

QuaverPLC: Leaders in Education – Supporting Students with Anxiety

GUEST SPEAKER
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Overview

QuaverPLCs bring educators and leaders together to discuss important and timely topics in education. Our goal is for you to come away with powerful insight and actionable steps that will help create a culture for success in your school or district.

After you watch an episode of “Leaders in Education,” we invite you to discuss these relevant topics in **your own PLC**. We provide you with the framework for discussion, relevant resources, and a general guide to begin thinking about next steps.



The Process

During your PLC, educators will work through the framework laid out on pages 2–4 of this document. This framework is designed to aid educators and leaders to take part in thoughtful and meaningful discussions.

Next Steps

Schedule a Meeting Date and Time	Pre-Work Expectations
<p>Date:</p> <p>Time:</p> <p>Location:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please view or listen to Episode 10 of “Leaders in Education.” • Come to the meeting prepared to discuss the topic of supporting students with anxiety.

QuaverPLC: Leaders in Education – Supporting Students with Anxiety

Audience

- All educators

Objectives

- Discuss the physiological responses and external manifestations of anxiety.
- Share strategies for supporting students experiencing anxiety.
- Plan for how to recognize and respond to student anxiety.

Opening

Consider the discussion questions on page 3. Allow educators a few minutes to reflect and take initial notes before sharing with the group.

Collaboration

Divide into groups of three to five people, representing a variety of roles and grade levels, if possible.

Groups will collaborate to complete page 4, "Navigating the Fight-Flight-Freeze-Fawn Response." Note the "Connections" column, which is for personal reflections. Individuals may choose not to share these reflections with the group.

Wrap-Up

Ask each group to share one or two ideas they had during their discussion. As other groups share, educators may want to add the new ideas to their own charts.

QuaverPLC: Leaders in Education – Supporting Students with Anxiety

Discussion

Directions: After watching Episode 10, please reflect on these questions and record your thoughts below. Be prepared to share with the group.

1. Dr. Bagwell stated that anxiety stems from “a perceived or real threat to a person’s safety,” whether physical, emotional, or social. What can we do to ensure our school is a safe place for all students?

2. What are the differences between the fight, flight, freeze, and fawn responses? What might each response look like?

3. In what instances might anxiety responses be miscategorized as defiance?

4. How can we allow time for students to regain control of their cerebrum after the fight-flight-freeze-fawn instinct activates the amygdala?

5. What structures can we put in place to support students experiencing anxiety?

6. Dr. Bagwell stated that “knowledge is the antidote to fear.” How can we ensure that our families and students also have the knowledge needed to respond to student anxiety?

QuaverPLC: Leaders in Education – Supporting Students with Anxiety

Navigating the Fight-Flight-Freeze-Fawn Response

Directions: Dr. Bagwell stated that “knowledge is the antidote to fear.” In this activity, we will develop the knowledge we need to recognize and respond to student anxiety.

For each of the four anxiety responses—fight, flight, freeze, fawn—complete the following sections:

- **Signs:** What might each response look like in a school setting? What clues or behaviors might we notice from a student having that response?
- **Supports:** If we believe a student is having an anxiety response, what can we do to support that student? Consider prevention and intervention measures before, during, and after an anxiety response.
- **Connections:** Reflect on past experiences in which a student, or even yourself, may have had this response in a school setting. How was it handled? How might you handle it differently now based on the information shared in this episode? *This section is for personal reflection and does not need to be shared, if preferred.*

Anxiety Response	Signs	Supports	Connections
Fight			
Flight			
Freeze			
Fawn			