



SEL in Action: The 2017-2018 Social and Emotional Learning Innovation Awards for Teachers

Presented by NoVo Foundation, Education First and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors



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Courtesy of Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action

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Introduction

A LETTER FROM JENNIFER BUFFETT

Just a decade ago, social and emotional learning practices were often marginalized and misunderstood.

Working with an incredible group of partners, we set out to change that. Our goal was audacious: to catalyze a new critical mass of schools who could demonstrate the case for prioritizing the whole child in positive, caring school environments. We hoped the result would not just change schools, but the paradigm for education itself.

Today, that revolution is underway. Teachers are daring to redefine what it will mean to thrive in our interdependent and fast-changing world, elevating skills grounded in relationship, empathy, independent thinking and creativity.

In an era of “intelligent machines,” it turns out that it’s the things that make us uniquely and beautifully human that we cannot stifle — and that we need to promote — if our kids are to make it in the 21st Century.

A more just and balanced world depends fundamentally on our ability to foster kids’ curiosity and drives, their creativity, their feelings and emotions, their ability to create beauty, to care for one another and to work together.

In the following pages, these remarkable teachers show us how.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Buffett". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Jennifer Buffett

Co-president, NoVo Foundation

The sound of a singing bowl. The pressure of air filling your lungs. The smell of soil in a greenhouse. A mentor student talking to a mentee English Learner in their native language. Students bouncing on a yoga ball in class because it helps them listen more attentively. Students reading novels to see the world from another perspective; students writing poetry to share their own.

These are a few examples of what the experience of social and emotional learning feels like. Every day offers new possibilities. Classroom teachers are leading the way.

In 2016, we launched the Social and Emotional Learning Innovation Fund. We asked teachers for fresh ideas for implementing social and emotional learning in their classrooms. We sought to support projects that create places, environments and practices that value belonging, well-being, tolerance, compassion, listening, non-violence, inclusiveness, working productively together and looking out for one another. We intentionally didn't define what we meant by innovation—we wanted applicants to surprise us.

We have been awed and humbled by the response. This book celebrates the work of the 2017-2018 teacher recipients of an Innovation Award. With grants of up to \$5,000, they have engaged with Elders in their communities, created mentorship opportunities between freshmen and senior high school students and crafted prosthetic hands using a 3D printer.

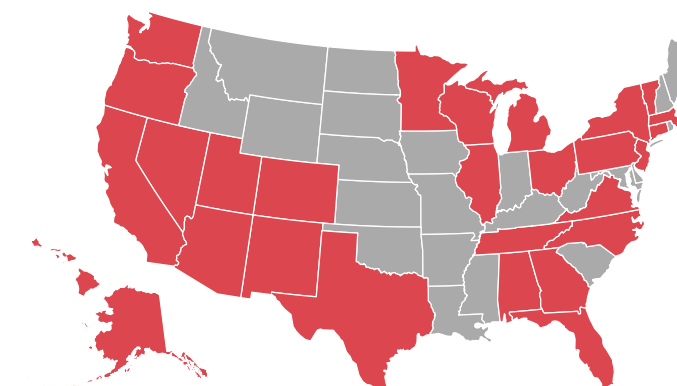
The pages to follow are organized around the main focus of each project. These include: **Art & Literature, Leadership Development, Mentoring, Mindfulness, Restorative Practices, Sports & Activity**, and **Use of Space**. Teachers tell their stories in their own words, sharing highlights from their work, challenges, as well as tips and tricks for other teachers to try in their own classrooms. Teachers have also shared links to resources, tools, videos and blogs.

We hope you'll be as inspired as we are.

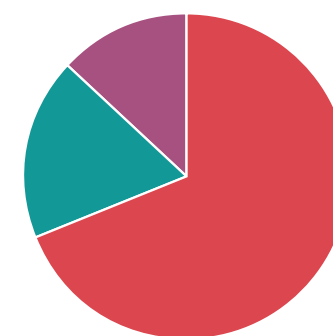
2017-2018 TEACHER INNOVATION AWARDEES AT A GLANCE

67

TEACHER
AWARDEES

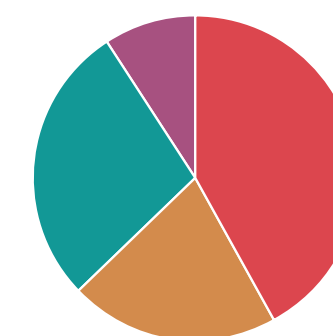


Teacher Awardees hail from 28 states



TYPE OF DISTRICT

- Urban: **69%**
- Suburban: **18%**
- Rural: **13%**



GRADE BAND

- High School: **42%**
- Middle School: **21%**
- Elementary School: **28%**
- Multiple grades: **9%**

TOTAL AWARDED
ACROSS ALL GRANTEES:

\$300,354

Descriptions of all awarded projects can be found at:

selfforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Awardee Data.



What is social and emotional learning?

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process of developing fundamental skills for life success within supportive, participatory learning environments. Attained through both curricula and instructional practices, SEL skills include recognizing and managing emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships and making responsible decisions. These crucial capacities can be taught by classroom teachers to students of every background.

NoVo Foundation's Strategic Approach

Our strategic approach to advancing social and emotional learning emphasizes working through formal education structures and other systems to integrate SEL practices. We work to achieve scale by supporting providers of evidence-based SEL, building the field by gathering partners and increasing demand through effective communication. We monitor and evaluate our efforts while remaining flexible to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

For more information, visit novofoundation.org.

Art & Literature 7

Gregory M. Bowman	8
Carrie Brown	9
Tiffany L. Brown.....	10
Dr. Jarred Amato.....	11
Ashley Karlsson	11
Kim Liland	12
Angela Manekas	13
Pamela Vance	14
Ty Gomez, Lauren Frydman, Debbie O’Gorman	15
Gwendolyn Nixon.....	16
Lisa J. Vasquez.....	17

Leadership Development 18

Kate Burwinkel.....	19
Vae Champagne.....	20
Ivee Cruz	21
Alexa Humberson, Katie Raymond, Natalie San Miguel.....	22
Karrie Marciniak.....	23
Kathy Batty, Mary Muroski.....	24
Alhassan P. Susso	25
Mary Haddad.....	26
Ray Baker.....	27

Mentoring 28

Jeff Broome.....	29
Jaime MacEwen.....	30
Karyn Rabe	31
Shawana Ridley	32
Elizabeth Syria	33
Dana Davis, Sandy Shoemaker.....	34
Tina Vasquez.....	35
Jessica Williams.....	36

Mindfulness 37

David Genovese, Nicholas Mazzarella, Linda Noble, Ph.D.	38
Christopher Poulos.....	39
Chrissa W. Sullivan	40

