

## **Solanco Expectations Initiative (established 2012)**

In 2012, 250 parents, educators, business owners, students, and community leaders came together for three nights to develop the Solanco Expectations. These meetings were designed to affirmatively state the common qualities we value and to develop ways to ensure these qualities were upheld. Consequent of these meetings, the Solanco Expectations were developed through consensus. The four core expectations are, as follows: Respect, Responsibility, Courage, and Kindness. Each of these were defined and clarified so that all had a common understanding.

Of course, defining expectations was only one step—how would we, as a community, embrace and demonstrate these? How could we ensure students embraced these? For this, students leaders and faculty/staff met and developed a plan to implement these expectations throughout the district in multiple ways.

A key step was to include the Solanco Expectations in the elementary civics curriculum, K-5, which teaches how government is structured, civic responsibility, and how these expectations are essential.

Each year, these expectations have become further ingrained in the district. And many valuable programs have developed, as a result—the victories have been both great and small.

Not only are the Solanco Expectations displayed, they are also practiced. For example, when Students of the Month are nominated, they are nominated based on how they demonstrate the Solanco Expectations in their every day lives. The nominating teachers' letters describe specifically how the student demonstrates these repeatedly. We annually give awards in both middle schools and Solanco High School to students who embody these traits.

The Solanco Expectations also have formed the basis for our anti-discrimination/harassment/bullying programs. Once these Solanco Expectations were developed, the district refined them and developed a district-wide initiative, the Solanco Stands Together initiative (established 2017), which consists of four components: Building (a Culture of Kindness), Reporting, Intervening, and Supporting (Each Other).

Each school, then, has developed numerous and robust programs to support these. For example, middles schools have adopted the PRIDE Program (and refined it to PRIDE 2.0). Solanco High School students embraced Rachel's Challenge (motto is "Practice Pre-Acceptance, not Pre-Judgement), and it has resulted in more student-led programs, such as the Best Buddies Program and the Kindness Notes initiative. Elementary schools adopted the Mikayla's Voice program, whose motto is "Inspiring kids of all abilities to share the message of inclusion . . ."

Each summer, all district principals meet to review the impact of the Solanco Expectations and the Solanco Stands Together programs, analyzing data and refining for the next year. Each year we note progress, strengths, and areas for improvement. And each year we enhance and improve the program. This is certainly a continuous process, which the chief goal being progress each year.

The Solanco Expectations have also supported community efforts, notably the Solanco Family Life Network (SFLN). The Solanco Family Life Network is designed to connect community needs with community resources in a three-part structure known as “Love, Lift, and Launch.” The work of the Solanco Family Network has been tremendous and has addressed many needs in the community (and continues to do so).

The community effort to support the Solanco School District plus the efforts to improve community life overall represent a core strength of Solanco community, a strength demonstrated many times each year (and visibly demonstrated when the community gathered to develop the Solano Expectations).