

Building Teacher-Student Connections

That Improve

**School Climate,
Achievement,
and Behavior**

Bill Parsons, Ed.S.

www.helpinggreatschools.com



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Student Connections
That Improve
School Climate,
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**Real Solutions
for Today's
Schools**



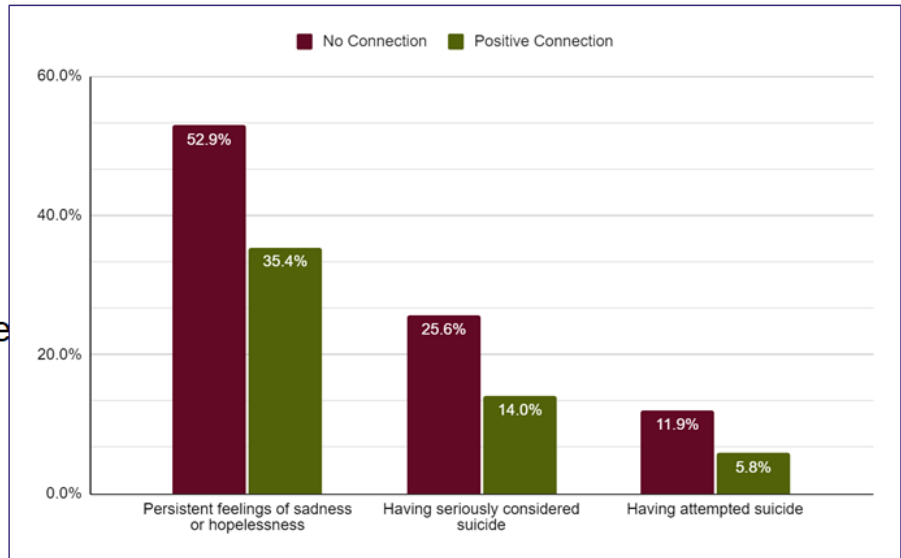
Research Summary - It's All About Connections!

Positive teacher-student connections:

1. Are the foundation for a positive school climate.
2. Have a significant impact on the mental health of students which is now considered a national emergency.
3. Increase student achievement so essential in closing the learning gap caused by the pandemic.
4. Build self-efficacy and resilience in students.
5. Directly improve teacher energy, motivation, and retention, while reducing stress and burnout.

Student Connections HELP!

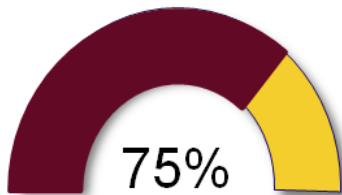
A 2021 nationwide survey by the Center for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) describes the positive impact of students feeling connected to the school.



What About the Teachers and Principals?

In a 2022 nationwide survey of teachers, 75% of respondents currently teaching said they would not recommend teaching as a profession.

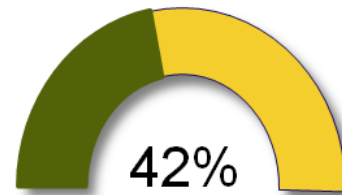
(CBS News, August, 2022)



**They're
good,
right?**

In a 2021 Education Week survey of principals, 42% of those polled described themselves as "wanting to leave the profession."

(Education Week, May 2021)



Accurate Post-Pandemic Summary?

- National emergency regarding student mental health
- Parent frustrations
- Disconnect from school
- Teacher turnover
- Principal burnout
- Achievement gaps that may last for years
- Long term effects on mental health
- Feral – in a wild state, especially after escape from captivity

Staff Connection

Why revisit classroom management?

- "Feral" student attitudes + teacher burnout = trouble
- More confrontation trouble
- Low profile interventions

revisited

They began as scheduled ZOOM or other well-planned “temperature checks” on the emotional well-being of students and teachers.

They are just as important now!