Restorative Practices..... 41

Susan Bernhagen	42
Samantha Curtis	42
Chris Brown, Ingrid Harrauld	43
Jillian Meade	44
Carrie Stradley	44
Carol Tureski	45
Daniel Schneider	46

Sports & Activity..... 47

Kaitlyn Hundt, Jodi Kromke.....	48
Jessica Hubbard.....	49
Courtney Tara Weiss-Chromeck.....	50

Use of Space..... 51

Katherine Engel	52
Claudia Fitzwater.....	53
Amber Chandler	54

Conclusion 55

Art & Literature

Authors of Resilience

Gregory M. Bowman

Doris Henderson Newcomers School
Guilford County Schools
Greensboro, North Carolina

Additional partners:

Jennifer Deschler
Joshua Dunlop
Angelica Shornack
Barrett Stanley

HIGHLIGHTS

Our students became real writers by studying poetry and graphic novels as mentor texts and then writing their own poems and stories with a theme of resilience. They began to trust their own experiences and voices as valuable not just to their English Language Learner community, but to the larger community in which we live. They had funny, exciting, sad, powerful, silly and redemptive stories to tell. They were validated by being able to share their work with a larger audience when they presented their books to English first language peers.

Their books were also a service-learning experience because once published, we sold the books as a PTA fundraiser for the Newcomers School. All funds generated by our project will go to purchase school supplies for new students who come weekly as first year ESL students.

CHALLENGES

Schedule changes and publishing challenges required that we build more flexibility into the time we had allotted for this project, but as our theme was “resilience,” we persevered.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

- Give students a model text and a guest author to ignite ideas.
- Students naturally begin to act as peer editors for one another once they gain confidence in their roles as experts. Use peer-to-peer classroom connections to promote literacy and language development.
- Be a model for the writing process by sharing and publishing your own work.
- Establish an authentic audience for the published work to encourage motivation among the student writers.
- Use your work as a fundraiser for the PTA at your school. Service learning empowers students and builds SEL competencies.

Doris Henderson Newcomers School School Supply List:

“Bring with you a brave, kind heart; bring memories of your home. Bring to school a desire to learn. Bring strength that helped you roam. Bring sisters, brothers, hopes and fears. Tell mom and dad they’re welcome here. Bring pictures in your mind to hold. The things you’ve lost will help us grow. Bring your language, culture, faith. All of you we will embrace. Paper, pencils, book bags; food that we can provide. Safety, value, love for you. The rest you have inside.”

— Gregory M. Bowman



Building a cohesive community through drumming

Carrie Brown

Native Montessori Preschool at Faubion School
Portland Public Schools
Portland, Oregon

Additional partners:

Childpeace Montessori School
Concordia University 3 to PhD Program
Native American Rehabilitation Association
Josh Poitra, Warm Springs
PPS Title VI Indian Education

HIGHLIGHTS

By using our Traditional Indigenous Teachings of courage, honesty, love, respect and humility through drumming and songs, children practiced thinking of others. We practiced specific traditional protocols of drumming in a group at a big drum. These protocols support our Traditional Teachings, enhance concentration, relieve anxiety and models thinking of others. Our children also had access to hand drums and could drum at will. Drumming is Good Medicine and allows children to self-regulate their emotions as needed.

CHALLENGES

In the beginning, it was a bit of a challenge for the children to stay with the beat of the drum and to focus. By early spring, they were able to have greater control and could drum with the down beat. It takes faith to allow children the space to find their way.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Many cultures have drumming as an integral part of their identity. Try having a drumming class as an after school program. Students learn self-discipline as well as working for the good of the group through drumming.



“The ones that matter the most are the children. They are the true Human Beings.”
— American Indian Proverb

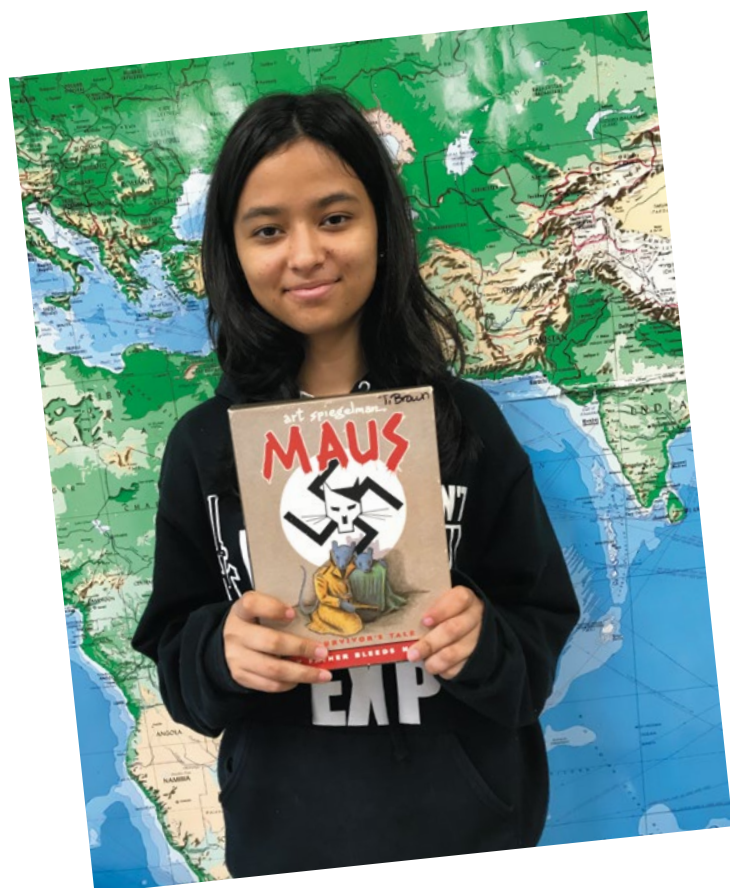
► For other ideas about using space in the classroom, see the Use of Space projects starting on page 98.



Teaching tolerance and language acquisition to English Learners through novels, technology and enrichment

Mrs. Tiffany L. Brown

W.P. Davidson High School
Mobile County Public School System
Mobile, Alabama



HIGHLIGHTS

The goal of my ESL classroom, in addition to language acquisition, is to establish tolerance and a safe environment for my students. I try to do this through novel units and awareness activities and projects. I used the SEL grant to purchase a class set of tablets and graphic novels and plan a class trip to the WWII Museum in New Orleans, LA. These activities fostered a deeper awareness and understanding of humanitarian issues and increased language proficiency.

CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge was the lack of exposure to technology. My high school is extremely diverse with more than 26 languages spoken among our student population. We have a large refugee population as well as a large number of immigrants with limited, interrupted or no formal education. These students also have limited or no understanding of technology, making their required high school courses more difficult. Learning to use the tablets was a challenge at first; however, I watched their confidence build socially, emotionally and academically after incorporating more technology into my lessons and group projects.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

I started my unit by teaching the graphic novel *Maus I* and *Maus II* by Art Spiegelman. I also taught the novels, *Zlata's Diary* by Zlata Filipovic, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park and *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai. I purchased several good resources from [teacherspayteachers.com](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com).



"I love reading. I want to learn more!"
— Student



Reading is LIT: Increasing access to culturally relevant books

Dr. Jarred Amato

Maplewood High School
Metro Nashville Public Schools
Nashville, Tennessee



► For other ideas about community building, see the Leadership Development projects starting on page 32.

HIGHLIGHTS

We hosted 10 community-wide book clubs at Maplewood High School to celebrate and discuss important novels such as *All American Boys*, *The Hate U Give*, *Dear Martin* and *Long Way Down*, culminating with our inaugural Project LIT Summit on June 16, 2018! Additionally, over the past year, our student leaders have continued to build a national grassroots literacy movement that, as of July 2018, includes more than 400 Project LIT chapters across 44 states!

CHALLENGES

As our community continues to grow, we'd love support in two major areas. We're always looking for more adults who are a) willing to read and discuss great books with our young people and b) interested in helping our chapters secure multiple copies of our Project LIT Book Club titles and build inclusive classroom libraries!

TRY THIS AT HOME!

We'd love for passionate students and educators to join our grassroots movement! Be sure to follow [@projectlitcomm](#) on social media, participate in our [#ProjectLITchat](#) on Twitter, and check out our [#ProjectLITbookClub](#) selections! When you're ready, complete our Project LIT chapter leader application. Don't hesitate to reach out to projectlitcommunity@gmail.com with any questions.



Amplifying student voice and self- awareness through the study and exposition of authentic narratives

Ashley Karlsson

Washburn High School
Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis, MN

Additional partners:

Katie Murphy-Olsen

HIGHLIGHTS

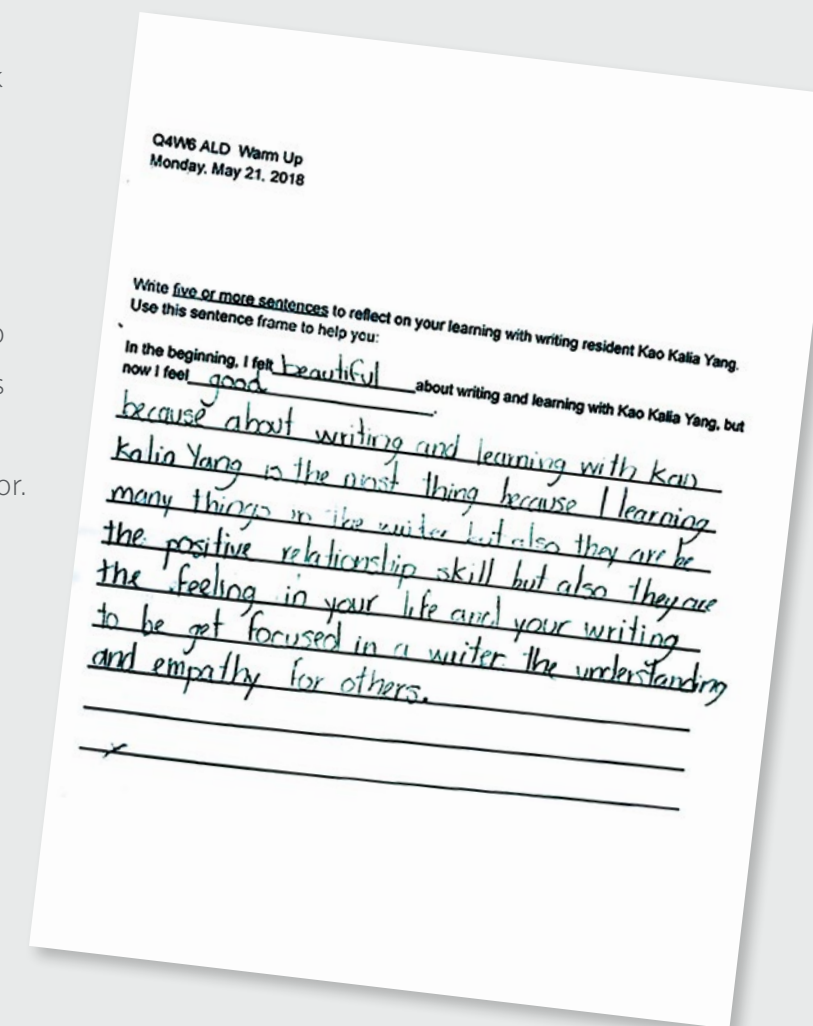
My students are all English Learners from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This grant project was focused on introducing students to authentic pieces of writing that would help students see themselves represented in literature, to learn more about the cultures around them and to understand the danger of a single story. One of the many highlights of this work has been to watch my students cultivate a passion for reading and writing and discover confidence in themselves as the authors and expositors of their own stories. Local author Kao Kalia Yang closed out the work with a writing residency.

CHALLENGES

Building students' self-awareness and social awareness can sometimes mean venturing into uncharted territory in the classroom. It requires being willing to relinquish your control in the classroom and to shift from director to facilitator. It can be challenging to find time and space for students to do the work of exploring their own identities and listening with empathy to their classmates stories, but the reward is well worth the effort.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Find resources that will inspire students to tell their own stories. The ID program by Dr. Alfred W. Tatum provided a helpful starting point for me to engage and empower my students, but I don't think there is any one specific resource or curriculum that is required for this work. The most important part of empowering students is creating a classroom environment where students feel safe and valued and identifying authentic opportunities to amplify student stories.



Breaking down stereotypes and barriers between cultural groups with storytelling and film

Kim Liland

East Anchorage High School
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

Additional partners:

Marie Acemah, *seestories*

HIGHLIGHTS

One highlight of our SEL filmmaking camp was seeing students' goal of breaking stereotypes happen right in front of us as the students worked together, twice a week for close to three months. This was a diverse group of students—multi-ethnic, multi-lingual with various levels of English proficiencies and of different religious and gender backgrounds. They were Hmong, Samoan, Gambian and Somali. Seeing each one step up to extend help to another—comfortably and genuinely—was heartwarming. They learned that individuals from other cultural groups are just like them—they are human beings, first and foremost. They all feel judgment and pain—fortunately, together, they felt joy in collaborating and producing their stories with each others' support. Students learned so much more deeply about each other—what they are thinking as individuals of different backgrounds and how each would like to be understood—not misunderstood or presumed to be the same as everyone in their own cultural groups. Another highlight was being able to secure public viewings of the 10 short films both at our school and then our local city library's theater, attended by other students and teachers from our school and members of our community in Anchorage. This included the Mayor's wife, who brought 30 German visitors to view the film and hope to learn more about diversity. This allowed the students' film and message to reach a larger audience, and hopefully, break down stereotypes and barriers for a larger amount of people in our community. The seed is planted.

