Building School and Classroom Community

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Time Frame	150-180 session(s)

Essential Question(s)

- What are the characteristics of positive school and classroom communities? How can we develop and promote positive school and classroom communities?

Summary

The Building School and Classroom Community professional development focuses on building school identity among teachers and students. Participants will be empowered to select research-based strategies that create community and support learning for all students. Participants will create a vision for their school and classroom communities and select research-based strategies and tools for putting their vision into action.

Learning Goals

- Meet new colleagues while identifying strategies that build community

- Collectively envision a school and classroom identity

- Select research-based strategies for the beginning of the school year in order to develop a sense of community in your classrooms and school

Attachments

- Lesson-Slides-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.pptx
- Picture-A-Teacher-to-Student-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.docx
- Picture-B-Student-to-Student-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.docx
- Picture-C-Teacher-to-Student-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.docx
- Picture-D-Teacher-to-Teacher-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.docx
- Research-Brief-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.docx
- Strategy-Reflection-Building-School-and-Classroom-Community.docx

Materials

- Internet-enabled device with sound
- Chart tablet paper
- Markers
- Selection of four photos (attached)
- Research Brief handout (attached)
- Strategy Reflection handout (attached)

Engage

Presenter's Note: Preparation Before The Professional Development

Prepare all handouts and materials prior to the session. As this professional development also contains three online videos to be shared with participants and uses Padlet, an interactive website, internet access is needed during the presentation. Create a Padlet board prior to the presentation to be shared with participants. Include the web link to the board and a QR code on **slide four.** Please check Internet access at the school site or send the links to the school liaison to verify access. The presentation room should also be arranged so that participants will work in small groups of three or four participants.

Greet participants at the door prior to beginning the professional development. This is a strategy that will be discussed later in the session and should be modeled at this time. As participants enter, ask them to sit with at least two people they do not know. Use the attached slide presentation to guide the session and display **slide two** for participants to view as they are seated.

Once participants are all seated, display **slide three**. Following the Pick a Pic strategy, ask participants to find a picture on their phone or laptop that makes them smile and that reflects an element of their identity. Have participants share the photo with their seated group and explain why they chose it.

After participants have introduced themselves and explained the significance of their photo, ask them to upload their picture to the prepared Padlet board (**slides four** and **five**).

Presenter's Note: Padlet Upload Instructions

1) Have participants go to the prepared Padlet board using the link or QR code you've added to the slide four. 2) To add something to the board, have participants click the plus sign in the bottom corner of the Padlet. 3) A text box will appear. Participants will click on the photo icon in the text box, upload the picture from their photo gallery, and add a caption and their name.

Transition to **slide six.** As photos are posted, participants can scroll through the pictures. Reflect on and discuss this activity in small groups by asking the questions: How did this activity help build community? How could this activity be adapted for students?

Allow time for small groups to discuss these questions and share out to the whole group. After the larger discussion, display **slide seven** and pass out the attached **Strategy Reflection handout.** Ask participants to describe the Padlet activity on the handout as well as how it could be implemented in the classroom.

Review the GEAR UP and session goals on **slides eight** and **nine** respectively. Display **slide 10.** Frame the idea of building school community as actions that occur teacher to teacher, teacher to student, and student to student. Also discuss community and family relationships, but keep in mind that this professional development focuses on the specific relationships on slide 10.

Explore

Presenter's Note: Picture Preparation

Slides 13–16 show four pictures that represent various aspects of school community. These pictures are printed and sourced on handouts in the attachments. Make enough copies to give one picture to each group. As groups present their OPTIC-al chart information, display the corresponding picture from the slides.

Transition to **slide 11** and introduce the It's OPTIC-al strategy. Pass out poster or chart tablet paper and markers to each small group of three or four. Ask groups to label their chart tablet similar to the model on slide 11, placing the letters **O-P-T-I-C** vertically with space to write between the letters. Pass out one of the four **attached pictures** to each group. These pictures are labeled as A, B, C, and D. Tell groups that they will observe and unpack one representation of "community".

Next, display **slide 12**. Ask participants to write down information about the picture following the O-P-T-I-C letter prompts on slide twelve. Groups should also label their chart as A, B, C, or D to correspond with their picture.

Allow about 10–15 minutes for groups to discuss the picture and fill out their chart. Once finished, have groups place or cluster all the picture A OPTICs on one wall, all picture B OPTICs on another wall, all picture C Optics on a third wall, and all picture D Optics on the fourth wall.

Ask groups to choose a spokesperson for their chart and share all or part of what they observed as the corresponding slides **(13–16)** are displayed. You may either ask each group to share everything or ask each group to share specific letters, based on time available. Share all OPTICs from each picture before moving on to the next picture.

After discussing the pictures. ask participants to reflect on this strategy using the questions on **slide** 17: *How can this strategy be applied to the classroom?"* and *"Could this be used to build community with students?"* Allow time for groups to discuss the strategy and share out ideas for its application.

