



Research on Effective Schools

In the past two decades substantial attention has been given to studying effective schools (See the work of Ron Edmunds, Larry Lezotte, John Goodlad). While no universal blueprint exists, some generalizations can be drawn from the myriad of research studies available. The exact causal nature of these characteristics is difficult to determine. However, the presence of certain specific traits are found in the most outstanding schools. The following characteristics have been identified as exemplifying the most effective schools:

- The professional staff is committed to the belief that all students can learn.
- Teachers hold high expectations for their students. Teachers also believe that their efforts do make a difference in the lives of their students.
- Students believe that their success in school is related to how hard they work.
- The principal functions as an instructional leader. They are able to set high goals for their buildings and to inspire the staff to move toward those goals.
- A safe and orderly school environment is provided.
- Continued professional development is encouraged and facilitated.
- Firm, consistent and fair enforcement of appropriate student behavior is emphasized. Disruptive and dangerous behaviors are not tolerated. Rules and expectations are clearly communicated to all.
- A climate of cooperation exists among the staff. The faculty works as a team. Collaboration becomes part of the school culture. Mutually supportive relationships exist between the principal and the staff.
- Students exhibit a high level of school spirit. They identify with their school and feel good about attending their school.
- Academic learning time is safeguarded. Frivolous interruptions of class activities are minimized.
- Parents feel welcome in the school. The community is supportive of their schools
- Student progress is systematically monitored.
- Staff input into instructional decisions is invited.
- Students' level of on-task behavior is relatively high.
- An emphasis is placed upon developing basic academic skills in students.
- Continuity of instruction from one grade level to the next is emphasized.

"Faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof."

John Kenneth Galbraith

Source: Partin, R. L. (1995). *Classroom teacher's survival guide*. West Nyack, NY: The Center for Applied Research in Education.