CHALLENGES

Working with a larger group, 10 students, with minimum computer skills, especially with iMovie and film production equipment, took more time than anticipated. The film camp was for students to learn to be filmmakers, so not knowing how to use the equipment and editing in iMovie was to be expected. Perhaps, in the future, limiting to eight students is more ideal.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

While I enjoy using technology in class, I do have my limits. The best way to produce student films is to find a local filmmaker in your area who would like to collaborate with you. You provide the structure, the time management and discipline of the film camp while the filmmaker supervises the technical aspect of the film production. Also, connecting with community members who would be willing to be interviewed by students for their film is very powerful. Our film camp was an after school program and the students earned elective credit for their work (be sure to speak to your curriculum principal for this consideration). This is very important especially for an immigrant student trying to catch up on the required graduation credit when they arrive as Juniors or Seniors.

To view the student films visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Kim Liland.



Student-led SEL literature lessons

Angela Manekas

PS 232Q

District 27 - New York City

Howard Beach, New York

Additional partners:

Lori D'Andrea

Nicole Miele

HIGHLIGHTS

As educators, we always wonder if our students listen and understand the important life lessons we try to teach in our classroom. After watching our student leaders in action, we know the answer is unequivocally yes. They embody SEL in Action, they are learners, leaders, passionate and self-reflective. The student leaders not only showed SEL growth, but also grew as readers and writers and in their planning and organization. As a school community, SEL, emotional vocabulary and emotional literacy are now part of our shared language.

In the project's inaugural year, our 90 student leaders created, designed and implemented five literature-based SEL lessons in every kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade class at our school, reaching over 500 students. In addition, the grant helped us create a PS 232 SEL library consisting of over 200 titles!

CHALLENGES

It is difficult to watch students be so excited about and engaged in their own SEL, and yet struggle to apply the self-awareness and self-management skills in the "real world." This further strengthens our resolve to continuously integrate SEL into our school culture and community. Additional challenges for our project's integration were scheduling and time management for student collaboration to create and plan their lessons.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Angela Manekas.

"Since we've started this work, I've noticed a change in the way our children are able to make sound choices, not just about academics, but about personal and social decisions."

— PS 232Q Principal Lisa Josephson



Hunterdon Central Dodge Poetry Fest — celebrate diversity

Pamela Vance

Hunterdon Central Regional High School
Flemington, New Jersey

Additional partners:

Christine Kania

HIGHLIGHTS

Five poets from the Dodge Poetry Foundation shared their work and inspiration with more than 800 students from across the curriculum.

The theme was diversity and the poetry was presented, in whole or in part, in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. Topics included: family, friends, culture, adversity, challenges and immigrants.

CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge we faced was our A/B day schedule and the weather, which forced schedule changes.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Gaining the full support of administration was key. Our Curriculum Director, Principal and Superintendent were all very supportive and our direct supervisors were instrumental in the

planning and coordination of the event. Bridging English as a Second Language classes with mainstream English classes opened up this opportunity and helped further cultural education throughout the school. Our library and media specialists offered us space to celebrate and advertise the event. A student volunteer created a “Poet Tree” with favorite poem submissions from dozens of students. She also created our logo and artwork for the posters. We used her logo on a bookmark which was given to all participants.



*“We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.”
—Maya Angelou*



Integrating SEL standards and practices through literature

Ty Gomez
Lauren Frydman
Debbie O’Gorman

Kate Smith Elementary School
 Washoe County School District
 Sparks, Nevada

Additional partners:

Marie Scilacci

HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the biggest highlights from our “Be the Best Me I Can Be” grant was having author Julia Cook visit our school, share her amazing books with our students and educate our staff and parents. In addition, we were able to purchase eight of her books for each teacher to integrate the specific SEL competencies within their literacy curriculum. We were also able to create and introduce “calm down kits” into every classroom and teach students how to recognize and manage feelings appropriately.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Using literature is an easy way to teach SEL skills to students. Students can easily connect with and learn from the characters in the story.

Julia Cook’s books are some of the greatest books to use when teaching SEL standards! Check out her website at www.juliacookonline.com.

We are happy to help support any school wishing to integrate SEL skills into their curriculum. Please email Ty Gomez at tgomez@washoeschools.net or Lauren Frydman at lfrydman@washoeschools.net.



CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge has been the integration of SEL practices and standards into the everyday curriculum. It is a change in mindset in regards to planning literacy instruction. Though it was challenging at first, it has led to a greater understanding of self-awareness and self-management in the classroom. Teachers were able to incorporate their own teaching styles and discover new ways to support their students’ SEL growth. With the support of the families, staff and students, this project has led to academic and social achievement for all.



We Matter!

Gwendolyn Nixon

Huguenot High School
Richmond Public Schools
Richmond, Virginia

Additional partners:

Ester Orellana
Pamela Ragin

Dear Ms. Nixon:
Marlon told me that he passed the English Writing SOL! Congratulations....I have noted your persistent determination in ensuring the best for your students. Your dedication speaks volumes....I specifically recall our first meeting, wherein Marlon...had blatantly given up on an assignment. I remember feeling disappointed in his behavior as I don't know him to be a child to give up....However, after your firm, yet caring stance, he made a 180 degree turn around....he started taking your subject & others more seriously....I am grateful that he has a teacher like you, no I am grateful he has YOU for his teacher.

