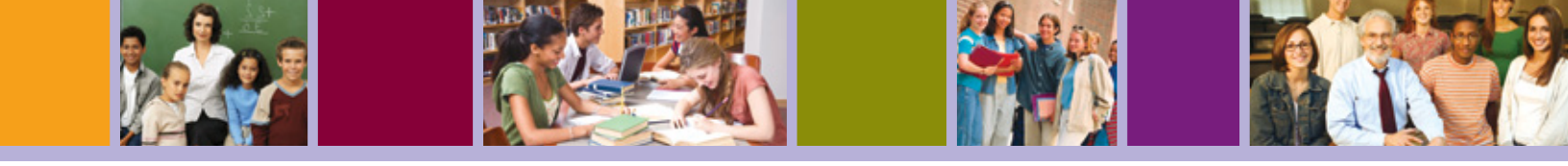



5. Ask that each member (individually) read the Strategy Worksheet and examples given at the top of the worksheet. Then, consider at least one action or activity their school or district is **presently using** or **already taking** to promote school connectedness among students that is aligned with the strategy assigned to their group.

Notes to facilitator:

- If groups have difficulty getting started, share some additional examples from the Facilitator's Key (pages 28–33). The group timer should stop the group after approximately 5 minutes.
- The examples used in the *Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheets* address a variety of actions, some that relate to specific people in the school community. Some examples focus on actions that school administrators might take. Others are actions that teachers, other school staff, or parents or guardians can take to promote school connectedness.

6. Then, the group facilitator/reporter should:
   - Give each group member an opportunity to (briefly) share his or her example(s).
   - Guide a discussion to prioritize the examples, identifying 3 best examples of actions their schools use to promote school connectedness.
7. The Recorder, using the marker and chart paper, will record the list of 3 key examples that are currently implemented in their schools and districts from their group.
8. Following the small group discussion, the group facilitator/reporter from each group will share the strategy and the examples of actions with the larger group. If necessary, the individual who originally shared the example may clarify or add information.
9. Discuss, explain, and clarify examples, as needed.
10. Thank participants for sharing their actions to promote school connectedness at their schools.
11. Tell participants now that they have heard what others are doing to promote school connectedness, they will now use the ideas that have been shared in the next "Action Planning" Activity.



Activity #4:
School Connectedness Action Planning

Objective

Following this activity, the participants will be able to meet:

Objective 7: Determine at least one action the school team will take to strengthen school connectedness and improve the climate at their school or district.

Estimated Time

35 - 50 minutes

Preparation

Consider how to organize participants into groups. It is recommended that groups consist of people from the same school (school teams) or district. Depending on the size of the group, this may require more than one group per school or district.

If Optional Activity #3 was implemented, move and hang the chart paper lists of actions for strategies 1-6, so all groups can view them.

Copy *School Connectedness Action Plan* Handout (pp. 37–39), one for each participant.

Procedure

1. Introduce participants to the activity, *School Connectedness Action Planning.* They will use one of the 6 strategies and identify examples of specific actions, activities, or policy changes their school or district could take to promote school connectedness. This should be an activity that is **not** presently implemented in their school or district. Show *Fostering School Connectedness Action Planning* slides #22-29, as you present the activity.

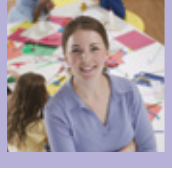
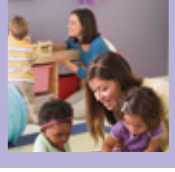
> **Note to facilitator:**
>
> If needed, distinguish this activity from previous, Activity #3. In Activity #3, groups reviewed an assigned strategy and identified examples of specific actions their school or district is **already taking** to promote school connectedness. Participants should have heard or learned about several actions adopted by participants within each group (who may or may not have like-jobs, or be employed in the same school and/or district). In this activity, same-school or same-school district participants work together to determine which strategy (1-6) they want to address and then they identify an action their school or district staff could take (that is not presently implemented) to promote school connectedness.

2. To each participant, distribute the *School Connectedness Action Plan* handouts (pp. 37–39) and the appropriate *Fact Sheet: Fostering School Connectedness: Improving Student Health and Academic Achievement Information.*

> **Note to Facilitator:**
>
> There are three fact sheets: **1.** *Teachers and Other School Staff,* **2.** *School District and School Administrators,* and **3.** *Parents and Families.* Select the appropriate fact sheet[s] for participants depending on the composition of the group.

3. Organize participants into groups.

4. Ask each group to assign a Group Facilitator, Recorder (note taker), Timer, and Reporter (Note: the group facilitator and reporter might be the same person).

