



**Indicator:** The School Community Council ensures that all volunteers understand motivational competency and their roles relative to its enhancement in students. (E2)

**Explanation:** The evidence suggests that student motivation is driven by four categories of factors: competence, autonomy, interest, and relatedness. The school community must work together to embrace students' natural motivation and develop greater motivation for learning by rewarding and celebrating effort and mastery. Through genuine involvement and care and a focus on continual improvement, students can develop a growth mindset and have greater intrinsic motivation for learning. The school must provide training and support for volunteers so that they fully understand the Motivational Competency and can implement these supportive practices for students.

**Questions:** What trainings and supports will the school provide for volunteers to understand motivation and the development of a growth mindset? How will school staff work to foster a growth mindset throughout the school community? How can volunteers work with school staff and families to promote the Motivational Competency in students?

*What is the Motivational Competency?*

The Motivational Competency explains why students engage with learning, how hard they will work on a particular task, and why they do or do not persevere to achieve their goals (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Headden & McKay, 2015; Redding, 2016). Usher and Kober (2012) identify four dimensions of motivation: competence, control/autonomy, interest/value, and relatedness. Toshalis and Nakkula (2012) write that, "we are motivated to devote energy to those activities in which we expect to succeed, and we subsequently tend to value those activities over others" (p. 10). If a student feels capable of accomplishing the task before them, they will be more likely to deeply engage in the work and persist.

This internal, or intrinsic, motivation also occurs when students truly enjoy or are interested in their work or goals (Redding, 2006). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) explain:

Motivation is wanting to do one task when there are competing tasks available. The learner believes that the task is important and has a belief in his or her ability to master the task through dedication and hard work. The learner persists even when mastering the task becomes difficult. (p. 8)

Many other factors affect a student's level of motivation – including their familial or social context, the classroom environment, and the degree to which teachers create an environment of mastery learning (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Headden & McKay, 2015; Redding, 2016). This concept of relatedness may not be as intuitive for teachers and parents to understand and foster collaboratively (Usher & Kober, 2012). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) outline a number of strategies that teachers can use to boost their students' motivational competency, including expressing confidence in their students' ability to complete and succeed in the work, sparking students' interest in lessons by starting with a related but fun activity, providing encouragement and support for students to keep going, and allow-

ing students to make decisions about project groups or topics. Redding (2006) also highlights ways that teachers can balance high expectations with a culture of caring, ensuring that students feel known, cared about, and recognized for their efforts.

This concept of relatedness may not be as intuitive for volunteers or community members to understand and foster collaboratively (Usher & Kober, 2012). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) outline a number of strategies that teachers and volunteers can use to boost their students' motivation, including expressing confidence in their students' ability to complete and succeed in the work, sparking students' interest in lessons by starting with a related but fun activity, providing encouragement and support for students to keep going, and allowing students to make decisions about project groups or topics. Redding (2006) also highlights ways that adults in the classroom can balance high expectations with a culture of caring, ensuring that students feel known, cared about, and recognized for their efforts.

Recognition for effort, as opposed to commendations for innate ability, is a critical piece of developing a growth mindset. Headden and McKay (2015) explain that students with a growth mindset "believe that with effort, their ability and performance can improve... The positive attitude prepares them for the realities of later life, helping them recover when their efforts fail to produce the outcomes they have come to expect" (p. 8). In contrast, students who have been rewarded and commended simply for being smart tend to have a fixed mindset, leading them to believe that their efforts are inconsequential and that they will simply either be good or bad at a given task (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Headden & McKay, 2015). Consequently, adults who focus on student effort and mastery of a goal, instead of performance on a test or a grade on a report card, are more likely to foster a growth mindset and consequently, higher levels of motivation, for their students (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Usher & Kober, 2012).

#### *How Can Schools Ensure that Volunteers Understand and Help Promote the Motivational Competency?*

Teachers and parents are not the only adults involved in children's educational experiences and therefore not the only ones who can help students be motivated to learn. Between after-school and summer programs, as well as school day volunteers, there are many other adults

who are influential in how and what students learn. Redding (2016) defines a school community as, "the people intimately associated with a school—students, their families, teachers, administrators, school staff, and volunteers—bound together by their common interest in the students served by the school" (p. 12). Bayerl (2014) writes:

By working together toward shared goals for the youth they serve, schools and community-based youth development organizations can ensure that their efforts are aligned and complementary and that every young person has the opportunities and supports they need to develop the skills and mindsets that support success in school and beyond. (p. 18)

All members of the school community can provide additional academic and emotional supports for students, but for them to be most effective, they need to be familiar with the goals and strategies of the classroom (Bayerl, 2014). The onus is on the school to fully integrate volunteers and community partners into its work and values, treating them as equals and as meaningful contributors in the task of educating children (Bayerl, 2014). When advertising their needs or requests for volunteers, schools can incorporate these values and competencies into job descriptions, scopes of work, and onboarding conversations (Redding, 2016).

Just as teachers and parents must be mindful of the types of praise and attention they give to students, volunteers must be as well. Yet they may not be aware that, for example, complimenting a child's intelligence instead of their effort may be detrimental to the child and could lead to that child having a fixed mindset about learning (Usher & Kober, 2012). Schools must teach volunteers how to most effectively praise and monitor children's learning (Kraft & Rogers, 2014; Redding, 2014). Schools should provide professional development opportunities for volunteers and partners in their building about the Motivational Competency and how they can use it to support student achievement. These professional development sessions can be just for these stakeholders, or they can be shared training with school staff (Bayerl, 2014; Redding, 2016).

Volunteers should understand that simple activities such as reading with children, discussing what they are learning and reading, expressing excitement and pleasure

about learning, and embracing children's natural instincts and motivators have a big impact on their values and motivation about school (Redding, 2006; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). Making this information as simple and actionable as possible is important for helping volunteers use it in their classroom or program; providing lists of proven strategies, activities, and instructional resources is a great way to help volunteers get started (Redding, 2014; Redding, 2016).

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