

# OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Definitions

Effective teaching and learning can only happen when an Optimal Learning Environment is in place. In an Optimal Learning Environment, the social and emotional elements of learning are prioritized and understood to be the foundation of academic success and personal well-being. Optimal Learning Environments begin with a positive, productive school climate and provide intellectually and emotionally safe, stimulating classroom communities that are personalized and co-constructed by adults and students. They are characterized by kind, caring, and respectful adult, adult-student, and peer relationships that cultivate a sense of belonging and foster academic, social, and emotional skills. Optimal Learning Environments reflect a belief that all students can achieve high standards. Within an Optimal Learning Environment, the diverse needs of each learner are addressed with an ever-present attention to equity and continuous academic, social, and emotional growth.

Domains



**Create Emotionally, Intellectually, and Physically Safe Environments**



**Provide Equitable, Culturally Responsive, and Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction**



**Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners**

Characteristics

- Positive **relationships** that are kind, caring, and respectful
- **Self-awareness** and healthy expression of emotions
- Expression of **reasoned thoughts** and ideas
- Focus on effort, supported **risk-taking**, and growth
- Co-created procedures, routines, and classroom design that support **safe and engaged** interactions

- Relevant, rigorous, **grade-appropriate content**
- Inclusive community where all aspects of **diversity and learner variability** are understood, expected, and welcomed
- **Learner agency** with feedback and opportunities for selfdirected learning
- Curiosity to seek others' **perspectives**

- **Individual strengths** leveraged to support academic, social, and emotional growth
- **Multiple pathways** to learn and demonstrate learning
- Learners supported in **productive struggle**
- **Scaffolded instruction** to meet needs of diverse learners