

Great Stories about Getting Students Caught Up

Providing encouragement

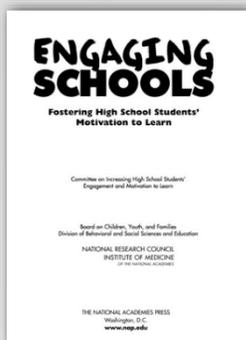
Knowing that you're behind in school is discouraging and discouragement can easily undermine the motivation you need to get caught up. See how this Fellow was able to instill a more optimistic perspective in one of her youths.

I could see the relief in his face. It was during our first one-on-one intervention. I sat down with him for an hour and got to know him, his hobbies, if he was getting fresh air, exercise, enough sleep, support from family. I asked him what he needed help with. Organization was his first concern, as it is with many 9th and 10th graders. After determining that his family could afford to buy school supplies, I helped him make a list of everything he needed. It was Friday, we made a plan to meet Monday to label and assemble his new binder. I helped identify the importance of paying attention and writing down notes in class. I told him we were going to work with his teachers to get all the partial credit he could get, we were going to re-take tests. I told him we were going to catch him up and then help him stay on track.



*We were talking about why it's hard to go to school and he pointed out it's hard to go to school when you know you have bad grades. I told him that we were going to have him caught up in a week and once his grades were up - he was going to look forward to school. Truth is - If he commits we could very well catch up in a week, maybe he will never like school, maybe all my effort won't be enough to keep him on track, but **I offered him a perspective which he wasn't getting anywhere else in his life, like a light at the end of the tunnel.** I could see it and I offered it to him. I guided him to that light and I am interested to see this year develop with this student. I know my student walked away with the feeling that he had a new caring adult in his life.*

Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students' Motivation to Learn, *National Research Council*



"...evidence suggests that student engagement and learning are fostered by a school climate characterized by an ethic of caring and supportive relationships; respect, fairness, and trust; and teachers' sense of shared responsibility and efficacy related to student learning. The evidence is clear, however, that a communitarian climate is not sufficient to increase academic engagement and learning. Equally important is a focus on learning and high expectations for student achievement or 'academic press'

The term 'academic press' does not mean 'pressure.' Press means focusing students' attention on genuine learning (rather than simply going through the motions). **Teachers 'press' students to learn by encouraging them, by paying attention to their work and giving constructive feedback, by not accepting low or half-hearted effort, by holding them accountable, by providing assistance when they need it, and by not giving up on them.**" (pp. 103-4)

[Click here for the full report.](#)