Heart of America Supporting Research

1. Heart of America believes that all children should have the opportunity to learn and develop a sense of self-worth so that they can reach their full potential.

   *Children with a positive sense of self-worth exhibit the following characteristics: feel more accepted, set high goals, are better students, are better decision-makers, are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, assume responsibility, tolerate frustration, are proud of their accomplishments, and enthusiastically try new things* (Maxwell, L. E., & Chmielewski, E. (2008). *Environmental personalization and elementary schools children’s self-esteem*. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28, 143-153).

2. Positive physical environments have the power to set children on a path of opportunity. After parents and teachers, the physical environment is children’s “third teacher.”


3. Physical environments send strong messages to children about their value, and this message can set children on one of two paths:

   - A poorly maintained school environment communicates to children that they are not a priority. As this message is internalized, it results in lower self-esteem, lower achievement and lower participation in school or community affairs.


4. Conversely, a positive educational environment is created when it is designed to support multiple and diverse ways of teaching and learning, personalized to promote a sense of belonging and filled with high-quality educational resources to enable learning. Such an environment sends a positive message that contributes to a child’s sense of self-worth and motivation to learn, key factors that contribute to future success.