

## Glass Half Full: Motivating Your School Community

Whether in January your school is covered in snow or you are still enjoying 60-degree days, the beginning of the winter season can signal a downward spiral in a school community's general attitude. Credit it to the winter blues, the post-holiday slump, or the realization of the amount of teaching and learning that must be accomplished before the end of the school year.

Whatever the reason, the mid-year can be tough to keep energy levels high. But midyear is just the time when it is most important to recommit to the year's goals because the foundation has been laid and there is still a significant amount of time left to make serious gains. Here are some quotes and suggestions for motivating your school community.

### Motivating Students

*"If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you say about them."*

—Haim G. Ginott

*"The child benefits more from being valued than evaluated."*

—Don Dinkmeyer

*"All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."*

—Pablo Picasso

In many ways, students will be the easiest group in your school community to motivate because of their innate optimism. But if you notice a student in your school who has a changed behavior pattern, is socializing differently, or just doesn't seem to have the same level of enthusiasm, it is worth it to speak with that student's teacher or parent, or the student to find out what may be amiss. Sometimes a small change in a child's routine can affect his or her mood.

### Motivating Teachers

*"I am your student, Care for me, Teach me, Help me to be a good person. I will remember you forever."*

—Pat Kushen, student poet

*"I was still learning when I taught my last class."*

—Claude M. Fuess, educator

*"Unfortunately, teaching is often times like golf, so many bad shots in between the good. And those are the few shots that we need to remember."*

—Howard Nerero, fifth-grade teacher

During frustrating times, the best way for educators to rededicate themselves is to remember why they entered the profession in the first place. Teachers work on the front line with students, and revisiting a

successful class lesson, activity, or accomplishment can remind them of their purpose. Also, taking on a new challenge can help teachers invigorate their creativity.

### Motivating Yourself

*"You can't direct the wind, but you can adjust the sails."*

—Christophe Poizat

*"Leadership is the special quality which enables people to stand up and pull the rest of us over the horizon."*

—James L. Fisher

*"Good schools, like good families, celebrate and cherish diversity."*

—Deborah Meier, educator

Though school leaders experience the same upward and downward spirals that the rest of a school community experiences, they have the unique responsibility of leading schools, teachers, and students to high achievement. Susan C. Reynolds, former principal of Herman L. Horn Elementary School in Vinton, Virginia, focuses on recognizing and celebrating the positives, such as student and teacher accomplishments, school gains, and parent and community support. "Believe your team can succeed, share challenges and successes, and be reflective, continuing with what works and letting go of what doesn't," Reynolds says. ■

These unique quotes, and others, appear in Robert D. Ramsey's *Inspirational Quotes, Notes, & Anecdotes That Honor Teachers and Teaching* and Diane Hodges' *Quote This!: A Collection of Illustrated Quotes for Educators*. Both are available for purchase from the National Principals Resource Center at [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org).