



MESSAGING RECOMMENDATIONS: **Teachers**

The recommendations on this page are intended for people communicating directly with **teachers**. They are meant to support professionals, including teachers, instructional designers, district leaders, curriculum developers, content developers, and others who work to engage, motivate, and enable students to learn math.



ELEVATE STUDENT AGENCY: Messaging should elevate student agency and center students' emotions and experiences, which are critical to their math learning.

- Encourage teachers to be curious and empathize with students' emotions and experiences learning math, in part by positioning students as critical messengers.
- Share a range of first-person student stories that give teachers insight into students' emotional experiences learning math.
- Show teachers the barriers that discourage some students from seeking help and the impact teacher behavior has on students' learning environment.



ACKNOWLEDGE REAL-WORLD CONTEXT: Empathize with students, teachers, and parents by acknowledging and naming the real-world challenges they face.

- Acknowledge the constraints that teachers experience to help reduce their skepticism and make them more open to suggested changes (e.g., large class sizes, students with different levels of math knowledge and language proficiency, gaps in learning from COVID, pacing and curriculum requirements, student absences, etc.).



ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS IN MATH LEARNING: Normalize the emotional nature of learning math, and provide examples of how negative emotions can be reinterpreted.

- Encourage teachers to empathize with students' negative or mixed emotional experiences learning math by inviting teachers to reflect on their own math learning journeys and the emotions they experienced along the way.
- Use stories of peer teachers to show teachers they have a role in helping students reinterpret their emotions.
- Provide teachers with examples of concrete things they can say to students to help them reinterpret their emotions in real time, such as, "When you're feeling frustrated, confused, or overwhelmed, that's a signal to ask questions and get extra help."



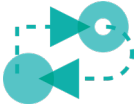
MAKE MATH RELEVANT: Deliver credible and motivational messaging on the relevance, value, and utility of higher-level math for students' lives, desired careers, and futures.

- Affirm that teachers are frequently asked about the relevance of math and find it challenging to provide answers that students find credible.
- Provide a range of examples about the relevance of math connected to contexts students understand, believe are real, and care about (e.g., keeping your career options open; financial literacy; having greater financial power).
- Frame messages about the relevance of math for students as a "toolbox" for teachers. A toolbox reinforces the idea that no single example of relevance will work for all students or for all teachers.



AFFIRM THE VALUE OF MISTAKES: Normalize making mistakes as an important and valuable part of learning, including learning math.

- Show teachers how to respond positively when students make mistakes and address negative emotions such as embarrassment or fear that students often experience when they make mistakes.
- Help teachers realize that students need to hear explicit messages that reframe making mistakes as a valuable part of the math learning process.



ENCOURAGE HELP-SEEKING: Build student confidence to seek the help they need to learn math and equip parents and teachers with messaging that supports and encourages students to seek help.

- Encourage teachers to understand better the barriers to seeking help that many students experience.
- Guide teachers to feel better equipped to encourage students to seek help. For example, you can share stories of peer teachers who have successfully created classroom environments where kids regularly ask for help.
- Motivate teachers to create an environment where students feel more comfortable asking questions



REFRAME STRUGGLE AND CAPABILITY: Reframe struggle from a sign of lacking capability to a sign of needing support.

- Encourage teachers to reflect on when and why they determine that some students are unable or less likely to be able to learn higher-level math, like algebra.
- Share stories of peer teachers who describe their own motivations to reconsider how they determine students' capability in the classroom.
- Share messages describing the challenges of teaching a class with students at different math proficiency levels and how peer teachers have successfully managed this range in their classrooms.



REASSESS ASSUMPTIONS: Encourage teachers to reexamine their assumptions about what certain student behaviors mean and the impact of students' negative emotions on their math learning experience.

- Encourage teachers to get curious about how students feel about learning math and the connection between student behaviors and student emotions. For example, ask teachers to reflect on the question, "What do I believe confusion and frustration look like in my students?" and, "How can I find out if something else is going on for this student?"
- Provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on how they interpret certain student behaviors.



PRIORITIZE BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: Show teachers the impact of their relationships with students on math learning and support them in prioritizing building relationships in their classrooms.

- Position building relationships as critical to learning math, an element of math learning that significantly helps students learn higher-level math effectively and successfully.
- Leverage teachers' desire to help their students to motivate and encourage teachers to take on and try out interventions.
- Show teachers how developing good relationships with students has a positive impact on their math learning and support teachers to prioritize building relationships with students in their classrooms.