

## Standard 4: Learning Environment

**Teachers work with all students to create a dynamic learning environment that supports achievement and growth.**

*The classroom environment is a critical aspect of a teacher’s skill in promoting learning. Students can’t concentrate on academic content if they don’t feel comfortable in the classroom. If the atmosphere is negative, if students fear ridicule, if the environment is chaotic, no one – neither students nor teacher – can focus on learning. Teachers who excel in Standard 4 create an atmosphere of excitement about the importance of learning and the significance of the content. Skills in Standard 4 are demonstrated through classroom interactions and observations.*

**Element 4.1: Teachers create a mutually respectful, safe, and supportive learning environment that is inclusive of every student.**

**NYSED Indicators:** *Caring and respectful in interactions with students. Embrace student diversity as an asset in the classroom. Recognize and reinforce positive interactions among students. Create a climate of acceptance and respect. Create an environment where students feel a sense of responsibility to one another.*

	Indicators	Ineffective	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
A.	<i>Interactions with students</i>	Teacher interaction with at least some students is inappropriate to the age or culture of the students. The classroom climate is not conducive to feeling accepted or free to take learning risks.	Teacher-student interactions are generally appropriate but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students’ cultures. Only some students feel accepted and free to take learning risks.	Teacher-student interactions demonstrate general caring and respect. Interactions are appropriate to the ages and cultures of the students. Teacher creates a safe learning environment where students feel accepted and free taking learning risks.	Teacher-student interactions reflect genuine respect, caring, and cultural understanding for individuals as well as groups of students. Teacher creates a safe learning environment where all students feel accepted and free taking learning risks.
B.	<i>Supports student diversity</i>	Teacher ignores diversity in the classroom and does not use it to support the learning environment.	Teacher acknowledges diversity in the classroom but is inconsistent in using it to enrich the learning environment.	Teacher acknowledges student diversity and uses it as an opportunity to enrich the learning environment.	Teacher acknowledges student diversity and uses it as an opportunity to enrich the learning environment. Students take initiative to respect and support diversity.
C.	<i>Reinforces positive interactions among students</i>	Teacher does not address student interactions that are inappropriate and disrespectful.	Teacher inconsistently addresses inappropriate student interactions.	Teacher ensures that student interactions are generally polite and respectful. Such interactions are appropriate to the age and cultures of the students.	Teacher ensures that students demonstrate respect for one another and monitor one another’s treatment of peers. Students correct classmates respectfully when needed, and assume and demonstrate personal responsibility.

**Element 4.2: Teacher create an intellectually challenging and stimulating learning environment.**

**NYSED Indicators:** *Encourage students to set high standards and expectations for their own performance. Motivate students to initiate their own learning and strive to achieve challenging learning goals. Promote students’ curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Students are actively engaged in learning. Students openly express their own ideas. Students show pride in their work and accomplishments.*

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
A.	<i>Establishes high expectations for achievement</i>	Teacher discourages students from expressing their ideas, and/or initiating their own learning and achievement.	Teacher inconsistently creates an environment where students express their ideas, take initiative and have high expectations for their own learning and achievement.	Teacher creates an environment where students are encouraged to express their ideas, take initiative and have high expectations for their own learning and achievement.	Teacher creates an environment where all students are expected to express their ideas, take initiative and have high expectations for their own learning and achievement. Students monitor their own progress as they strive to meet challenging learning goals.
B.	<i>Promotes student curiosity and enthusiasm</i>	Teacher conveys a negative attitude, suggesting that learning is not important or has been mandated. Students are not cognitively engaged in learning.	Teacher conveys importance of learning, but with little conviction and only minimal apparent buy-in by the students. Some students are cognitively engaged.	Teacher conveys enthusiasm for learning, and students demonstrate consistent commitment to its value. Students are cognitively engaged in appropriately challenging learning.	Teacher conveys genuine enthusiasm for learning. Students— through their curiosity, initiative, and active participation— demonstrate enthusiasm for learning. Students are cognitively engaged and striving to meet challenging learning goals.
C.	<i>Promotes student pride in work and accomplishments</i>	Teacher does not promote a sense of pride in student work or accomplishment. Students are not motivated to complete work or are unwilling to persevere.	Teacher inconsistently promotes a sense of pride in student work or accomplishment. Students minimally accept the responsibility to “do good work” but invest little of their energy into its quality.	Teacher consistently promotes a sense of pride in student work or accomplishment. Students accept the teacher’s insistence on work of high quality and demonstrate perseverance.	Teacher consistently promotes a sense of pride in student work or accomplishment. Student work demonstrates innovation, flexibility, originality, and perseverance in their work.

