



## Capturing Kids' Hearts™ Parent Information

We are excited to announce a new program being introduced to our elementary staff! This fall, prior to the first day of school, elementary school staff members were trained in a program called Capturing Kids' Hearts™. This amazing program outlines a process staff can use to help build meaningful connections with students. The goal is to capture kids' hearts in order to capture their minds. Research shows that when students feel more connected to their school and staff, they achieve higher academic success and are less likely to have attendance, tardy, or behavioral issues.

GHAPS staff have always cared about students; this new process shows the students how much we truly care, and it encourages students to reach their fullest potential. Students will learn how to take responsibility for their actions and performance while in school. Teachers will build better classroom rapport and encourage teamwork, while other staff will use this program to create a safe and trusting learning environment. This process increases students' willingness to learn and it empowers them to take charge with their learning process. The following are some components of this program your students can expect to see in their classrooms this fall.

The **EXCEL Model™** helps to show students that GHAPS teachers and staff care.

- Engage: Staff members personally greet each student at the beginning of class.
- X-plore: Teachers and staff look for opportunities to listen and interact with students about thoughts and feelings. Students may share their Good News to honor their lives and experiences.
- Communicate: Interactions with students become more of a dialog between teacher and students, with the teacher becoming a resource and a facilitator to help students learn. Lessons in the classroom will be tied directly to reality in order to show students the real-world importance of their education.
- Empower: Teachers and staff will empower students to interact more with peers, self-manage and peer-manage with behaviors in school, and problem-solve on their own.
- Launch: A conscious effort to end each class with a positive thought, teachers will provide closure for the day and hope for the future.

The **Social Contract** is built in class to establish the guidelines and expectations for how students and teachers will treat each other. Students will work together to develop this contract and the teacher will act as a facilitator to encourage discussion. This contract is designed to help students internalize and practice character traits and employability skills that they will use in their future. It also lets all participants in a classroom know what behavior is acceptable and what is not. The goal is to help each student develop "self-managing" skills.

The **Four Questions** help students focus on good behavior, demonstrate they know what behavior is expected, take responsibility when they are not doing what is expected, and determine what they should be doing instead. These questions are used to help students stay on track and be productively involved in their learning experience.