

# A Crisis of Student Belonging

Belonging is a fundamental human need, yet American youth face an acute crisis of belonging that jeopardizes:

- ! Educational experiences
- ! Mental health
- ! Future success



**40%** of US high school students **do not feel connected to school**

## Students that feel ALIENATED

More likely to be **chronically absent**, which is a precursor to

- Bullying
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Detrimental health and social outcomes in adulthood

In over 1/2 of US high schools, **30% or more** students were **chronically absent** in the 2021–2022 academic year

Students with **mental health struggles** are **less likely to attend class**

A feeling of alienation can exacerbate rising levels of:

- Anxiety
- Depression, &
- Hospitalization for suicidal thoughts

In 2021 **1 OUT OF 10** high school students **attempted suicide**

More likely to have **detrimental health and social outcomes in adulthood**, including

- Drug abuse
- Mental health issues

## Students that feel a sense of BELONGING

More likely to exhibit **positive educational outcomes**, including:

- Higher attendance
- Higher graduation rates
- Better motivation
- Better classroom behavior

More likely to report higher rates of **happiness & self-esteem**

Have a **lower tendency towards drug abuse & mental health issues**

Show **lower tendencies towards violent behavior** in adulthood

More likely to **enroll in college**

## Schools Have a Duty to Help all Students Feel that They Belong

Research-backed practices include:



**Building a sense of connectedness** where students feel they are cared for by adults and peers



**Building curricula** that reflects student's diverse identities and teaches children how to manage their emotions



**Continually assessing students' sense of belonging**, then acting on opportunities to improve