Our belief in our ability as a learner has a huge impact on how well we learn. It either opens us up for learning, or shuts us down. Our self-expectations are also shaped by beliefs of others. “Notes to Myself” are gentle reminders of ways we can keep our own self-expectations high and those of our classmates. But, we can’t do it alone.

When you turn this page over you will see “Notes to Others Who Care” — teachers, parents and community members. These are ways they can also help every young person in our community believe in his or her potential and worth. It takes a community to build “Great Expectations”!

Believe in myself!

- Set goals for myself that challenge me but are also within my reach
- Be clear about what I want, create a plan, and go make it happen
- Remember how important practicing is, even though it might be boring sometimes
- Take something that seems unreachable & break it down into doable steps
- When I am discouraged, find someone who believes in me and share my doubts and fears
- Leave my comfort zone and take risks
- Be my own person; do not compare myself to siblings or friends to define my worth or potential
- Be willing to keep reworking something until I get it right
- When I am feeling bad about myself, take a walk or get exercise

Ways I can build high expectations with my classmates ....

- Remember that everyone learns differently and has different interests and passions
- Encourage my peers to ask teachers questions
- Remind discouraged classmates of their accomplishments & share my faith in them
- Make learning mutual; help peers and allow peers to help me
- Know each person for who they are, not based on what group they hang around with, what they look like, or any other reason
- Push each other to do our best, try something new, pursue a passion
- Respect others, even if I don’t agree or someone’s question seems obvious
- Notice when someone is working hard & tell them I notice
- Give each other honest and caring feedback
Believe in me as a learner

- Help me discover my interests and passions and let me pursue them
- Value when I am working hard, even when I don't get a great grade
- Check in every day; even if I don't say much, it matters
- Know me for myself; don't compare me to siblings or others
- Allow room for risk-taking
- Give me responsibilities and count on me to complete them
- Expect me to make mistakes as I learn - don't judge me as a person by them
- Let me take charge of my own learning
- Listen to what I have to say — really listen — before you speak
- Spend quality time with me
- Come to school events or things I am involved in

Believe in me
- Get to know me, my interests and passions
- Include me in setting goals and expectations and support me to reach them
- Set clear expectations (and check in to make sure I understand)
- Let me make and learn from my mistakes without being punished or judged
- Assume my best intentions, even if some days that is hard
- Notice when I am struggling and reach out to me if I don't ask for help
- Notice when I am working really hard & value this effort
- Challenge me to learn independently
- Know me for myself; don't stereotype me based on my siblings or who I hang around with or any other reason
- Teach me HOW to learn
- Be passionate and compassionate
- Teach me to break down big goals into small steps, and celebrate each step with me
- Give me options to re-do assignments or re-take tests until I “get it”
- Don't give up on me!

Make learning engaging, challenging, interactive and fun

Be positive, supportive and caring
- Help me set high expectations, then support me to reach them
- Never give up on me!

Notes to community members
- Remember how much it meant to you when an older person believed in you — and pass it on
- Provide ways for me to have a meaningful voice in community decision making
- Work with the school to offer real-world learning opportunities
- Publicize accomplishments of all young people, big and small, in and outside of school
- Attend student-run events, student performances, athletic games
- When our paths cross, don't be afraid to look me in the eye.
- Help me learn from my mistakes; don't judge me by them
- Know that the most powerful factor influencing my life is how many caring adults are there for me — and choose to be one of them
- Model the same values and behaviors you want to see in me
- Ask questions and listen carefully

Believe in my best of intentions — most of the time you will be right!

Notes to my parents — ways you can help me build high expectations

Notes to my teachers — ways you can help me (and ALL students) build high expectations