



# Staff Development Newsletter

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## Relationships, Rigor, Relevancy

The writers of the theme song of the sitcom “Cheers” tapped into the elemental human need for acknowledgment; everybody wants to go where everybody knows their name. That acknowledgment is embodied in the very first practice

listed in the Equitable Classroom Practices document created by the MCPS

Diversity Training and Development Team: in an equitable classroom, a teacher “welcomes students by name as they enter the classroom, and correctly pronounces students’ names.” Greeting a person by name is evidence of seeing them, and Ruth Charney connects this with student engagement in learning: “I realized that children need to be seen. It was a simple matter of safety and a more complex matter of recognition and trust... They need the safety that comes from the belief that

their teacher sees them, knows them. Mutual trust grows from this security. When all children feel seen, they are released to work.”

At the secondary level where a teacher may easily have over 150 students that he/she sees daily, it may seem a daunting task to greet every student by name. But it is also at the secondary level where a student might easily pass days without a single adult—and possibly a single person—speaking to him or her in school, and so it is more than worth the teacher’s effort to make this contact. Research has shown that a student’s sense of

connectedness to school has a positive impact on his or her achievement. “The ultimate goal of the school becomes one of creating an environment and culture that meets students’ basic needs,” Blankstein notes. He cites the research and prac-

tice of many, from William Glasser to Boys and Girls Clubs of America to tradition in the Sioux nation, who identify that basic student (indeed, human)



need: belonging, love, significance to others, acceptance. Blankstein points out a practice to address this need which he found in many of the high-performing schools and classrooms he studied: “greeting students warmly at classroom door.”

The positive impact of this practice is magnified when coupled with a school-wide systematic assurance that “every student is positively connected to an adult.”

Read more of this article: MCPS website, staff, departments, diversity team, tips.

Try this equitable partnering strategy (it also incorporates movement):

### FOLD THE LINE

Choose a method for lining up your students (birth month, first letter of their name, favorite color, etc.) Have them arrange themselves in order silently.

Take the student at one end of the line and “fold” that student over to the person at the other end of the line. You now have split the line with two students facing each other.

They can now engage in student discourse with the person standing in front of them!

### Did You Know???

- The sixth grade will be at Outdoor Education the week of January 14th?
- MSA is 40 school days away?
- January 22nd is a day to prepare grades and plan for the third marking period?

## Grading and Reporting

As we near the end of the second marking period, here are some gradebook procedures to be aware of:

- 1) Be sure you have at least one assignment in each category.
- 2) All Blanks and Zs must Be changed to Xs and Os
- 3) Watch your mailboxes for more details!