— Mrs. N. Campbell Spence
and Mr. Milton Spence

HIGHLIGHTS

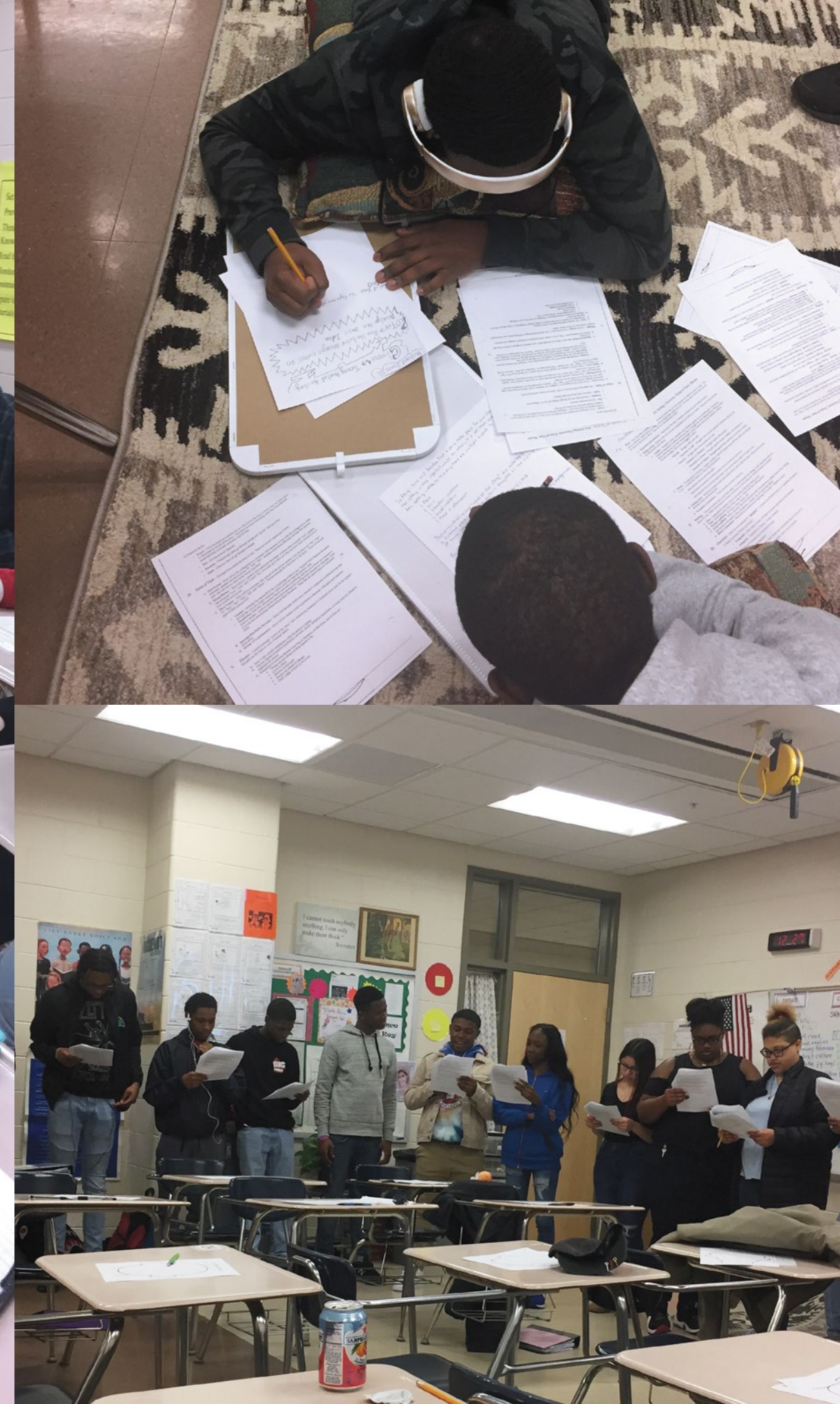
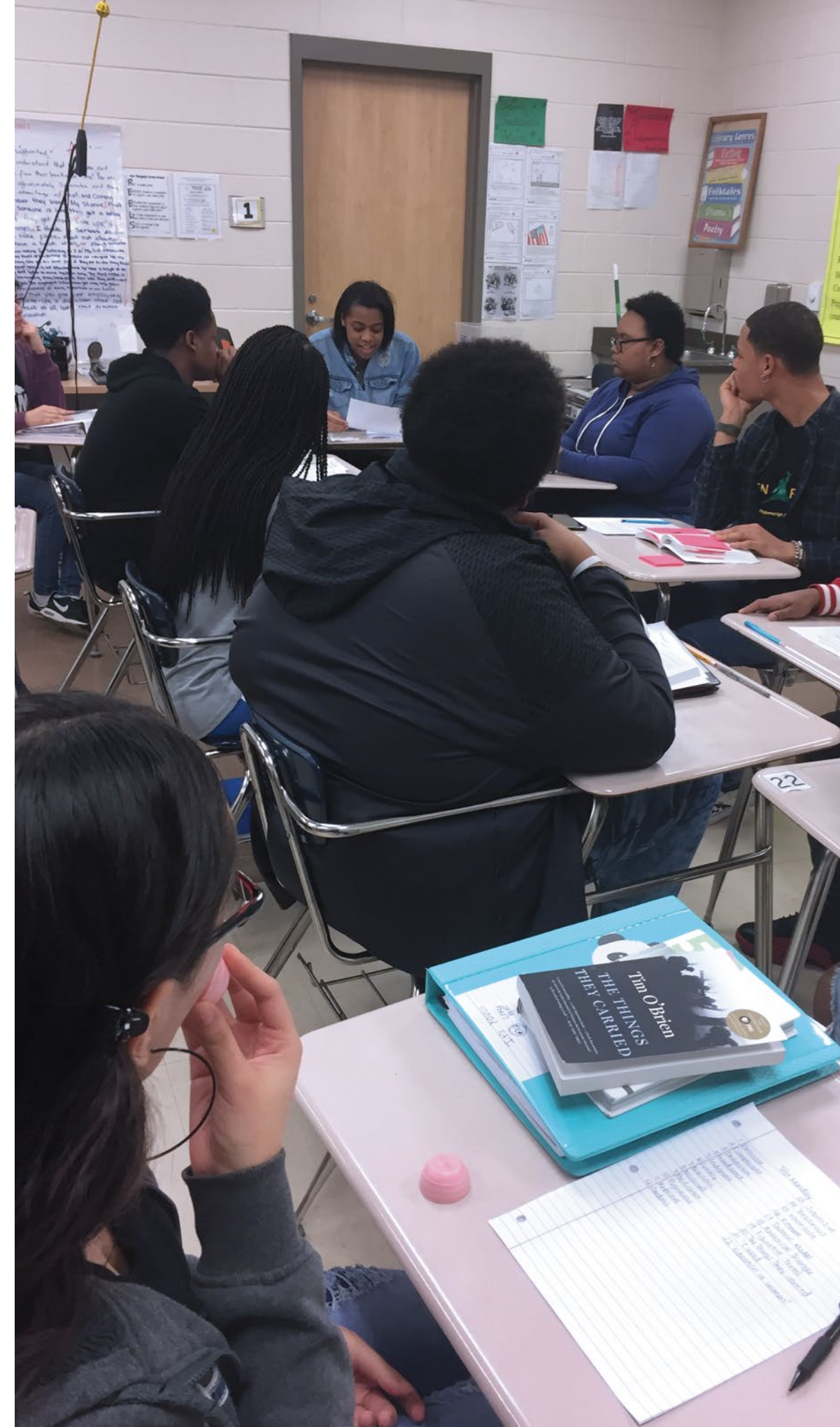
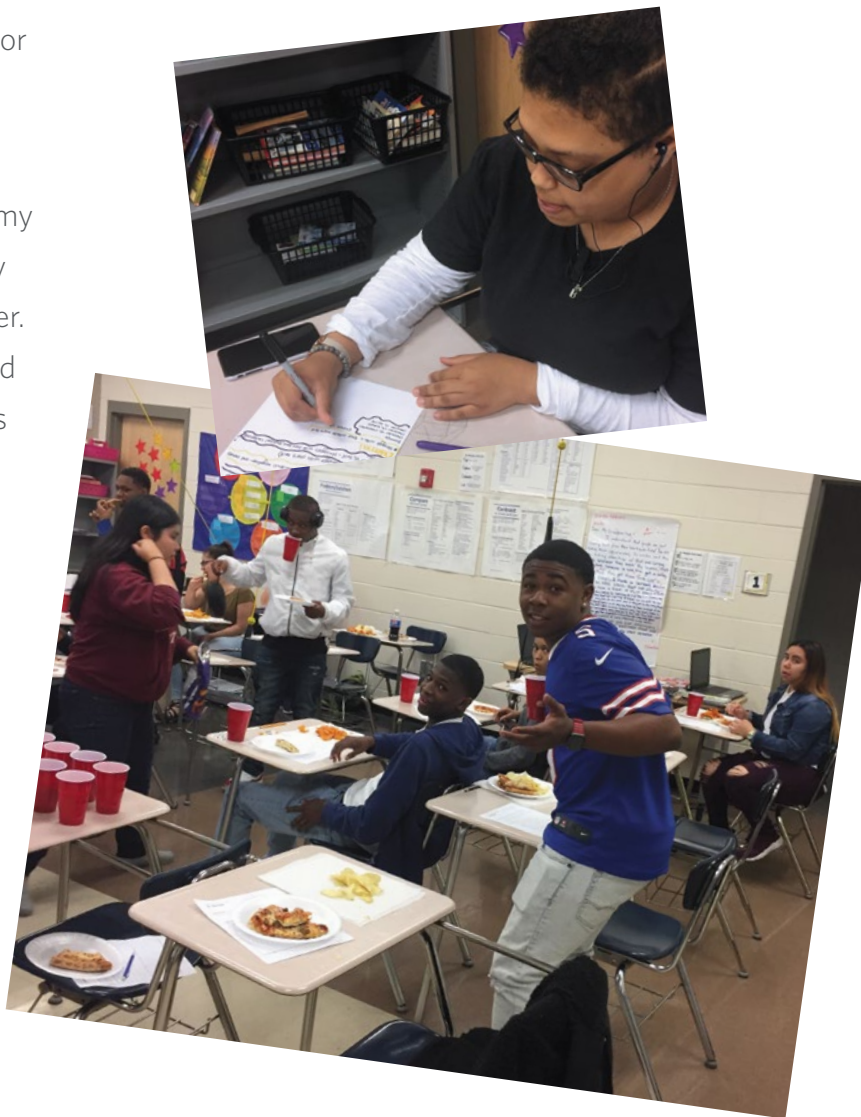
- After my students experienced the murder of two of their peers, they created a wall for their peers to write on.
- During National Walkout, one of my students gave a speech to the student body and staff.
- Students participated in intense Socratic seminars; they stayed after school (even on Saturdays), and they changed themselves and me.

