

BEYOND ACADEMICS: PROMOTING LEARNERS' WELL-BEING IN SCHOOLS

by:

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Education is often associated with academic achievement, test scores, and intellectual development. However, true education goes beyond textbooks and examinations. It is about nurturing well-rounded individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also emotionally, socially, and physically healthy. In today's rapidly changing world, promoting learners' well-being in schools has become more important than ever. Schools are not just centers of learning; they are also safe spaces where learners should feel supported, valued, and empowered.

The well-being of learners directly impacts their ability to learn, interact with others, and navigate the challenges of life. When learners are mentally, emotionally, and physically well, they perform better academically and develop essential life skills. Schools must therefore prioritize learner well-being alongside academic excellence to ensure a holistic approach to education. According to the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the emotional and psychological state of a learner is just as critical as academic achievements in ensuring overall development (IBE, 2021).

Learner well-being refers to the overall health and happiness of learners, encompassing their physical, emotional, social, and mental well-being. A positive school experience can contribute significantly to a learner's growth and development, while a negative one can hinder progress and lead to long-term consequences. The UNESCO report on mental health in schools emphasized that creating environments that foster well-being can mitigate mental health challenges and contribute to better academic outcomes (UNESCO, 2020).

Well-being, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), is "a state in which an individual appreciates his or her own abilities, can manage with the regular stressors of life, can work productively, and is able to contribute to his or her community." In the context of education, this means that learners should feel safe, supported, and engaged in their learning environment. This holistic approach not only improves academic performance but also enhances learners' capacity to cope with life's challenges, fostering a generation of resilient, confident, and socially responsible individuals.

Ensuring learner well-being involves creating a balanced system where academic learning is complemented by emotional support, physical health programs, and social development opportunities. Schools that prioritize well-being help learners develop resilience, emotional intelligence, and a strong sense of self-worth. Moreover, the incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools has been shown to improve relationships, reduce behavioral issues, and increase academic achievement (CASEL, 2022).

As educators, parents, and stakeholders, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that schools become environments where every learner feels valued, supported, and empowered. By addressing both the academic and emotional needs of learners, we create a foundation for lifelong success. When we invest in the well-being of learners today, we pave the way for a brighter and more promising future for all.

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