Explain

Pass out the **Research Brief** found in the attachments. Ask groups to number off one through three to implement a Jigsaw strategy. Display **slide** 18 that divides the research brief into three parts according to each person's number. Display **slide** 19 that explains the Categorical Highlighting strategy. Pass out two highlighters of different colors to each participant. As participants "jigsaw" the reading, ask them to highlight reasons for building community in one color and strategies for building community in another color. If highlighters are not available, participants can circle reasons for building community and underline strategies for building community.

Invite each group member who annotated a different section of the reading to share with group members the reasons for building community, and then strategies that build community (see **slide** 20). In the same order, invite a representative from each group share out at least one reason for building community that they discussed and one strategy that encourages building community. Ask participants to volunteer an answer to these questions: *Which part of the article resonated with something you currently do? Which part of the article was new or powerful?*

Have participants return to their Strategy Reflection handout. Display **slide 21** and invite participants to reflect on the Jigsaw and Categorical Highlighting strategies, and their potential application in the classroom. Discuss as a whole group. Display **slide** 22 and give participants an opportunity to take a break.

Slides 23 and 24 contain brief video examples to reinforce the strategy modeled in the Engage phase. These strategies are also mentioned in the research brief regarding the importance of greeting students at the door. As the facilitator, determine if one or both videos are important for participants to view. The images on the slides link to the YouTube videos. Full URLs for the videos can be found in the slide notes, in the Resources section below, and here: This Teacher Has Different Handshakes with Each Student; 60-Second Strategy: TUMS at the Door

Display **slide** 25. The research brief mentions several strategies for building community—ask participants to continue working on their Strategy Reflection handout, addressing these strategies in particular. Have participants note ideas for the strategies' application with students. Invite volunteers to share ideas about how they might use some of these strategies.

Extend

Display **slide** 26. Remind participants that the research brief notes students can recognize the hypocrisy of a school climate that promotes a warm and caring culture while a classroom climate appears distant or neglectful. Both the classroom and school culture must offer and support some aspects of positive community-building.

Pass out three sticky notes to each participant. Display **slide** 27. Ask participants to reflect on everything they have read and discussed today. Ask participants to put the word "school" at the top of each sticky note. On each sticky note, participants should note what a positive school community looks like, feels like, and sounds like. Have group members discuss their sticky notes with each other and create a poster that reflects their shared understanding (see **slide** 28 for an example grid). As groups complete their posters, place them around the room. Have a spokesperson from each group share out the component that is the most important to a positive school community (**slide** 29).

Evaluate

Ask participants to review all of the posters in the room. You can have groups rotate to each poster using a Gallery Walk strategy. As they review the other posters, ask participants to place stars or sticky notes beside statements or phrases they agree with. After the rotation is complete and as participants are returning to their seats, point out those statements that appealed to multiple groups and ask participants to share their reasoning.

Presenter's Note: Working With Only One School

If you are working with only one school, display **slide 30**. Rather than a Gallery Walk, ask for volunteers to discuss ideas that they heard during the poster share-out that they believe would fit with their school community.

Continue to **slide** 31. Have participants think about how they could use the "Looks Like, Feels Like, and Sounds Like" activity with their own students. Ask participants to record these ideas on their Strategy Reflection handout. Allow additional time for participants to share ANY strategies from their own experiences that might support building school or classroom community. Encourage participants to share ideas and record them in the space provided on the Strategy Reflection handout.

Display **slide** 32. Challenge participants to think about which strategy they might use this year to build community and how they might use it. Specific questions are shown on the slide to help guide participants' planning. Call on volunteers to share ideas.

Optional: Additional Reflection

If time allows, show the video titled "Every Opportunity," on **slide 33.** After the video, challenge participants to consider every student as an individual even though they may have a large number of students. Ask participants not to forget that each student is an individual who needs their care and concern, no matter how large their student population may be. If working with a school team, display **slide 34** and ask participants what their next steps might be to build school community. Allow time for this discussion.

Display **slide 35,** thanking participants and inviting their feedback. You may wish to add your contact information or another method for participants to provide feedback.

Follow-up Activities

This presentation is meant as an introduction to building school and class community. For school teams, follow up activities could include: creating shared team or grade level policies and procedures, creating a shared vision or mission statement for the school with daily routines that manifest the school mission day-to-day.

Research Rationale

Positive school communities are environments that promote a sense of belonging and connectedness with their members (Petrillo et al., 2016). They foster democratic values, civic participation, and collaborative discourse through students and teachers working together (Farmer et al., 2016, p. 209).Schools must be intentional and evidenced-based (Westheimer & Kahn, 1993) in their efforts to promote a positive school community. Stating a school mission or shared vision is in itself not enough to create a community; the evidence of this vision needs to be tangible throughout the school and in every classroom. Staff must work together to develop common routines and procedures that actively encourage respectful and supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents. Students in schools with a strong, positive, and caring community are more likely to be academically motivated (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000), to act more ethically and altruistically (Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997), to develop social and emotional competencies (Solomon et al., 2000), and to avoid negative problem behaviors (Resnick et al., 1997).

Resources

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