

## Structures: Creating Structures for Knowing Students Well

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### Overview

Students in Expeditionary Learning schools are known well and supported by adults. Each student's academic progress and character development are followed closely over time by at least one caring adult. School structures such as crews, multi-age classrooms, and/or looping ensure students' needs are met and individual strengths are discovered. Mentoring, internships, and apprenticeships foster relationships between secondary students and community members. Flexible, heterogeneous groupings replace tracking.

## **BENCHMARK 2:**

### **CREATING STRUCTURES FOR KNOWING STUDENTS WELL**

#### **A. Building Relationships**

1. Multi-year connections between students and adults are created through looping, multi-age classrooms, and/or mentoring or crew relationships that last more than one year.
2. A caring adult monitors the progress of each student.
3. When appropriate and feasible, older students are paired with younger students for orientation, tutoring, and mentoring.

#### **B. Crews**

1. Crew time is used well and has clear purposes, goals, and lesson plans.
2. All crew leaders adhere to schoolwide expectations for crew time.
3. Crew time is respected and proceeds without interruption.
4. Crew leaders ensure that all their students know about and have access to demanding academic courses, extracurricular activities, academic and social supports, and the best sequence of classes for college placement.
5. Crews allow students and teachers to forge productive relationships over time.
6. Crew leaders form relationships with parents, monitor academic progress, lead interventions, and ensure that all students graduate.
7. Crews provide a forum for character education, portfolio work, adventure, and literacy.

#### **C. Mentoring, Internships, and Apprenticeships**

1. Mentors provide additional support to secondary students.
2. Internships help high school students build relationships with adults in the community, accumulate work experience, and learn about job and career opportunities.
3. Apprenticeships create opportunities for students to master a craft or a discipline.

#### **D. Heterogeneous Grouping**

1. Tracking by ability is eliminated.
2. Students are taught in heterogeneous, flexible groups so that they know and learn with a diverse group of peers.