

# Authentic Student Engagement Strategies

- Do you use positive framing: “Trey, I see you want to talk today, but we need to stay on target so everyone can learn...as opposed to “stop talking.”
- Do you walk near Jose within physical proximity at least 1x per class period and ask, “how are you doing” or “do you need any help?”
- Do you help Keyshawn to just get started/end in a positive fashion during class time?
- Have you gone the restorative route first when challenged.. “tell me what’s going on, as opposed to “stop, quit, don’t, etc.?”
- Are you complimenting the child on their clothes, hair, on-task behavior, something/anything that maintains some level of positive regard?
- Do you say please/thank you to the student along with other niceties?
- Have you written a short note that the student can take home that says, “I care about you...let’s try again tomorrow” (always give the student and yourself a chance to redeem)!
- Have you given the student a piece of candy, a picture of themselves, or a pat on the back?
- Do you apologize for harboring hard feelings (i.e., “yesterday I wasn’t patient-can we both work on being patient with each other one day at a time?”)
- Have you asked, “do you like my lessons....do you like how I teach?”
- Do you really believe that \_\_\_\_\_ is inherently good?
- Are you conscious of your feelings that maintain positive regard, and your feelings that maintain the negative cycle?

## Authentic Student Engagement Strategies Homework

Try at least one of the authentic student engagement items communicated by students in a study 1-2 times per week to create a web of positive student-teacher connect.

1. Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help you put books away, repeat class rules, move items around in the classroom, etc.
2. Ask \_\_\_\_\_ to draw a picture of his/her family that you will post in the classroom near your desk.
3. Tell \_\_\_\_\_ he/she is a leader, and leaders act this way. “If I give you a job as a leader, how could you show you are a leader in the classroom?”
4. Call \_\_\_\_\_’s parent/guardian and instead of the negative message parents often receive; ask the parent, “what works best with \_\_\_\_\_ at home, how do you discipline him/her, what motivates them, what does your student tell you about my classroom/ and/or the school? Communicate a positive message about the child during this contact..... Even better-conduct a home visit in which you connect with the student in their authentic environment.
5. Ask, “what makes you happy?” “What do you like to eat?” “What is your favorite television show?” (discuss the show or food after the weekend).
6. Ask, “who are your favorite teachers in the building and why?”

**The recommendations on this page for teachers to consider in developing relationships that foster positive classrooms were developed by high school students during a study on the lessons Students of Color most connect with and enjoy**

**Think about your most challenging students  
Have You:**

- Ever had a one-on-one conversation with your students to develop the relationship?
- Asked about the student's life, community, siblings, interests, and home life, etc?
- Asked, "how do you learn...what works best for you?"
- Acted in a way that we would describe as "real" and "straight?"
- Worked out any disagreements after they happened-to make sure you and the student were okay after the problem?
- Consulted, worked with, and asked the student's parents what is the best way to support, relate to, or teach them?
- Learned how to listen to feelings that were strong, loudly verbalized, angry, or harsh before you shut down the communication?
- "Put your feet in someone else's Jordan's?"
- Busted your students down with love and kindness?
- Related to the student as a kid—and not as a big angry monster or criminal?
- Acted as a parent, mediator, grandmother, etc., in relationship to your students?
- Shown that you believe the student is capable and smart?
- Shown that you liked the student?
- Ever complimented students on their hair, clothes, skills, or unfamiliar cultural ways?
- Regularly called on the student for their input/suggestions during class?
- Made sure your lessons are interesting to the students you are teaching?
- Developed a special job or task for the student to engage and excel in?
- Not shown fear—but have shown love in your eyes (even when challenged or afraid)?

