



Caring School Community (CSC) Program



Who: Kindergarten through sixth grade; whole school

What: The Caring School Community program is a nationally recognized, research-based K–6 program that builds classroom and school wide community. It focuses on strengthening students’ connectedness to school—an important element for increasing academic motivation and achievement and for reducing drug use, violence, and delinquency. CSC staff development emphasis is on enhancing teachers’ instructional strategy skills, integrating facilitation techniques and cooperative structures into content area instruction.

CSC consists of four components that work together to build the whole school community.

- Class Meetings – Whole class meetings where teachers use facilitation skills to engage students and give them a more meaningful voice in the classroom. Students learn how to set class norms and goals, create plans, make decisions and solve problems related to classroom life and instruction; how to better understand and empathize with other students through real experiences.
- Cross-Age Buddies – Activities that create respectful relationships between older and younger students. Students learn how to give and receive help and how to experience themselves as caring and competent individuals through content instruction activities.
- Homeside Activities – Activities that create a cycle of learning that connect the classroom and the home. Students learn the experiences and perspectives of other families and cultures.
- Schoolwide Activities – Whole school collaborative activities that can be used to promote academic growth and school wide community; ways to link students, parents, the school, and the community-at-large. Students learn how to help and take responsibility, how to collaborate with one another and how to appreciate cultural differences.

Why: Studies have shown that the most effective classrooms and schools are those with a strong sense of community – where children feel they have some influence or control over their behavior and where others care about and are responsive to their needs. Students who feel connected to their school perform better academically and are less likely to engage in problem behaviors than their counterparts who feel disconnected from their school. Educators and researchers say:

- Children thrive in caring school communities
- Children learn when their basic needs are met
- Students’ connectedness to school affects their behavior
- Competitive situations make learning more difficult
- Children seek social support to learn the skills of their culture

How: School staffs must participate in the following CSC professional development:

- 1-day CSC overview workshop
- 4 follow-up staff meetings
- 6 observation/coaching sessions
- 5 principal meetings
- Monthly school community leadership team meetings

Contact:

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