

## What Makes a School Successful?

Based on evidence from across America, there are several common components to successful schools (see resources listed below for more information):

### **1. High Expectations**

Successful schools are staffed by principals and teachers who expect every child to learn at high levels. Shared, rigorous expectations drive student achievement.

### **2. Standards**

Successful Schools set high academic standards that are well known to students, parents, and teachers.

### **3. Assessment and Performance**

Successful Schools focus on clear, measurable results aligned with their high academic standards. Schools engaging in data-driven assessment can report on student achievement and school performance in ways that make it possible for students, parents, and teachers to understand and act on the information.

### **4. Accountability**

State and local school systems should offer assistance to schools struggling to improve, reward strong results, and sanction persistently failing schools. All aspects of an accountability system should support sustained improvement.

### **5. Schoolhouse Leadership**

Successful Schools have leaders who instill teamwork and guide instruction to produce results for every student.

### **6. Teaching Quality**

In order for children to learn at high levels, they must have continual access to highly effective, caring teachers who meet high state standards.

### **7. Professional Development**

Teachers and administrators in successful schools continuously improve their knowledge and skills. The most effective professional development often takes place in the schoolhouse with teachers learning together and deepening their understanding of effective practice.

### **8. Tools for Learning**

Successful schools use textbooks, libraries, technology, and other resources to increase the knowledge, information, and productivity of students and teachers.

## **9. Parent Involvement**

Successful schools aggressively involve parents in the life of the school, making it possible for parents to support the learning process, influence decisions, and make choices about the children's education.

## **10. Early Learning Readiness**

Successful Schools are part of a network that provides high-quality pre-kindergarten education for disadvantaged children. Successful schools work with parents in addition to public and private agencies to help every child prepare for school.

## **11. Safety and Discipline**

Successful Schools provide a safe, well disciplined, and caring environment for student learning. They understand that unless students and teachers feel safe and secure, high achievement is not possible.

### **Resources:**

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| Alabama Best Practices Center:               | <a href="http://www.bestpracticescenter.org">www.bestpracticescenter.org</a> |
| Consortium for Policy Research in Education: | <a href="http://www.cpre.org">www.cpre.org</a>                               |
| Education Commission of the States:          | <a href="http://www.ecs.org">www.ecs.org</a>                                 |
| The Education Trust:                         | <a href="http://www.edtrust.org">www.edtrust.org</a>                         |
| Just for the Kids:                           | <a href="http://www.just4thekids.org">www.just4thekids.org</a>               |
| Southeast Center for Teaching Quality:       | <a href="http://www.teachingquality.org">www.teachingquality.org</a>         |
| United States Department of Education:       | <a href="http://www.ed.gov">www.ed.gov</a>                                   |