

EMPOWER COÖS YOUTH 2017



BUILDING YOUTH CONNECTIONS AT SCHOOL AND IN THE COMMUNITY

WHY IS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS IMPORTANT?

+ School connectedness is linked to many aspects of positive youth development. Students who feel more connected to their schools are more likely to be doing well socially, emotionally, and academically. They have higher self-esteem, experience fewer feelings of depression, and are less likely to engage in risky or aggressive behaviors. Coös youth who see their communities in a positive light also have higher self-esteem. A strong sense of community can even help to protect youth—especially boys—from problem substance use.

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO BUILD STUDENT CONNECTEDNESS?

- + Students who are connected with their schools feel that educators believe they can succeed academically and expect them to do their best. Let all of your students know that you have high expectations of what they can achieve and that you are holding them to a high standard.
- + Students who say that their teachers are willing to give them extra help with schoolwork or help them out with a personal problem feel more connected with their schools. Do you know of any students who you think might need some help? Check in and see how they are doing.
- + Aid students in creating and establishing personal routines and structure in their daily lives. Help students to prioritize tasks and assignments and to organize their schoolwork demands.
- + The more connected students feel to their schools, the more positively they view their prospects of finding a job locally, even when trends in the unemployment rate are taken into account. It is possible that the networks they build while in school give them a job market advantage. Helping to foster connectedness now may have a real impact on your students' future workforce engagement and economic success.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES?

- + Accept people for who they are. All students should be able to feel that they belong at their schools and in their classrooms.
- + Some of your classmates may be dealing with problems like bullying, a family member misusing drugs, or the death of someone close to them. Making your school a place where students going through challenges feel like they have each other's support begins with you.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITIES DO TO CONNECT WITH YOUTH?

- + Teens are more invested in their communities and more likely to plan to stay in the area when they get older if they feel like their thoughts and opinions are valued. Offer opportunities for youth voices to be heard in community decision-making.
- + Students with formal or informal adult mentors, including extended family members, school staff, and people in the community, have higher aspirations for the future. They are more likely to say they can do anything they set their minds to and more likely to believe that they will graduate from college. Consider becoming a mentor for a young person in your life.
- + Only about one-third of young adults who attended Coös County public schools reported that their schools helped to prepare them for career and workforce skills, compared to nearly half of young adults nationally. School-community partnerships may help to address this gap by linking school preparation to experiential learning and to local workforce needs.