5. Ask each group to take about 2 to 5 minutes to select one of the six strategies they would like to begin action on, improve upon, or start implementing at their school or district (Group Facilitator to lead). They are to:

   - Familiarize themselves with the strategy and examples, then create or identify a closely matched task, target population, and the specific action steps they could take.
   - Identify the partners who would be involved in the change (e.g., administrators, students, parents, community, etc.).
   - Specify an approximate timeline to complete the activity.
   - Complete the Action Plan worksheet, in 20 minutes (Timer) with an activity that would complement the strategy (Recorder). Allow more time if needed.
   - Present their team's Action Plan to the larger group. (Reporter)

6. Review the directions on the worksheet. The Action Plan should include

   - A specific action, activity, or policy change related to the specified School Connectedness Strategy (1-6) that will be implemented.
   - The specific steps that need to be taken to implement the Action.
   - The people who will be responsible for each step. For example, who needs to be involved in planning and implementing the activity or policy and who you recommend assume leadership for the action.
   - The approximate time when each step will be initiated and completed.
   - How the process, progress, or impact of the activity or policy will be evaluated.

7. Ask groups to consider:

   a. What strategies are your school or district presently implementing to increase school connectedness (from Activity #3)? What is missing?

   b. Which new strategy and action, activity, or policy change would be the most feasible and appropriate for your school or district to use that you are not doing now? (Tell groups to refer to the *Fact Sheets -- Fostering School Connectedness: Improving Student Health and Academic Achievement Information* for strategies and examples of related actions, and review the list of actions taken from the Strategy Groups on the paper on the walls/easels.)

   c. What strategies have other schools or local school districts in your area implemented? How might you go about finding out what strategies other schools or school districts are successfully implementing?

   d. How will your team obtain feedback on your Action Plan ideas from other members of your school and district staff and students?

   e. What resources and buy-in are needed to move the Action Plan forward?

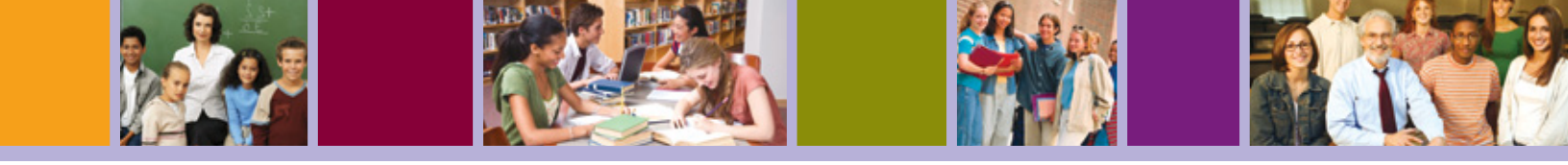
   f. What contacts or areas of professional expertise are needed to help move the Action Plan forward?

   g. Who will serve as the team lead for coordinating, refining, implementing and evaluating the implementation of the Action Plan?

8. Ask groups to prepare their Action Plans. After 20 minutes ask groups to stop so they can share their plans with the larger group.

9. Discuss each group's Action Plan.

   - Have groups share ideas, comments, omissions, feasibility of implementation, and additions to other team's plans.
   - Discuss next steps. When they return to their respective schools or districts, to whom will they talk with about the strategy, activity, and plan?
   - Remind participants that some actions are small changes that can be done in the short term with relative ease; others might be much broader, longer-term goals that require administrative or



budget changes. Individual schools and school districts should determine which actions are most feasible and appropriate, based on the needs of the school and available resources. Implementation will require a team effort that will likely involve school administrators, teachers, other staff, students, families, and community stakeholders. It is important to secure buy-in from these groups and to teach them about the importance of school connectedness in improving students' health and education outcomes. It is important to evaluate efforts to increase school connectedness to learn which actions have the greatest impact.

10. Now that participants have identified one action to promote school connectedness, who would be involved in the implementation, and identified a timeline, ask participants to consider, what they will need to do next. They should consider --

    a. How will their team obtain feedback on their Action Plan ideas from other members of their school and district staff and students?

    b. What resources and buy-in will they need to move the Action Plan forward?

    c. What contacts or professional expertise will they need to help move the Action Plan forward?

    d. Who will serve as the team lead for coordinating, refining, implementing and evaluating the implementation of the Action Plan?

11. Distribute the School Connectedness Resources list and review key resources.

12. Distribute a *Posttest* (p. 21) and *Fostering School Connectedness Staff Development Program Presentation Feedback Form* (p. 34) to each participant. Ask participants to complete both forms and return them before they leave.

