



# DIVERSITY

## PROMOTING RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to respond actively and positively to life conditions, stress, and trauma in such a way that we are able to bounce back and continue to approach life with positive actions. According to Joseph (1994), a resilient individual is one who is “responsible, positive, self-reliant, committed, and socially skillful” (Christiansen & Christiansen, 1997, p.88).

Other define resilience as the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, develop social competence including problem solving skills despite exposure to severe stress, and having a sense of purpose (i.e., having goals). It is the ability to recover readily from illness, depression, stress, insult or injury, and adversity, and the capacity to maintain competent functioning in the face of major life stressors (CDE, 2002; Kaplan & Turner, 1996; Krovetz, 1999; Mothner, 1995; Rak & Patterson, 1996). Masten (2001) points out that resilience is characterized by “*good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development*” (p.228), and is promoted by environmental supports like those listed below.

### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO?

How can the school system promote resilience for students? Numerous suggestions are presented below that a PBS team can discuss and implement (Fox, 1994, Henderson, 1998; Mayer, 1999; Mayer et al., 2000; Meyer and Farrell, 1998; Mothner, 1995; Noonan, 1999; and Pianta and Walsch, 1998):

- Promote caring relationships
- Promote high expectations of student success
- Foster high self-esteem through providing successful experiences and reinforcing consequences
- Promote social and academic success
- Teach problem-solving skills within different contexts
- Promote student participation in school level decision making
- Give the students school related and other responsibilities
- Teach and foster independence
- Encourage students helping students
- Provide the students with choices
- Clarify rules and goals
- Provide an opportunity for students to participate in establishing the rules
- Provide opportunities to participate