- Maintaining emotional well-being
- Establishing the way we do things (procedure)
- Establishing the way we treat others (relearning social skills)
- Focusing on school initiatives such as mental health, bullying, and

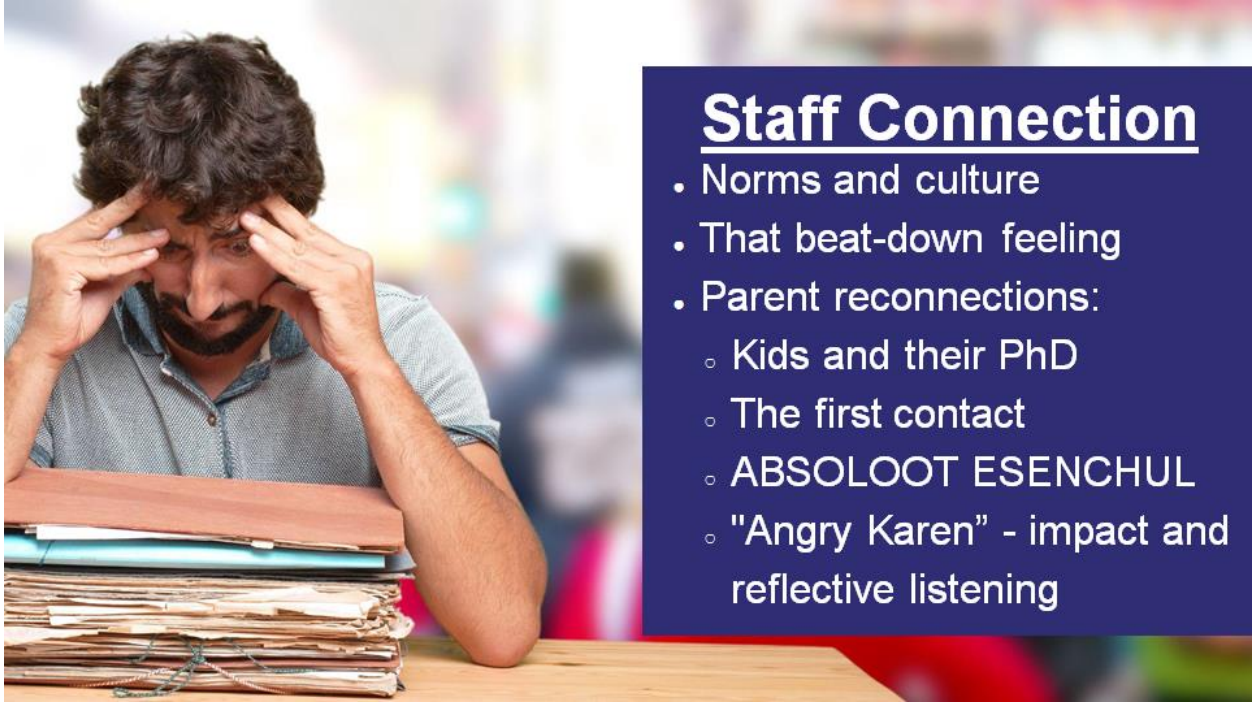


National Center for Educational Statistics

- 20% of students report being bullied at school, with 41% of those believing it will continue.
- 42% of the bullying takes place in the classroom.
- 49.8% of tweens (ages 9-12) report being bullied at school. Of those, 69% said it negatively impacted their feelings about themselves.

Bullying impacts the current student mental health crisis in America. Students who are both targets of bullying and engaging in bullying are at far greater risk for both mental health and behavior problems than their peers.

Making bully-proofing a sustained priority is more important than ever.



Staff Connection

- Norms and culture
- That beat-down feeling
- Parent reconnections:
 - Kids and their PhD
 - The first contact
 - ABSOLOOT ESENCUL
 - "Angry Karen" - impact and reflective listening

1. Avoid the outliers
2. Prepare *everyone* on how to deal with Karen
3. Taking it personally
4. Responding to angry e-mails
5. Email yourself?
6. Reflective listening and in-person confrontations...

A screaming person cannot hear you talking!

Avoiding Burnout by Preparing for Karen

Increasing...

Preparation...

Emotional toll...

Not My Responsibility!