13. Summarize: Actions, small or grand, on the part of school staff can show students that you care. The action might be as small as greeting students by name when passing in the hallway, or more involved, such as engaging students in a conversation about how they think the school climate could be improved. These actions can help to promote your students' connectedness to school and may impact their academic achievement as well as their health.

14. Thank participants for actively participating in this activity and for their involvement in this staff development program.

Fostering School Connectedness Pretest

NAME: ..... DATE: .....

SCHOOL: ..... DISTRICT: .....

Directions: For each statement, answer by checking "Agree" or "Disagree."

	Agree	Disagree
1. Students who feel appreciated and recognized feel good about themselves.		
2. School Connectedness is the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.		
3. Students who do well in school are less likely to engage in risky health behaviors.		
4. Students are less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or have sexual intercourse if they feel connected to school.		
5. Increasing students' connection to school promotes educational motivation, classroom engagement, academic performance, and school attendance and completion rates.		
6. Improving student connection to school requires adults to be willing to listen, engage, and shift attitudes, policies, and practices in response to youth-adult dialogue.		
7. Children and adolescents who feel supported by important adults in their lives are likely to be more engaged in school and learning.		
8. The physical environment and social climate of the school can influence student connectedness to school.		
9. Students who feel connected to school are less likely to have emotional problems, suffer from eating disorders, and have suicidal thoughts or attempts.		
10. Students who feel anonymous, unsafe, or unsupported at school are more likely to disengage – both socially and academically.		

Fostering School Connectedness Posttest

NAME: ..... DATE: .....

SCHOOL: ..... DISTRICT: .....

Directions: For each statement, answer by checking "Agree" or "Disagree."

	Agree	Disagree
1. Students who feel appreciated and recognized feel good about themselves.		
2. School Connectedness is the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.		
3. Students who do well in school are less likely to engage in risky health behaviors.		
4. Students are less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or have sexual intercourse if they feel connected to school.		
5. Increasing students' connection to school promotes educational motivation, classroom engagement, academic performance, and school attendance and completion rates.		
6. Improving student connection to school requires adults to be willing to listen, engage, and shift attitudes, policies, and practices in response to youth-adult dialogue.		
7. Children and adolescents who feel supported by important adults in their lives are likely to be more engaged in school and learning.		
8. The physical environment and social climate of the school can influence student connectedness to school.		
9. Students who feel connected to school are less likely to have emotional problems, suffer from eating disorders, and have suicidal thoughts or attempts.		
10. Students who feel anonymous, unsafe, or unsupported at school are more likely to disengage – both socially and academically.		

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet

Strategy 1:

Create decision-making processes that facilitate student, family, and community engagement; academic achievement; and staff empowerment.

Examples:

- **Get** involved in making decisions to improve the school climate and students' sense of connectedness to school.
- **Help** plan school policies and activities with teams of students, faculty, staff and parents.
- **Encourage** students to talk openly with school staff and parents. Involve students in parent-teacher conferences, teacher evaluation, curriculum selection committees, and school health teams.

Directions: Identify (briefly) at least one specific action, activity, or policy that your school or school district and staff presently implement related to Strategy 1. Then, share your examples with your group members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet

Strategy 2:

Provide education and opportunities to enable families to be actively involved in their children's academic and school life.

Examples:

- **Involve** parents who have varied schedules, skills, abilities, and resources in meaningful activities.
- **Encourage** parents to share their culture and expectations.
- **Have** materials translated into languages spoken in students' homes. Request interpreters, as needed.
- **Establish** regular meetings with parents to discuss their children's behavior, grades, and accomplishments. First, comment about a positive experience that the student had, not a negative one.

Directions: Identify (briefly) at least one specific action, activity, or policy that your school or school district and staff presently implement related to Strategy 2. Then, share your examples with your group members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet

Strategy 3:

Provide students with the academic, emotional, and social skills necessary to be actively engaged in school.

Examples:

- **Use** teaching methods and "teachable moments" for students to improve interpersonal skills, stress management, and decision-making. Foster critical and reflective thinking, problem-solving skills, and working effectively with others.
- **Allow** students to identify, label, express, and assess their feelings.
- **Use** classroom activities to explore and discuss empathy, personal strengths, fairness, kindness, and social responsibility.
- **Use** interactive, experiential activities and help students personalize the information.
- **Encourage** students to learn, be involved and be recognized through service learning, peer tutoring, classroom chores, teacher assistance, extracurricular activities, and creative projects.
- **Correct** inaccurate perceptions about what are normal behaviors among students (e.g., percentage of students who smoke).
- **Help** students to plan career and personal goals and to map out the steps to take to meet their goals.