**Element 4.3: Teachers manage the learning environment for the effective operation of the classroom.**

**NYSED Indicators:** *Establish, communicate, and maintain clear standards and expectations for student behavior. Develop, implement, and adapt routines and procedures to manage activities and transitions. Facilitate instructional groupings to maximize student participation, cooperation, and learning. Students exhibit respectful classroom interactions.*

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
A.	<i>Establishes expectations for student behavior</i>	The teacher has not established standards of conduct, or students are confused by the standards.	The teacher has established standards of conduct, and most students seem to understand them.	The teacher has established standards of conduct and they are clear to all students.	The teacher and students have established standards of conduct. They are clear to all students and appear to be internalized.
B.	<i>Establishes routines, procedures and transitions</i>	The teacher's routines, procedures, and transitions are chaotic, with much instructional time being lost between activities or lesson segments.	The teacher's routines, procedures, and transitions are somewhat efficient, resulting in some loss of instructional time.	Teacher's routines, procedures, and transitions occur smoothly, with little loss of instructional time. Students assume some responsibility under teacher direction.	Teacher's routines, procedures, and transitions are seamless, with students assuming responsibility in ensuring their efficient operation.
C.	<i>Establishes instructional groups</i>	Teacher's grouping results in students who are not working with the teacher, are not productively engaged in learning and/or exhibit disrespect to the teacher and/or other students.	Teacher's grouping results in students in only some groups being productively engaged in learning while unsupervised by the teacher. Student behavior is generally appropriate but occasionally may reflect disrespect for one another.	Teacher's grouping results in small group work being well organized and most students are productively engaged in learning while unsupervised by the teacher. Student behavior is generally polite and respectful.	Teacher's grouping results in small group work being well organized and students are productively engaged at all times, with students assuming responsibility for productivity. Students work independently and collaboratively to accomplish goals. Student behavior is consistently polite and respectful.

**Element 4.4: Teachers organize and utilize available resources (e.g. physical space, time, people, technology) to create a safe and productive learning environment.**

**NYSED Indicators:** *Arrange and adapt the physical environment to accommodate individual and group learning needs. Ensure that all students have equitable access to available resources and technologies. Effectively use the services and skills of available volunteers and paraprofessionals. Know and implement policies and procedures to ensure classroom safety*

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
A.	<i>Organizes the physical environment</i>	Teacher has not organized the physical environment to meet student learning needs, or the teacher makes poor or inequitable use of physical resources.	Teacher has organized the physical environment to adequately accommodate student learning needs. Available resources and technologies are accessible to most students. The resources may be adjusted for a lesson, but with limited effectiveness.	Teacher has organized the physical environment to accommodate all student learning needs. Available resources and technologies are equally accessible to all students. The resource arrangement supports the learning activities.	Teacher has organized the physical environment to accommodate all student learning needs. Available resources and technologies are equally accessible to all students. Students adjust the resources to advance their learning.
B.	<i>Manages volunteers and/or paraprofessionals</i>	Teacher does not effectively use the services and skills of available paraprofessionals and/or volunteers.	Teacher attempts to use the services and skills of available paraprofessionals and/or volunteers with limited effectiveness.	Teacher effectively uses the services and skills of available paraprofessionals and/or volunteers.	Teacher effectively uses the services and skills of available paraprofessionals and/or volunteers, and supports their contributions to a productive learning environment.
C.	<i>Establishes classroom safety</i>	Teacher does not know, or knows but does not implement classroom safety procedures.	Teacher inconsistently implements classroom safety procedures.	Teacher consistently implements classroom safety procedures.	Teacher knows and implements classroom safety procedures consistently. Students have internalized the safety procedures.