- The impact being late to school has on students
- Bullying and the day
- Making them part of your team
- They respond to school-related motivation.
- Praise works



Bus Drivers and 84 Reasons



Leadership Connections

- Cooperative planning and regression analysis? What?
- Knowing your “irreplaceables”
- STAY, and GO conversations
- Third party technique
- “What did you learn today?” ... with follow through
- DEAR the important stuff

Student Connections:

Proactive Help for the Most Vulnerable

Research Identifies the Most Vulnerable

- New to the school
- Unassertive
- Isolated because of appearance (clothes, hygiene, “different”)
- Disabilities
- Physical characteristics (weight, height, acne, etc.)
- LGBTQ+
- Extremely “attractive” or “unattractive”
- Traditional at-risk characteristics



Proactive Strategies to Connect to the Most Vulnerable

- Identify them before they start school
- Work with “sending school”
- Give their names a face
- Show them the “school buffet”
- Match student and teacher in learning/teaching styles and personality where possible.
- Each One Reach One

Active Student Participation in School Matters... More Important Now Than Ever!

- It builds and rebuilds trust in authority.
- It develops buy-in to school improvement initiatives.
- It is a frequent correlate in positive connections and culture.
- Students are increasingly cynical about “implement first and ask later” leadership.
- The more students are engaged, the more they become the architects of innovation for their future and for their school.

Student Connections Active Participation in School Matters

- Student Leadership Teams
- Student mentors
- Secret agents and Nik
- Posting student accomplishments
- Student-Principal Mailbox
- Student partners in safety
- Adopt-A-Spot



Become Your Own P.R. Director!

The power of using incremental data

Burn-out is real. Students *and* teachers need frequent reminders that their school is on the right path with school improvement initiatives in order to maintain buy-in, energy, and effort that made it happen.

- Since September 23rd, our student attendance rate has been 99.2%.
- Since October 2nd 97% of our students have passing averages in all subjects.
- The teacher attendance rate has been 99% since December 1st.

Muggability

- Research from Central Park
- Avoiding the finger
- Blurted answers
- Supporting schoolwide rules
- Student behavior and unintended muggability messages



**Muggability
That Hinders
Connections**

Define Your School

School reputations don't just happen. They occur as a result of the school culture that makes students and staff want to connect to us...or leave us!

- Clearly defining who you are (or want to be) is essential in helping students connect to the school
- Establishing school norms
- Touchstones and how to use them
- The importance of publicizing them.
- Defining through traditions. Do the traditions align with the reputation you wish to establish?
- Creating and using Honor Codes
- Honor Codes in athletics

Character Building: Why Again and Why Now?



Reminds us how to treat one another in an "angry world"



Improves the emotional well-being of students and staff, behavior, and achievement



Decreases the incidents of school violence and bullying



Invites students to model the values important to your school and the school families



Done well, does not become a "one more thing on the plate"

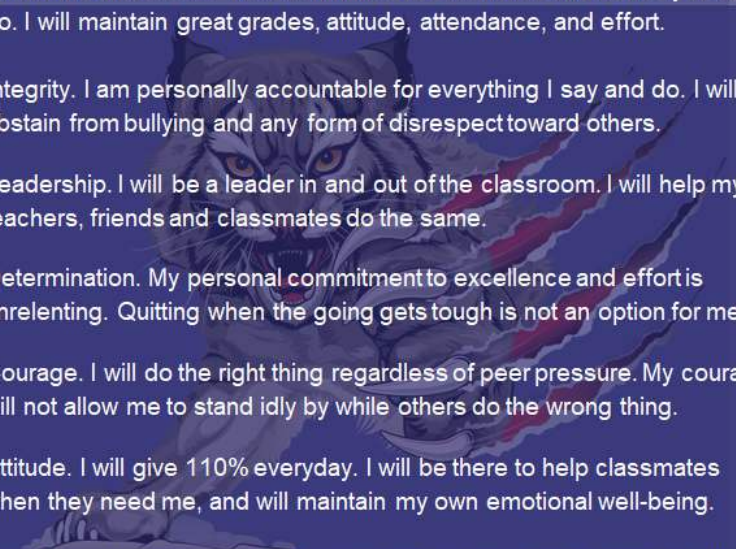


Works best with a deliberate focus



Is amplified by using the school mascot

Using School Mascots to Focus on Character

- 
- W Win in the classroom. I am committed to excellence and honesty in all I do. I will maintain great grades, attitude, attendance, and effort.
 - I Integrity. I am personally accountable for everything I say and do. I will abstain from bullying and any form of disrespect toward others.
 - L Leadership. I will be a leader in and out of the classroom. I will help my teachers, friends and classmates do the same.
 - D Determination. My personal commitment to excellence and effort is unrelenting. Quitting when the going gets tough is not an option for me.
 - C Courage. I will do the right thing regardless of peer pressure. My courage will not allow me to stand idly by while others do the wrong thing.
 - A Attitude. I will give 110% everyday. I will be there to help classmates when they need me, and will maintain my own emotional well-being.
 - T Team first. I will make family, friends, and school priority in my life. I will present a positive image of our school and help keep it safe.

