

Generating Hope and Resiliency

WHOLE CHILD and FAMILY SUPPORTS

GENERATING HOPE AND RESILIENCY WHILE REOPENING

Creating an optimistic mood and a sense of excitement is key to a successful return to school for everyone in the school community. Welcoming and supportive activities highlight how much everyone is valued and the critical role they play. Thoughtful planning, an exciting agenda, and new opportunities for engagement can help increase hope and resiliency as staff and students return to school for the new year.

All welcome-back activities should be embedded with an emphasis on hope as a cognitive process and psychological strength (Hellman & Gwinn, 2019).

- Hope is having a **goal**;
- Seeing the **pathways** to achieve the goal;
- Having the mental energy or motivation to travel down the pathways despite obstacles. This is considered **agency**.

University of Oklahoma, [Hope Research Center](#)

Consider a Kickoff Renewal Planning Group to plan several kick-off events

Keynote presentations by leadership that focus on renewal and hope, followed by small discussion groups focused on ways each stakeholder plays a role in making renewal a reality.

Welcoming events for staff, families, students, and community members.



Provide transition supports for students during the first week and as needed.



Use buddy/mentor systems to support new students until they are functioning effectively.



Substantive orientations for new teachers, staff, families, students, and volunteers.



Welcoming events should focus on celebration and relationship-building!

Publicize to stakeholders what makes the upcoming year so special.
Email Announcement, Mailer, Handout, Brief Video

Events adhere to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How do we celebrate the return of our staff and students to reduce anxieties associated with returning to learn?

What new traditions can we start that give our staff and students opportunities to develop/increase hope and resiliency?

How can leadership/school teams empower staff and stakeholder voices to collaborate in creating meaningful kickoff events that get students and families excited about the new school year?

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INCREASING HOPE AND RESILIENCY WHILE RE-ENGAGING STUDENTS IMPACTED BY INSTRUCTIONAL INTERRUPTION

Understand students' mindset and the difference between the learning brain and the survival brain. [This video](#) explains that when students are functioning within their survival brain, their learning brain is not engaged. Adults can help students shift back to their learning brain by creating safe environments and introducing regulatory activities.

Resilience is the ability to overcome adversity and cope in a positive and adaptive way. It is a resource that is never exhausted and turns potential toxic stress into tolerable stress. [National Scientific Council on the Developing Child](#), 2015.

Resilience is developed through the context of supportive relationships (see [How Resilience is Built](#)).



- ❑ Resilience can be taught and strengthened at any age.
- ❑ Educators can use [Social Emotional Learning](#) to teach resilience.

Ways to increase resilience and empower students:


- ❑ Personalization and differentiation will be key during school reopening.
- ❑ Provide students opportunities for voice and choice. Allowing student choice instills a sense of hope and control over the future, thus increasing a sense of safety.
- ❑ Engage students by ensuring instructional approaches honor students' needs, circumstances, and interests.
- ❑ Students must perceive the tasks given to them as attainable and worthy of their participation.

LEARNING BRAIN VERSUS SURVIVAL BRAIN

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' MINDSET

 <p>Neocortex, also known as the rational brain, is responsible for higher functions such as language, sensory perception, spatial reasoning and conscious thought.</p>	 <p>Survival brain, also known as the limbic and reptilian/brain stem, controls emotions, memory, attention and basic life functions.</p>
Open to new information and comfortable with ambiguity. Is ready for learning, can be trained and strengthened.	The survival brain is concerned with self-preservation, fear and the protective response of flight, fight or freeze. It doesn't like ambiguity.
The neocortex is flexible, malleable and has the capacity for infinite learning.	Survival brain is soothed by safety, provision of basic needs and healthy connections.

Ham, J. 2017
"Help for Billy," Forbes, H. 2012



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