Core Function → **Personalized Learning: Motivational Competency**

Effective Practice → Promoting a growth mindset, stretching students' interest, connecting learning to student aspirations, and differentiating instruction to enhance students' engagement and persistence with learning

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Indicator: All staff conducting co-curricular programs fulfill the purposes of the programs including appropriate elements of student motivation to learn. (E4)

Explanation: The evidence suggests that co-curricular program staff should also be knowledgeable about the Motivational Competency and ways in which to implement it in their academic activities. Co-curricular programs can reinforce and expand on the habits and knowledge that students are learning in the school day and encourage them to engage more fully. The more opportunities for students to be exposed to and practice the development of a growth mindset, resilience, and engagement, the more likely they will be to carry those beliefs and tools over to their regular academic pursuits.

Questions: How are co-curricular programs aligned to the curriculum and practices of the school day? In what ways are co-curricular and school-day staff communicating to ensure that they are best collaborating for student success? How are co-curricular staff being trained on the Motivational Competency? In what ways are co-curricular staff encouraging growth mindset and other motivational concepts?

What is the Motivational Competency?

The Motivational Competency explains why students engage with learning, how hard they will work on a particular task, and why they do or do not persevere to achieve their goals (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Headden & McKay, 2015; Redding, 2016). Usher and Kober (2012) identify four dimensions of motivation: competence, control/autonomy, interest/value, and relatedness. Toshalis and Nakkula (2012) write that, "we are motivated to devote energy to those activities in which we expect to succeed, and we subsequently tend to value those activities over others" (p. 10). If a student feels capable of accomplishing the task before them, they will be more likely to deeply engage in the work and persist.

This internal, or intrinsic, motivation also occurs when students truly enjoy or are interested in their work or goals (Redding, 2006). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) explain:

> Motivation is wanting to do one task when there are competing tasks available. The learner believes that the task is important and has a belief in his or her ability to master the task through dedication and hard work. The learner persists even when mastering the task becomes difficult. (p. 8)

Many other factors affect a student's level of motivation – including their familial or social context, the classroom environment, and the degree to which teachers create an environment of mastery learning (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Headden & McKay, 2015; Redding, 2016). This concept of relatedness may not be as intuitive for teachers and parents to understand and foster collaboratively (Usher & Kober, 2012). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) outline a number of strategies that teachers can use to boost their students' motivational competency, including expressing confidence in their students' ability to complete and succeed in the work, sparking students' interest in

lessons by starting with a related but fun activity, providing encouragement and support for students to keep going, and allowing students to make decisions about project groups or topics. Redding (2006) also highlights ways that teachers can balance high expectations with a culture of caring, ensuring that students feel known, cared about, and recognized for their efforts.

Recognition for effort, as opposed to commendations for innate ability, is a critical piece of developing a growth mindset. Headden and McKay (2015) explain that students with a growth mindset "believe that with effort, their ability and performance can improve… The positive attitude prepares them for the realities of later life, helping them recover when their efforts fail to produce the outcomes they have come to expect" (p. 8). In contrast, students who have been rewarded and commended simply for being smart tend to have a fixed mindset, leading them to believe that their efforts are inconsequential and that they will simply either be good or bad at a given task (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Headden & McKay, 2015).

Consequently, teachers who focus on student effort and mastery of a goal, instead of performance on a test or a grade on a report card, are more likely to foster a growth mindset and consequently, higher levels of motivation, for their students (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Usher & Kober, 2012). This type of mindset can also be developed in the home, as a result of parental expectations, attitudes, and habits, making it even more important for schools to engage families in their children's learning and provide them with strategies that they can use at home.

How Can the Staff of Co-Curricular Programs Work to Promote the Motivational Competency?

The school day is not the only time that students are receiving academic instruction and interventions. Saturday academies, summer school, and extended school years, as well as traditional after-school time are all co-curricular opportunities for students to learn. During these times, opportunities can be made available to students who need enrichment, academic intervention, and social supports. In addition to schools, it is common to see these programs run by community centers, churches, and non-profit agencies (Closing the Gap, 2008).

Therefore, teachers and parents are not the only adults involved in children's educational experiences and not the only ones who can help students continue to learn and grow. Through co-curricular programs and community activities, there are many other adults willing to help students however they can. These adults can provide additional academic and emotional supports for students, but for them to be most effective, they need to be familiar with the goals, content, and strategies of the classroom. The onus is on the school to fully integrate these partners and treat them as equals and meaningful contributors in the task of educating children (Bayerl, 2014).

Beckett, et al. (2009) present a set of recommended strategies for maximizing the effect of educational activities outside of the classroom. Although these recommendations are primarily for programs serving elementary and middle school students in disadvantaged communities, the wider applicability of these recommendations can be helpful for high school programs as well. The most applicable suggestions for the Motivational Competency are for schools and providers to adapt the program to meet the needs, preferences, and attendance habits of students and families, as this will maximize their level of engagement. They also encourage programs to connect learning experiences to real-life, offer collaborative activities, and develop positive relationships to increase student interest and engagement. These connections allow program staff to provide a supportive, non-school environment where students can practice and hone their academic skills and knowledge in a more hands-on and applicable manner.

The Afterschool Alliance (2009) also found that the nature and structure of many after-school programs naturally provide many of the elements that have been shown to better engage youth in school, such as individualized tutoring and mentoring and a wide range of curricular areas. Hartmann, et al. (2011) also talk about how many elements of after-school programs – positive relationships with caring adults and peers, opportunities for small successes, and academic improvement – encourage the concept of positive identity development for teens, which in turn leads to more resilience and success in high school and beyond. By encouraging co-curricular program staff to also build and reinforce the practices

of the Motivational Competency within their program activities, students will have even greater opportunities to turn their practices and personal beliefs into learning habits and to feel motivated to continue their academic pursuits.

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