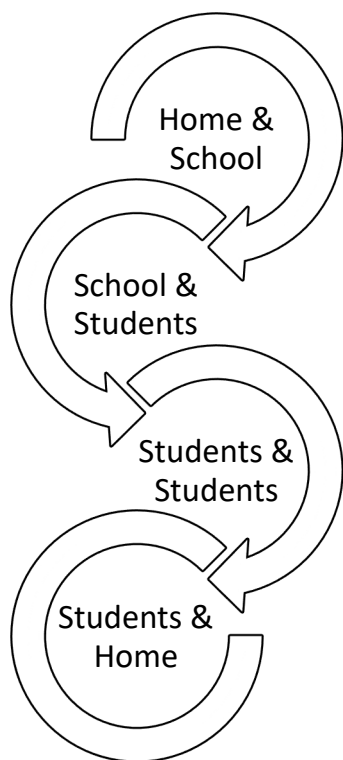


Overview of School Connections

School connectedness is defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as “the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals”. Research on school connectedness demonstrates:

- It is a strong protective factor against substance abuse, absenteeism, and violence.
- It is correlated to positive educational outcomes such as higher grades and test scores.
- Students who feel supported by adults in their lives demonstrate higher engagement in school & learning.

Student connectedness has several layers to consider, **home & school**, **school & students**, **students & students**, and **students & home**. Schools should implement intentional activities to strengthen each of these areas.



Invite & Inform:

Parents and guardians are well informed regarding the core values of the school and are invited to engage in conversations and activities in the school setting.

Reach & Respond:

Students feel welcome in the school environment. Multiple staff know who they are, and students feel comfortable seeking out school staff for support.

Intentional Encounters:

Students feel accepted among their peers. They develop friendships and work cooperatively with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Building Community:

Families and students are provided opportunities to engage together in the school environment to learn and to build community with others.

The Ground Work framework provides recommended activities to support and strengthen these four aspects of school connection. During the initial implementation of Ground Work, it may be necessary for campus teams to choose just 1-2 activities for focus. In this case, it is recommended that teams start with the area of school & students connections.