Directions: Identify (briefly) at least one specific action, activity, or policy that your school or school district and staff presently implement related to Strategy 2. Then, share your examples with your group members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet

Strategy 4:

Use effective classroom management and teaching methods to foster a positive learning environment.

Examples:

- **Clearly communicate** expectations for learning and behavior that are developmentally appropriate and applied equitably. Describe lesson goals and relate them to the real world.
- **Link** lessons to standards and ensure students' learning is sequential and builds upon prior lessons.
- **Be** flexible with instructional strategies to allow for teachable moments and personalization of lessons.
- **Use** student-centered pedagogy, and appropriate classroom management and discipline strategies that meet students' diverse needs and learning styles.
- **Assist** students in developing self-control.
- **Engage** students in appropriate leadership and decision-making processes. Establish a reward system for both academic and extracurricular achievements; encourage the intrinsic rewards of learning.
- **Fairly enforce** reasonable and consistent disciplinary policies that are jointly agreed upon by students and staff.
- **Encourage** open, respectful communication about differing viewpoints.
- **Assess** students continuously and use the results to guide the direction of the class and teaching methods used.

Directions: Identify (briefly) at least one specific action, activity, or policy that your school or school district and staff presently implement related to Strategy 4. Then, share your examples with your group members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet

Strategy 5:

Provide professional development and support for teachers and other school staff to enable them to meet the diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs of children and adolescents.

Examples:

- **Share** and develop your experience and expertise in child development.
- **Participate** in professional development on all school curricula to be used, effective teaching methods, and classroom organization that promotes a positive environment.
- **Apply** and educate other school staff on strategies to effectively communicate and involve parents.
- **Request** materials, time, resources, and support to effectively use the skills learned in training.
- **Build** learning teams and observe experienced teachers who effectively manage classrooms and facilitate group work.
- **Coach** or mentor teachers and staff to share teaching techniques and classroom management strategies, solve problems at school, and create a supportive work environment.

Directions: Identify (briefly) at least one specific action, activity, or policy that your school or school district and staff presently implement related to Strategy 5. Then, share your examples with your group members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet

Strategy 6:

Create trusting and caring relationships that promote open communication among administrators, teachers, staff, students, families, and communities.

Examples:

- **Provide** opportunities for students of all levels to interact, develop friendships, and to promote teamwork, and for students to work, partner, and help adults.
- **Commit** to and **model** respectful behavior toward principals, other school staff, administrators, and students.
- **Challenge** teachers and other school staff to greet each student by name.
- **Encourage** teachers and other school staff to build stronger relationships with students who may be experiencing academic or social issues.
- **Request** that a school counselor, psychologist, or other expert be available for consultation and referral.
- **Communicate** expectations, values, and norms that support positive health and academic behaviors to the school community.

Directions: Identify (briefly) at least one specific action, activity, or policy that your school or school district and staff presently implement related to Strategy 6. Then, share your examples with your group members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet—KEY

Strategy 1:

Create decision-making processes that facilitate student, family, and community engagement; academic achievement; and staff empowerment.

Examples:

- **Get** involved in making decisions to improve the school climate and students' sense of connectedness to school.
- **Help** plan school policies and activities with teams of students, faculty, staff and parents.
- **Encourage** students to talk openly with school staff and parents. Involve students in parent-teacher conferences, teacher evaluation, curriculum selection committees, and school health teams.
- **Get** involved in efforts to improve the school climate and students' sense of connectedness to school.
- **Give** teachers and principals appropriate decision-making authority over how school resources are used, including people, time, facilities, and funds.
- **Work** with students, faculty, staff, and parents to identify simple changes or modifications that would make the school's physical environment more pleasant.
- **Assign** students developmentally appropriate levels of responsibility for classroom decision making and management.
- **Empower** students to communicate openly with school staff and parents by providing a mechanism for students to give in-depth evaluations of their teachers, and hold student-led parent-teacher conferences to actively involve students in the discussions.
- **Engage** community partners to provide a range of services at the school that students and their families need (e.g., dental services, health screenings, childcare, substance abuse treatment).

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet—KEY

Strategy 2:

Provide education and opportunities to enable families to be actively involved in their children's academic and school life.

