



# Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students' Motivation to Learn

*Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn, Youth and Families  
Board on Children, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council*

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When it comes to motivating people to learn, disadvantaged urban adolescents are usually perceived as a hard sell. Yet, in a recent MetLife survey, 89 percent of the low-income students claimed "I really want to learn" applied to them.

What is it about the school environment—"pedagogy, curriculum, climate, organization"—that encourages or discourages engagement in school activities? How do peers, family, and community affect adolescents' attitudes towards learning? **Engaging Schools** reviews current research on what shapes adolescents' school engagement and motivation to learn—including new findings on students' sense of belonging—and looks at ways these can be used to reform urban high schools.

This book discusses what changes hold the greatest promise for increasing students' motivation to learn in these schools. It looks at various approaches to reform through different methods of instruction and assessment, adjustments in school size, vocational teaching, and other key areas. Examples of innovative schools, classrooms, and out-of-school programs that have proved successful in getting high school kids excited about learning are also included.

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