

How to Improve Relationships With and Engage Hard-to-Reach Secondary Students



PRESENTED BY

Rebecca Knighton



SERIES SESSIONS

Date	Time
October 22, 2026	9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
November 04, 2026	4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
November 18, 2026	9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
January 27, 2027	4:00 PM - 5:30 PM



LOCATION

**The Consortium, South Office Learning Suite
OR Zoom online meeting - 2219 14 Ave S
(Located in Our Lady of Assumption School)**

FEE

\$275.00

QUESTIONS?

Contact Us:

[403-381-5580](tel:403-381-5580)

REGISTER ONLINE

Visit our website to register:

south.aplc.ca

Learning Opportunity

We often assume teachers who excel at connecting with hard-to-reach students simply have a natural gift. Research on "positive deviant teachers," those who consistently build strong relationships and change the trajectory of struggling students' lives, reveals specific mindsets, attributes, and skills behind that success. This series helps all educators develop those same capacities.

Sessions are experiential, reflective, and action-oriented, blending personal stories and research with reflection and application activities that build self-awareness, empathy, and practical skill.

What Participants Will Gain:

- Understanding of the mindsets and skills behind strong teacher-student relationships
- Insight into what drives student engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy
- Awareness of personal triggers and assumptions that create barriers to connection
- Strategies to navigate conflict, build student agency, and partner more effectively with students
- Greater empathy and a shift in how student behaviors affect them
- A personalized action plan with strategies, likely barriers, and steps to address them
- Clarity on their authentic teaching identity and a plan to sustain their learning

For a detailed breakdown of each day, see the following [PDF](#).

Presenters

Rebecca Knighton

Rebecca Knighton, PhD, is a lifelong learner with a passion for understanding our shared human needs, the barriers we face, and what motivates us. As a senior consultant for a Mountain West State Department of Education, she helps district and school leaders lead with heart while navigating complex change efforts. Her work centers on humanistic leadership, culture and climate improvement, and student-centered transformation.

Rebecca began her journey as a middle school behavioral interventionist and gifted and talented specialist, where she co-led Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and student support teams. She also developed and taught a social-emotional intervention class for sixth graders with behavioral and engagement challenges—transforming their academic paths and self-perceptions.

Her doctoral research focused on what the most effective teachers do to connect with and engage disengaged youth. Today, she helps educators develop these same skills, offering tools to flip the script and ignite hope in every learner.

Rebecca holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry, a master's in education, and a PhD in Population Studies in Health. She has presented at state, national, and international conferences. In her role at the Colorado Department of Education, she contributed to the development of state-level frameworks for student wellness and dropout prevention. She is also a working group member for Knowledge Works' Lead for Learners development project.

When she's not working with educators, she enjoys being in nature with her husband and their Corgi, Tifa, traveling to see her son in Europe, or soaking up the beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

Registration Notes

All times are in Mountain Time.

The zoom link will be sent out in the registration email.

This session is offered In-person & online.



Supporting every educator
in every classroom