Examples:

- **Engage** parents in meaningful ways in school activities, such as school health teams, tutoring, mentoring, or assisting with grant writing. Identify special opportunities for parents with limited resources or scheduling difficulties to participate in or contribute to classroom or extracurricular activities.
- **Seek** opportunities for parents and students to share their culture with others in school.
- **Communicate** regularly with families about school and classroom activities and policies by e-mail, letters, or updates on the school's Web site.
- **Translate** materials into languages spoken in students' homes.
- **Establish** regular meetings with parents to discuss their children's behavior, grades, and accomplishments.
- **Request** interpreters as needed to ensure clear communication and to avoid misunderstandings arising from language barriers.
- **Implement** training workshops that provide parents with skills to better manage their children's behavior. Skills can include identifying desirable and undesirable behaviors, communication strategies, conflict resolution, listening skills, setting expectations for behaviors, and appropriate praise. Parents also can learn about how to teach their children self-restraint and problem-solving.
- **Provide** parent workshops that teach academic support skills, such as how to talk with teachers about ways parents can help their children develop academic skills.
- **Seek** alternative ways to provide hard-to-reach parents with skills training, such as by using a telephone-based parent education program.
- **Communicate** the school's behavioral and academic expectations to families and encourage them to reinforce those expectations at home. Expectations can be communicated through newsletters, parent– teacher–student conferences, and school Web sites.
- **Encourage** parents to create a supportive learning environment in the home. This includes providing homework guidance, ensuring adequate educational supplies such as computers or books, and assisting their children with time management.

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet—KEY

Strategy 3:

Provide students with the academic, emotional, and social skills necessary to be actively engaged in school.

Examples:

- **Use** teaching methods and "teachable moments" for students to improve interpersonal skills, stress management, and decision-making. Foster critical and reflective thinking, problem-solving skills, and working effectively with others.
- **Allow** students to identify, label, express, and assess their feelings.
- **Use** classroom activities to explore and discuss empathy, personal strengths, fairness, kindness, and social responsibility.
- **Use** interactive, experiential activities and help students personalize the information.
- **Encourage** students to learn, be involved and be recognized through service learning, peer tutoring, classroom chores, teacher assistance, extracurricular activities, and creative projects.
- **Correct** inaccurate perceptions about what are normal behaviors among students (e.g., percent of students who smoke).
- **Help** students to plan career and personal goals and to map out the steps to take to meet their goals.
- **Implement** tutoring programs to provide one-on-one assistance to students. Tutors can provide weekly academic help in reading and math, help students with decision-making, and work with students to develop specific academic and social goals.
- **Support** positive academic competition within and among schools. For example, schools can establish interscholastic team competitions in academic subjects and offer activities such as debate and physics projects.
- **Offer** extended learning opportunities for all students, such as summer and vacation camps, to improve academic and social skills.
- **Provide** opportunities for students to improve their interpersonal skills, such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-control, communication, negotiation, sharing, and good manners. Other skills that could be taught include listening, stress management, and decision-making.
- **Foster** pro-social behavior by engaging students in helping activities such as service learning, peer tutoring, classroom chores, and teacher assistance. Use classroom activities and lessons to explore and discuss empathy, personal strengths, fairness, kindness, and social responsibility.
- **Teach** refusal and resistance skills, including how to recognize social influences to engage in problem behaviors, identify consequences of problem behaviors, generate and suggest alternatives, and invite peers to join in those alternative activities.

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet—KEY

Strategy 4:

Use effective classroom management and teaching methods to foster a positive learning environment.

Examples:

- **Communicate** clear expectations for learning and behavior that are developmentally appropriate and applied equitably.
- **Clearly** describe lesson goals and relate them to the real world.
- **Link** lessons to standards and ensure students' learning is sequential, and build upon prior lessons.
- **Be** flexible with instructional strategies to allow for teachable moments and personalization of lessons.
- **Use** student-centered pedagogy, and appropriate classroom management and discipline strategies that meet students' diverse needs and learning styles.
- **Assist** students in developing self-control.
- **Engage** students in appropriate leadership and decision-making processes.
- **Establish** a reward system for both academic and extracurricular achievements; encourage the intrinsic rewards of learning.
- **Fairly enforce** reasonable and consistent disciplinary policies that are jointly agreed upon by students and staff.
- **Encourage** open, respectful communication about differing viewpoints.
- **Assess** students continuously and use the results to guide the direction of the class and teaching methods used.
- **Advocate** for class-size reduction to ensure more time for individualized assistance.
- **Use** interactive and experiential activities, such as group discussions, problem solving, and role-playing, to engage students in learning and help them personalize the information.
- **Be flexible** with instructional strategies to allow for teachable moments and personalization of the academic lessons.
- **Use** a variety of teaching methods such as discussion questions, extra readings, and group projects to foster critical and reflective thinking, problem-solving skills, and the capacity to work effectively with others.
- **Apply** a variety of classroom management strategies and teaching methods that are conducive to the diverse needs and learning styles of students.