Reconnecting to lost learning

- Crickets...
- The amygdala and learning
- Creating brain post-it notes
- Novelty and bait
- The power of thoughts, cortisol and the horse



Instructional Connection: 50 Shades of Gray Matter

Connections, School Safety, and Emotional Support

2022 Education Week Survey

- 33% of teachers threatened verbally
- 43% wanting to quit because of violence
- 43% of administrators threatened

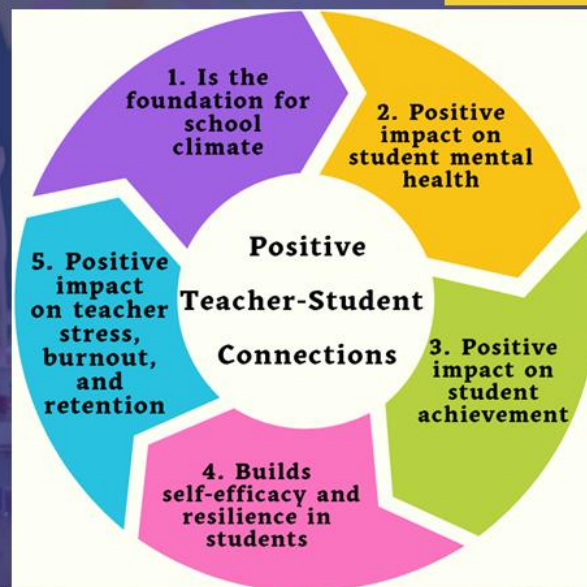
Connections and climate impact safety!

Emotional support for teachers...

When and How

Where Do We
Go For
Answers?

It's All About
Connections
and Climate!



About The Presenter

Bill Parsons is a nationally recognized principal and motivational speaker who understands the importance of educating and developing individuals and schools for sustained success. Bill has over thirty years of experience as a teacher, principal, and a school system leader. As a middle school teacher, he was selected as Teacher of the Year twice and was a top ten finalist for Georgia State Teacher of the Year. He served as middle school assistant principal at the same school he taught at for seven years.

As an elementary school principal, he developed Georgia's first character education program, was awarded an Innovative Schools Grant to create the school's first pre-kindergarten program, created multi-age classrooms, and implemented parallel-block scheduling that led to dramatic increases in student achievement, and significant decreases in discipline. His work there was featured in the Georgia Voyager magazine, Journal for the Georgia Association of Elementary Principals, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, and Journal for the Georgia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. During this time Bill was awarded as the Troup County Citizen of the Year and received the Troup County Community Leadership Award.



As a high school principal, he began student mentorship programs, and teacher/student leadership teams that changed the entire culture of the school and increased achievement. During this time, he was selected as Georgia State Citizen of the Year, and nominated for the Milken National Educator of the Year. Bill also received the LaGrange College Most Distinguished Alumni Award, and West Georgia Youth Leadership Award. Bill received personal commendations from three different SACS accreditation teams for transforming school climate and innovative leadership. His work was featured in numerous publications including *Smart and Good High Schools*, Excellence and Ethics newsletter, Page One Magazine, and The Fourth and Fifth R's.

As an Assistant Superintendent, he mentored principals and was responsible for systemic planning that addressed school climate and school safety. During this time, he received the Georgia State Educational Leadership Award, was chosen to serve on the Seventh Congressional District At-Risk Youth Partnership, and served on the State of Georgia Leadership in School Improvement Task Force. Bill wrote the school safety, gang, and weapons protocols for Troup County School System, and was selected by RESA to train school resource officers.

Bill has spoken at hundreds of state and national workshops motivating teachers and school leaders. Two of those presentations included being the keynote speaker at the *International Conference on the Family* in Monterrey, Mexico, and the *Canadian Educational Leadership Conference* in Ontario, Canada. Bill is best known for his proven experience, humor, passion, and ability to motivate educators.

Learn more about Bill at:
www.helpinggreatschools.com



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