

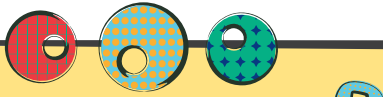


# Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

## 24. BONDING TO SCHOOL

Young person cares about her or his school.



### What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

**Bonding to school** is one of five commitment-to-learning assets.

52% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.\*

\*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Engage students in creating a strong school climate.
- Consider how the physical surroundings affect emotional responses.
- Encourage staff to be energized by students.
- Make the school a second home for all.

### Making School a Welcoming Place

Teachers are motivated to be at school because it's our career choice and we're making a living at it. But why should kids come to school if they get no positive energy from being there?

The most powerful moments of bonding occur

when students feel safe, comfortable, and sometimes even joyful to be in school. This most often happens when students feel they have taken an active part in creating a strong school climate.

To do that, consider the following:

- Allow student artists to create murals.
- Get kids to create outdoor spaces that are inviting gathering places.
- If you can't change the architecture, figure out how to embrace it or disguise it.
- Remember that comfortable spaces inside don't necessarily mean a lack of discipline.



Also remember the emotional component of being in school. Try to energize students by being engaged yourself. Let students draw on your enjoyment of being there and they will begin to enjoy being there too.

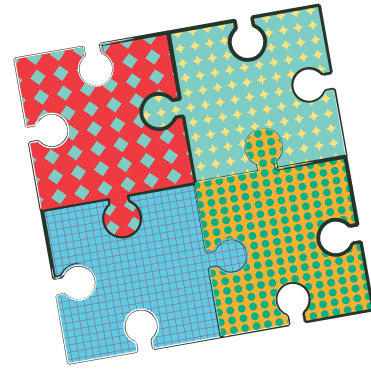
Most importantly, find common ground between what students and staff want the school to look like and feel like. Begin to work with that common vision, and as long as the students are copilots, the school will gain new life.

## What's So Great about School?

In this discussion, “bonding to school” really means “caring about school”—a hard thing to define. Think about these questions:

- ⦿ What are the specific elements of your job that bring you joy and satisfaction?
- ⦿ What are the specific elements of your job that cause you stress or frustration?

These two questions are going to go a long way toward clarifying your feelings about your school. But what's even more important is how you go about increasing the things you like and decreasing the things that cause you stress.



To that end, what specific goal can you set that will increase your exposure to the things that help you feel sustained and energized by your work?

And what specific goal can you set that will decrease your exposure to elements that sap you of energy and job satisfaction?