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet—KEY

Strategy 5:

Provide professional development and support for teachers and other school staff to enable them to meet the diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs of children and adolescents.

Examples:

- **Share** and develop your experience and expertise in child development.
- **Participate** in professional development on all school curricula to be used, effective teaching methods, and classroom organization that promotes a positive environment.
- **Apply** (and educate other school staff on) strategies to effectively communicate and involve parents.
- **Request** materials, time, resources, and support to effectively use the skills learned in training.
- **Build** learning teams and observe experienced teachers who effectively manage classrooms and facilitate group work.
- **Coach** or mentor teachers and staff to share teaching techniques and classroom management strategies, solve problems at school, and create a supportive work environment.
- **Employ** teachers who have been trained in child development, and demonstrate effective implementation of student-centered pedagogy, a variety of classroom management techniques, and teaching methods (e.g., cooperative learning).
- **Educate** school staff on strategies to effectively involve parents in their children's school life.
- **Provide** training on all curricula the school plans to use, as well as effective teaching methods (e.g., cooperative learning, active learning), to maximize the curricula's effectiveness. Ensure that teachers have the necessary materials, time, resources, and support to effectively use the skills learned in training.

Strategies and Actions to Promote School Connectedness Worksheet—KEY

Strategy 6:

Create trusting and caring relationships that promote open communication among administrators, teachers, staff, students, families, and communities.

Examples:

- **Provide** opportunities for students of all levels to interact, develop friendships, and to promote teamwork, and for students to work, partner, and help adults.
- **Commit** to and **model** respectful behavior toward principals, other teachers, and school staff.
- **Challenge** teachers and other school staff to greet each student by name.
- **Encourage** teachers and other school staff to build stronger relationships with students who may be experiencing academic or social issues.
- **Request** that a school counselor, psychologist, or other expert be available for consultation and referral.
- **Communicate** expectations, values, and norms that support positive health and academic behaviors to the school community.
- **Consider** structuring the school so that teachers stay with the same students for 3 years in elementary and middle school and 2 or more years in high school. This can provide better continuity in learning and might allow the development of stronger teacher–student relationships.
- **Allow** students and their parents to use the school building and property outside of school hours for recreational or health promotion programs. This can increase their feeling of being part of the school community.
- **Apply** reasonable and consistent disciplinary policies that are collectively agreed upon by students and staff and are fairly enforced.
- **Hold** school-wide activities that give students opportunities to learn about different cultures, people with disabilities, and topics such as arts or sports. This will increase students' respect for diversity and form connections among students. Increasing understanding of similarities and differences can engender respect.
- **Promote** teamwork and lessen hierarchical divisions between older and younger students.
- **Create** opportunities for students to work in partnership with adults in helping roles. For example, service-learning opportunities enable students to connect with adults in the community. Involve students in activities that traditionally involved only adults (e.g., parent–teacher conferences, curriculum selection committees, school health teams).

Presentation Feedback Form

Directions: For each of the statements below, circle one number that best describes your opinion about the helpfulness of the presentation.

How helpful was the presentation on:	Very Helpful	Helpful	Neither Helpful or Unhelpful	Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful
1. Reflecting on personal experiences related to school connectedness.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Defining school connectedness.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Differentiating between protective and risk factors.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Describing the relationship between school connectedness and student social, academic and health outcomes.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Identifying six strategies and related actions used in schools and districts to increase school connectedness among students.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Identifying resources for assessing and promoting school connectedness in your school(s).	5	4	3	2	1
7. Determining at least one action the school team may take to address school connectedness and improve the climate at their school or district.	5	4	3	2	1

8. In your opinion, what part of the presentation was most valuable? _____

9. In your opinion, what part of the presentation was least valuable? _____

10. Would you recommend it to others? (Circle one) Yes No

Why or why not? _____

Thank you for your attendance and participation in this program.

School Connectedness Resources*

ASCD.org (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Provides information and resources related to school health promotion and online community networking to help educators integrate health issues into the curriculum and address nonacademic barriers to learning. (Available at www.healthyschoolcommunities.org/HSRC/pages/navigationcontent/Resources.aspx.)

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

Publishes The School Connectedness - Improving Students' Lives monograph, a series highlighting the best and promising practices for schools, and explores successful approaches for improving school connectedness. (Available at http://cecp.air.org.)

Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Analyzes policies and practices to improve mental health outcomes of young people in schools. Publishes an information resource fact sheet About School and Classroom Climate. (Available at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolclassroomclimate.pdf.)

Center for Social and Emotional Education (CSEE)

Promotes positive and sustained school climate, and synthesizes school climate research. Publishes The School Climate Challenge: Narrowing the Gap Between School Climate Research and School Climate Policy, Practice Guidelines and Teacher Education Policy. (Available at www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/school-climate-challenge.pdf.)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Promotes the health and well-being of children and adolescents to enable them to become healthy and productive adults. Provides information and resources on critical health issues including:

- Student health and academic achievement. (Available at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/index.htm.)
- School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth. (Availabale at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/AdolescentHealth/connectedness.htm.)

Child Trends

Publishes Assessing School Engagement: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Program Practitioners and describes why school engagement matters and how out-of-school time programs can affect school engagement. (Available at www.childtrends.org.)

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

Provides publications, programming guides, briefs & reports, articles, books, parent packets and an e-Newsletter to establish social and emotional learning (SEL) as an essential part of education. (Available at www.casel.org.)

FindYouthInfo.gov

Provides interactive tools and other resources to help youth-serving organizations and community partnerships plan, implement, and participate in effective programs for youth. (Available at www.findyouthinfo.gov.)

Harvard Family Research Project

Conducts and published research on family involvement in children's learning and development. (Available at www.hfrp.org/family-involvement.)

Inclusive Schools Network (ICARE Schools)

Shares information obtained from "Kids with Cameras" study about student accounts about the importance of connections with school. (Available at inclusiveschools.org.)

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

Serves as a clearinghouse for resources that advocate and fosters parent and family involvement of in their children's education. (Available at ncpie.org/Resources/.)

National 4-H Council

Supports and reports on the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. (Available at www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/.)

National School Climate Center (NSCC)

Partners with school districts, law enforcement agencies, courts, and state and federal agencies to provide support for youth and their families to be engaged at school. (Available at www.schoolclimate.org/climate or www.schoolengagement.org.)

Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC)

Aims to improve student academic performance by increasing parental involvement in children's education; offers workshops, publications, toolkits, newsletters, tip sheets, and support to parents, schools, and community organizations. (Available at www.nationalpirc.org.)

School Mental Health.Org

Provides school mental health resources with practical information and skills based on current research, evidence-based practices, and lessons learned; offers the School Connectedness Checklist. (Available at www.schoolmentalhealth.org.)

SEARCH Institute

Offers tools and research, including a framework of Developmental Assets, to promote a healthy school climate. (Available at www.search-institute.org.)

SEDL National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

Aims to improve teaching and learning, and the quality of afterschool programs that support school, family, and community connections to increase student success. (Available at www.sedl.org/connections.)

WestEd

Publishes with the California Department of Education, the Workbook for Improving School Climate and Closing the Achievement Gap, a supplemental resource to the California Healthy Kids Survey and the California School Climate Survey. (Available at www.wested.org.)

* Links updated in May, 2011

School Connectedness Action Plan

Directions: As a school or school district team, complete the Action Plan (page 38) for one strategy and a related action, activity, or policy change related to promoting school connectedness among students. Review the list of **Questions for Action Planning**, then, on the Action Plan form (page 2) fill in the School Connectedness Strategy by number and description. Use the **Criteria** stated below to complete the information in each column of the form. Enter the name of the school or school district your Team represents and the names of each of your Team members.

Questions for Action Planning, consider:

- ✔ Which strategies is our school or district presently implementing to increase school connectedness? What is missing? Which new strategy and action, activity, or policy change would be the most feasible and appropriate for our school (or district) to implement? (See Fact Sheet handout for Strategies and examples of related actions.)
  1. Create decision-making processes that facilitate student, family and community engagement; academic achievement; and staff empowerment.
  2. Provide education and opportunities to enable families to be actively involved in their children's academic and school life.
  3. Provide students with the academic, emotional, and social skills necessary to be actively engaged in school.
  4. Use effective classroom management and teaching methods to foster a positive learning environment.
  5. Provide professional development and support for teachers and other school staff to enable them to meet the diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs of children and adolescents.
  6. Create trusting and caring relationships that promote open communication among administrators, teachers, staff, students, families, and communities.
- ✔ What strategies have other schools or local school districts in your area addressed or implemented? Do they have insights to share?
- ✔ How will your team obtain feedback on your Action Plan ideas from other members of your school and district staff and students?
- ✔ What resources and buy-in are needed to move the Action Plan forward?
- ✔ What contacts or professional expertise does your Team need to help move the Action Plan forward?
- ✔ Who will serve as the team lead for coordinating, refining, implementing and evaluating the implementation of the Action Plan?