CHALLENGES

- When you do this work, people may try to hinder it. Find those who will support it. For me, Ms. Ragin and Mrs. Orellana helped! They are my heroes!
- Creating Interactive Notebooks assisted my students' success. I could find texts easily and print it unencumbered with the printer. I also purchased novels, a reading rug and pillows. We celebrated successes — kids love to eat!

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Create special places for children: let them charge their phones at charging stations; provide tissue and hand sanitizer, pencils, sharpeners, hole punchers, drawing/notebook paper, and other supplies. Consider seating areas that aren't desks: rugs, pillows; high school kids like this too! If you want them to talk, provide food and real-world topics!



Adolescents forming their identity ask “Who am I and where does my identity come from?”

Lisa J. Vasquez

Ruidoso Middle and Ruidoso High School
Ruidoso Municipal Schools
Ruidoso, New Mexico

Additional partners:

Aimee Vasquez
Megan Rabourn



HIGHLIGHTS

By reading books about others like *Weedflower*, *Farewell to Manzanar*, *Wonder*, *The Book Thief*, *Schooled* and *I Am Malala*, students discussed, wrote, role played, and participated in related art activities. Students understood what factors influenced their identity, values, ideas and actions and were better equipped to understand and manage their emotional needs and show empathy for others. They also gained the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with their peers, parents and teachers.

CHALLENGES

Living in a small rural area in New Mexico it is difficult for our students to understand and relate to others who are different from their experience. It is crucial that our schools give students the necessary tools to change the stereotypes that affect their feeling about others unlike themselves and their peers.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

It is so important that teachers ensure that their students are exposed to reading materials that help them become critical thinkers and learners. By incorporating interdisciplinary activities into the curriculum, students can see that the characters in books are very much like them in many ways and helps them transform their thinking and change preconceived ideas about many of the issues that they face today. Integration of games and art activities into the reading of books gives students a hands-on relationship with the characters they are reading about. A good resource is: <https://www.common-sensemedia.org/lists/books-that-teach-empathy>.

“Reading the book Schooled made me realize how wrong it is to judge people who are different from me. I should get to know someone before I judge them.”
— 6th grade student



Leadership Development

The partnership between parents, educators and community members can be powerful for kids!

