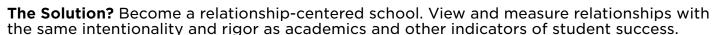# RELATIONSHIPS WITH CARING ADULTS ARE A KEY PART OF THE STUDENT SUCCESS PUZZLE

Research shows that young people with a mentor are 55% more likely to be enrolled in college, and are 130% more likely to hold a leadership position in a club or sports team.

But, the relationships that young people have with adults in school systems are not equitable. While some students report many caring adult relationships, some students don't have any.

The Solution? Become a relationship-centered school. View and measure relationships with the same intentionality and rigor as academics and other indicators of student success.

HOW TO BECOME A RELATIONSHIP-CENTERED SCHOOL: A SNAPSHOT

1. Prepare Your Community

- Normalize asking your students about their social and supportive networks and experiences.
- Get feedback from your students, making sure their diverse identities are honored and their suggestions are implemented in the process.

2. Train Faculty and Staff with a [Critical Mentoring Agenda](#)

- Address factors like race, class, sexuality, and gender as they contribute to students' identities.
- Recognize the assets in both students' existing networks and identities while providing deliberate opportunities for both youth and adults to celebrate the strengths, cultures, and values within that network.

3. Identify How Well You Know ALL of Your Students

- [With student rosters, stickers, or a contact database,](#) work with staff (teachers, administrators, and support staff) to understand how well they know students in the school. The range of students' relationships will emerge through patterns.
- Identify students who lack trusting relationships with adults or faculty and direct additional connections and resources.

4. Understand Your Students' [Webs of Support](#)

- Provide students the opportunity to identify adults and peers, in and out of school, who provide them the support they need to be successful and meet their goals.
- Ensure there are channels for the members of that web to communicate with one another to best support students.

5. Use Meaningful Metrics

- Quantify and track relationships over time alongside academic metrics. Measure:
  - The number of connections a student has with adults in school.
  - The degree of student trust in and satisfaction with existing relationships.
  - Students' relationship skills, including the ability to engage or re-engage with individuals in their network.

MENTOR has the resources and supports to guide you through the steps of becoming a relationship-centered school. To learn more about the process, contact [Dudney Sylla](#) or learn about starting or enhancing a youth mentoring program through the [OJJDP National Mentoring Resource Center.](#)

Christensen Institute's [5 Steps for Building & Strengthening Students' Networks](#)

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