Criteria

Action	Identify a specific action, activity, or policy change related to the specified School Connectedness Strategy (1-6) that will be implemented.
Steps	List the specific steps that need to be taken to implement the action.
By whom	List the people who will be responsible for each step. For example, who needs to be involved in planning and implementing the activity or policy and who would you recommend assume leadership for the action.
When	Identify and approximate time when each step will be initiated and completed.
Progress	Describe briefly, how the process, progress, or impact of the activity or policy will be evaluated.

School Connectedness Action Plan

TEAM SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT: .....

TEAM MEMBERS: .....

Strategy # ___ : .....

Action	Steps	By Whom	When	Progress

School Connectedness Action Plan (EXAMPLE)

TEAM SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT: *Peabody Middle School*

TEAM MEMBERS: *Mary (teacher), Jane (principal), Bob (teacher), Alexis (Asst. principal), Lonnie (counselor), Jose (basketball coach), Ron (Foodservice manager), Andre (clerk)*

Strategy # 1: *Create decision-making processes that facilitate student, family, and community engagement; academic achievement; and staff empowerment.*

Action	Steps	By Whom	When	Progress
Work with students, faculty, staff, and parents to identify simple changes that would make the school's physical environment more pleasant.	*1. Create a School Connectedness Action Team. Solicit representatives:* • *Teachers* • *Parents* • *Students* • *School staff* • *Community* *2. Elect/select Action Team Leader*	*Mary, teacher and others*	*Sept. 10*	• *List of Action Team Participants, with cross-school and community representation.* • *Identify Team Lead/Coordinator (responsible for scheduling meeting, agenda, and facilitating meeting).*
	3. Meet to determine characteristics of the school environment that promote or hinder school connectedness among students	*Action Team Lead & Team*	*Sept. 23*	*List of characteristics and criteria to assess school connectedness (prepared & reviewed by Action Team)*
	4. Plan and facilitate meeting of Action Team, walk the school grounds, assess environment	*Action Team*	*Sept. 28*	*Meeting date, agenda, completed school environment assessment by Action Team*
	5. Brainstorm list of changes that could be made to improve the school environment and school connectedness	*Action Team*	*Oct. 5*	*Meeting date, agenda and review findings from school environment assessment*
	6. Draft proposal of changes for school and district leadership (using findings from school environment assessment)	*Action Team*	*Oct. 19*	*Written draft of proposal for changes to promote school connectedness to present to school and district leadership*
	7. Schedule time on Leadership agenda to make presentation of proposal	*Action Team*	*Oct. 31*	• *Leadership agenda* • *Proposal presentation*

EXAMPLE ONLY EXAMPLE ONLY EXAMPLE ONLY

E-mail Template for a Staff Development Program: Fostering School Connectedness

Note:

This e-mail template can be used to generate interest and alert staff of the staff development program to be made available and may be adapted for use in school newsletters.

Dear _____:

Great news! You are invited (insert where and when) to participate in a new Staff Development Program, Fostering School Connectedness. This (1.5 to 2 hour) program will feature a variety of strategies and actions that every school staff member can use to promote school connectedness among students.

You are an important adult in students' lives; the time, interest, attention, and emotional support you give students can engage them in school and learning. School connectedness is a key protective factor that may unlock student potential and improve their health and academic well-being. Students who believe that adults and peers in the school care about their learning and care about them as individuals are connected, and they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and more likely to do better in school.

If you are a teacher or other school staff, such as a coach, school nurse, health assistant, instructional assistant, secretary, counselor, teacher-aide, physical education specialist, school resource officer, or you work in school food service, facility and maintenance, before- and after-school programs, special education, or are a school administrator, please join me to participate in this staff development program and learn about strategies and actions we can take to improve health and academic outcomes of our students.

I look forward to seeing you at the staff development program on (insert date and time).

Cordially,

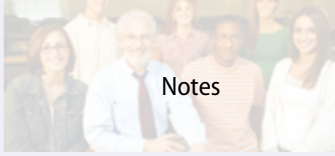
(enter)

Name: _____

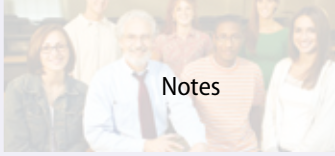
Position: _____

Phone: (___) ___ - _____

e-mail: _____@_____



Notes



For more information please contact

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov
Web: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth
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