Kate Burwinkel

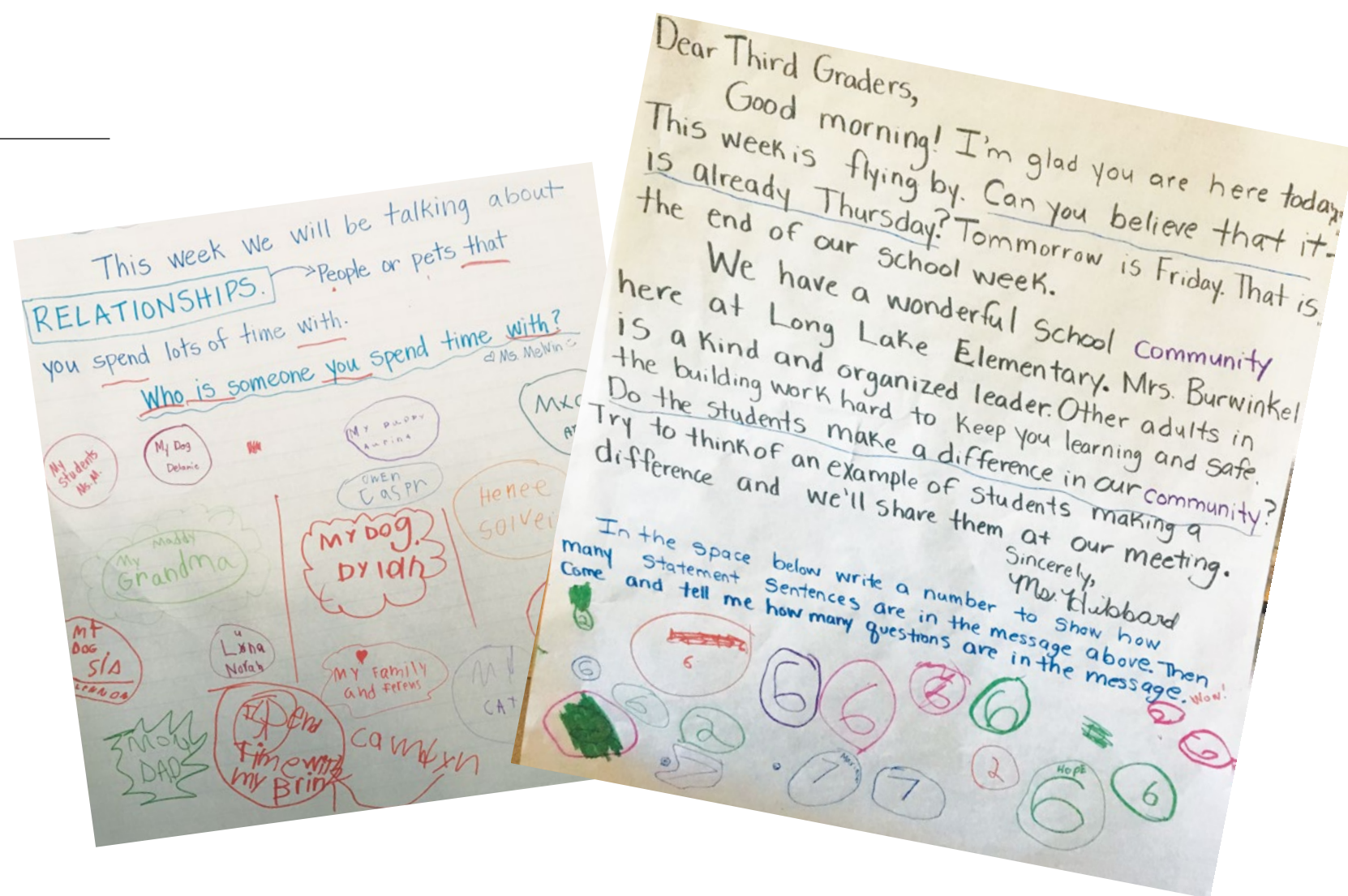
Long Lake Elementary
Traverse City Area Public Schools
Traverse City, Michigan

Additional partners:

Kelly DeLonge
Angela Jane Gorenflo
Linda Melvin
Cassie McCall
Tammy Lantz
Jennifer Wohlfert

HIGHLIGHTS

Our school's leadership team had an idea to offer workshop-style sessions for families in the area of social and emotional learning. We wanted our parents to feel connected to school and have a toolbox full of ideas to support their child's learning both academically and emotionally. Our staff led workshop sessions on a variety of topics, including Writing, Preschool Supports for Independence, Homework Help, Physical Fitness and Responsive Classroom. In addition, local community organizations also led sessions on topics such as Alternatives to Anger, Managing Screen Time, Food Health and more. The event was a huge success and built a stronger bond between our families, our school, and with the community.



Want to know more about this project? Read their blog post!
<https://education-first.com/using-sel-to-connect-with-families>



Cultivating student leadership through dual SEL initiatives: Ambassador and peer mentoring programs

Vae Champagne

Bridgeport Central High School
Bridgeport Board of Education
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Additional partners:

