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Learning from Success in Schools in Arab Society in Israel's Northern District: Promoting Persistence Among Students at Risk in Educational Settings

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Background

The learning process in this study was conducted against the backdrop of persistent socioeconomic and educational disparities between Arab and Jewish society in Israel, alongside trends of improvement in educational achievement in Arab society. The study focuses on schools in Arab society in the Northern District that have successfully promoted student persistence and reduced dropout and disengagement. Dropout and disengagement from school are multidimensional phenomena, and promoting persistence requires a combination of early identification of academic and social difficulties and signs of disengagement, as well as fostering positive relationships with the students, strengthening their sense of belonging, discussing future career options, and building a support network.

Objective

Systematic knowledge is still lacking on how schools successfully translate these principles into effective day-to-day practices, particularly in Arab education in Israel. To address this gap, the present study extracted applied knowledge and work practices through which schools help students succeed even in complex realities, based on success stories from schools that promoted persistence and reduced dropout and disengagement.

Method

The study used a Learning from Success approach in six secondary schools in the Arab education system in Israel's Northern District: four six-year schools and two technological education centers. Interviews were conducted with 23 staff members and five attendance officers.

Key Findings

1 **School leadership that promotes a persistence-oriented culture:** Promoting persistence is central to these schools' culture. School leadership advances a vision, mobilizes resources, and institutionalizes mechanisms for monitoring school attendance, rapid response, and shared responsibility.

- A vision of persistence is translated into work routines and the mobilization of appropriate resources
- Mapping, documentation, and monitoring prevent situations in which students "disappear" from the educational staff's view
- Responsibility is shared among school leadership, homeroom teachers, dedicated administrators such as persistence coordinators, counselors, and attendance officers, as well as community actors

> "From the moment the student enters the school, we have all kinds of routines and meetings. It is an entire team working with the student." (School principal)

2 **Strengthening and developing the staff:** The schools invest in training and supporting their staff. Professional development, attention to teachers' well-being, listening to teachers, and involving them in decision-making processes all enable staff to continue supporting students with empathy and assisting them over time.

- Training and ongoing professional support
- Strengthening teachers' well-being and creating spaces for processing and consultation
- "Parallel processes": the way school leadership relates to staff models the way staff are expected to relate to students

> "If you take care of the teacher's emotional resilience... then they give wholeheartedly. And when they give wholeheartedly, students improve." (Counselor)

3 **A personal, supportive, and growth-oriented relationship adapted to students' needs:** The personal relationship is embedded as a systematic practice. Schools act so that students feel seen, believed in, and accepted at school, while also strengthening their self-efficacy and sense of meaning and helping them adopt a future orientation.

- Teacher-student personal conversations and daily contact
- Fostering success experiences and recognizing strengths
- Connecting learning in the present with a realistic future

> "I have many personal conversations... The emphasis is: I see you, I hear you, and you are important to me." (School principal)

4 **Partnering with the community:** The schools do not act alone. They mobilize parents, attendance officers, welfare workers, the local authority, and other community stakeholders to expand the support network around the student. The school thus serves as a community anchor that strengthens belonging and social responsibility.

- Working with parents as partners
- Partnership with attendance officers and local authority actors
- Connecting students to the community

> "We don't blame you [parents]. We want to mobilize you as partners. We are aware of your difficulties." (Pedagogical coordinator)

Persistence is cultivated when the school acts as a system that identifies academic and social difficulties and processes of disengagement early on, responds quickly, provides support to the student and family, strengthens belonging, and does not leave the student alone. This is a proactive process of promoting persistence, which includes attaching personal meaning to learning and strengthening the student's ongoing engagement in school and in the community, while emphasizing early prevention.

Recommendations

Strengthening school leadership that promotes a culture of persistence and ongoing responsibility

Establishing personal relationships with students, strengthening their self-efficacy, and building students' future orientation as part of routine school practice

Institutionalizing mechanisms for early identification, monitoring, documentation, and rapid response to student disengagement

Strengthening partnerships with parents, attendance officers, welfare workers, the local authority, and the community

Investing in the professional development and well-being of educational and administrative staff and providing them with appropriate support

Working in a culturally sensitive manner, in accordance with the community structure and the locality's characteristics



The document presents practices and principles of action identified as successful and as supporting the implementation of these recommendations. These principles may serve as a basis for learning, adaptation, and further development in additional schools and local authorities.