**Culture of Achievement Resources: Relationships & Investment**

*Back to School Edition*

*Purpose*: In order to create long lasting and enduring academic and personal growth for students, your classroom culture must be passionate, urgent, and joyful. Using this document to guide your thinking will help you navigate all things “first days of school” related, including building relationships with students and families as well as building investment among your students.

As you review all three parts of this guide, be sure to complete and/or answer all of the statements/questions in **green**. If you would like additional guidance, feel free to click on the various links embedded throughout to get ideas and examples of resources that other teachers have used. Please note, not every question has embedded links/resources and many links will direct you to TFAnet. It is suggested that you log into TFAnet and then click on the hyperlinks.

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| **Read through the Culture of Achievement description of passionate, urgent, and joyful below. Then, use that description as you complete the remainder of this guide.** |
| **Passionate, urgent, and joyful** | *We see the following types of observable student actions, behaviors & mindsets for all (100%) students in the class:*This classroom has an *exemplary* Culture of Achievement because the incredibly high expectations, effort and motivation are truly owned by the students. Students are passionate, urgent, joyful, caring and “on a mission” towards a destination that matters to them. They have deep conviction in the destination for the year, understand the role it will play in their future aspirations and can make authentic connections to the importance of daily objectives in reaching both short *(i.e. end of summer or end of course goals)* and long term goals. This conviction drives an incredibly high level of urgency, where students are the drivers of high expectations and high levels of engagement. Students know and trust their teacher and peers because they feel safe, cared for and valued in the learning environment. They are excited to come to class and genuinely don’t want to miss a moment of class time because they feel the joy of learning in a positive classroom community. Students are actively building the intrinsic motivation, confidence and character that will empower them to achieve enduring success. |

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| **Get more specific:** Based on your initial reflections on your vision and reading the description above, what do you want your classroom to look like, sound like, and feel like this year? *(Suggestion: Consider writing this from the perspective of a visitor. What would you want to see students doing and saying?)* |
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| **Part 1: Building Relationships and Creating a Welcoming Environment with Students** |
| *Students know and trust their teacher and peers because they feel safe, cared for and valued in the learning environment. They are excited to come to class and genuinely don’t want to miss a moment of class time because they feel the joy of learning in a positive classroom community.* |
| **How will you let students get to know you?:** * [10 Creative Ways to Introduce Yourself to Students](http://www.weareteachers.com/community/blogs/weareteachersblog/blog-wat/2012/08/20/10-creative-ways-to-introduce-yourself-to-your-students)
* See how these teachers shared a bit about themselves in their “First Day” PowerPoint:
	+ [Who is Miss Eastman?](http://www.tfanet.org/net/myportal/tfanet/teaching/resourceexchange/nonav/resourceprofile?resource_id=58c2446fda58af7f:392e4a21:11bc3902a56:-7f80)
	+ [First Day of School PowerPoint](http://www.tfanet.org/net/myportal/tfanet/teaching/resourceexchange/nonav/resourceprofile?resource_id=5799cdc27f45d431:-47b8e6:12c368ae9fe:-7a6c)
* Have different family members or friends interview you using questions from your student survey and then play it for the class on the first day of school. To jazz it up you can explain who they are and show a picture of them with each new question/speaker.
* Answer your student survey and print copies of your completed survey out for students.
* This [link](http://culturallyresponsiveteaching.weebly.com/relationships-interactions-with-who-you-teach.html) can be used for this question and many of the questions below and is created with Culturally Responsive Teaching in mind.
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| **How will you get to know students?:** * Student Survey Examples:

   * While students are doing things like taking diagnostics, schedule mini-meetings with students to go over the survey they completed and share any commonalities between you and the student and/or ask questions to learn more about them. That way, they see that you’re actually reading and using the survey ☺
* For videos of teachers building relationships with students and with families, check out this page of the [Culture Chronicles](http://culture.tfateams.org/building-relationships#family-relationships)!
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| **How will students get to know each other?:** * A Collection of 25 Activities for the First Day/Week of School:

* Have students create a “Coat of Arms” or [“Identity Quilt”](http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/stitching-it-together) and then share them with one another in small groups.

 * Have students write a [“Six Word Story”](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/16/six-word-story_n_5332833.html) and have a few students share them each day with the whole class. Or, have them illustrate it as well – [“Illustrated Six-Word Memoirs”](http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2013/01/09/six-word-memoirs-students/)
* Other links that have resources and activities for students to get to know one another:
	+ [How Well Do Your Students Know Each Other](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/how-well-do-your-students-know-each-other)
	+ [Back to School: 3 Question Activities to Connect Students](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/back-to-school-question-activities-students-maurice-elias)
	+ [Conversation Jenga](http://media-cache-cd0.pinimg.com/originals/42/dd/ae/42ddae97c82eff5a7e17d20194e38fb7.jpg)
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| **How will you create a sense of “team” and celebration of peers in your classroom?:** Creating Team* [Cup Challenge: Thursday August 22, 2013”](http://inthemiddle7thgradeela.blogspot.com/)
* [Marshmallow Challenge](http://marshmallowchallenge.com/TED_Talk.html)
* [Pasta Master](http://greatsolutions.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/pasta-master.html)

Celebrating Students & One Another* Create a “Twitter Board” where you and students can tweet/shout out one another. Here are another [“60 Ways To Use Twitter In the Classroom](http://www.teachthought.com/social-media/60-ways-to-use-twitter-in-the-classroom-by-category/)” if you’re interested!
* Feature a “Student of the Week” and create a certificate of some sort for them. You can also send home a parent letter like the one below. “Student of the Week” can still be done in high school!

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| **Why is a safe environment important for learning? How will you communicate that with students?:** |

**Be sure to continue on to Part 2: Building Relationships with Families & Influencers (a separate document).**