Melissa Gentile
Charlotte Pecquex

HIGHLIGHTS

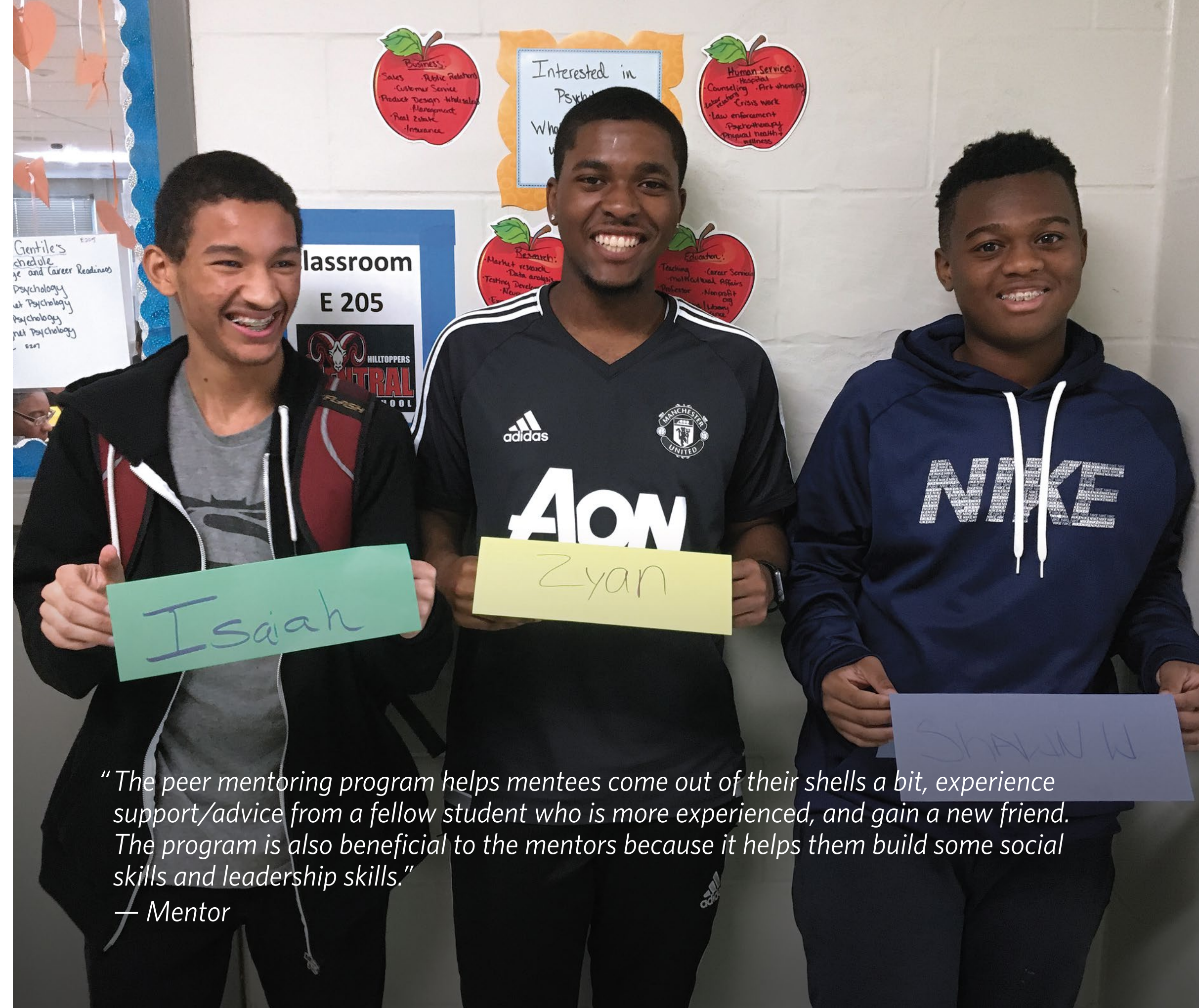
Central High School's two student-led SEL programs have empowered 35 Ambassadors and 20 Mentors to model, teach, and promulgate the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER Anchor tools, essential SEL skills, and basic restorative practices across our school community. The Ambassadors delivered formal presentations to peers, teachers and families and the Mentors provided support and guidance to ninth-graders struggling socially, emotionally, academically and/or behaviorally in school.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Give student leaders the creative space and opportunity to organize, drive and take ownership over the program's direction and main activities. Regularly circle-up with student leaders to allow the group to troubleshoot problems, support each other through challenges and share innovative ideas.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge of running these programs is working within the confines of a public high school schedule. The bulk of the student leader training and meetings, mentoring activities and special presentations must take place within the school day so that all students are able to participate and build a sense of community and collective responsibility to model and teach SEL skills to classmates. The student leaders' work is becoming an essential part of our school culture and needs to be visible and highlighted during the day.



"The peer mentoring program helps mentees come out of their shells a bit, experience support/advice from a fellow student who is more experienced, and gain a new friend. The program is also beneficial to the mentors because it helps them build some social skills and leadership skills."

— Mentor

Global leadership and social emotional learning in action

Ivee Cruz

University Laboratory School
Hawai'i State Department of Education
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Additional partners:

Asia Botelho
Dania Hill
Dayna Kitamura
Gabe Nehl
Betty Skiles

HIGHLIGHTS

Field Study to Moloka'i Island. One highlight was a field study to Moloka'i Island. This was a culture-based experiential learning inter island field study where students gained hands-on experience in social emotional learning, leadership development and community building in an immersive program.

Global Youth Summit. Another highlight was our Global Youth Summit, a youth conference with over 130 students, including more than 10 schools and community organizations represented. The summit included student presentations, facilitated interactive workshops, student-created video projects, performed spoken word and team-building exercises.

CHALLENGES

Logistics. Logistics were a challenge, particularly building, maintaining and cultivating collaborative partnerships with organizations, schools, and community leaders given busy schedules and teacher responsibilities.

Student Leader Balance. We also worked to find student leader balance, empowering student leaders to take on kuleana (responsibility), while still recognizing their needs and responsibilities as students with a full load — maintaining strong academics, athletics, church and community involvements. Also keeping in mind their mental health and wellbeing, not trying to overburden or add additional stress to their lives.



► For other ideas about mentorship, see the Mentoring projects starting on page 50.

"I learned more about SEL and how to be more aware of myself. Before coming into this class I wasn't aware or care how I react."
— Student



Student leaders learn to facilitate tough community building circle discussions during homeroom

Alexa Humberson

Katie Raymond

Natalie San Miguel

Anderson High School

Austin Independent School District

Austin, Texas

Additional partners:

Alonzo Blankenship

Sammi Harrison

Kevin Kerr

Megan Tesano

HIGHLIGHTS

Students first reflected about themselves and strengthened their own community during the homeroom leader trainings. This allowed them to believe in the importance of community within their own homeroom. Students felt empowered to facilitate SEL learning discussions with their peers through community building circles, team building and other activities.

Selected student leaders also led professional development sessions with teachers to answer questions about student facilitated SEL lessons.

CHALLENGES

Students left the training feeling energized and ready to implement strategies they had learned.

However, they had to overcome challenges of apathy from others and skepticism around the effectiveness of SEL. Students also reported feeling challenged by the tough topics they were facilitating discussions about such as healthy relationships, suicide and racism.



TRY THIS AT HOME!

Reflection is key to helping student leaders be successful. We did this through in-person reflective circles, weekly surveys and opportunities to problem solve in smaller groups with a trusted educator. Having student voice in creating homeroom lessons was also key to increasing student engagement. Lastly, we provided choices of activities for homeroom leaders in order to teach SEL competencies and address tough topics.

For a community building resource, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Alexa Humberson.



“This leadership role has given me a sort of confidence boost.”
— 11th grade student

Team Paws spreads kindness

Karrie Marciniak

Mackensen Elementary
Bay City Public Schools
Bay City, Michigan



*"We rise by lifting others."
— Robert Ingersoll*

HIGHLIGHTS

My students are an awesome group of 3rd-grade service workers. We are Team Paws! It's our goal to change the world with kindness. Even the smallest kind act can mean a lot; hold the door, smile at someone, use your manners, be humble and be kind, always.

My students understand that what they do and say matters.

They know their actions can make a difference. As members of Team Paws, they learn we truly DO rise by lifting others. Our motto, Spread Kindness, is what makes being a part of Team Paws so special and important. Team Paws is a group of 30 little kids giving back to our community through volunteerism.

CHALLENGES

When it comes to challenges on the implementation of Team Paws activities, there were very few. The biggest one was related to time when it came to carrying out big projects, but we always seemed to make it work.

I learned that the incorporation of SEL goes beyond the volunteerism activities we completed outside of the classroom.

Since receiving an Innovation Award, SEL in the classroom has become a passion of mine. I spent a lot of time teaching the kids the importance of self-love and 'on purpose' kindness. Because of this, they too were passionate about the efforts put forth by Team Paws.



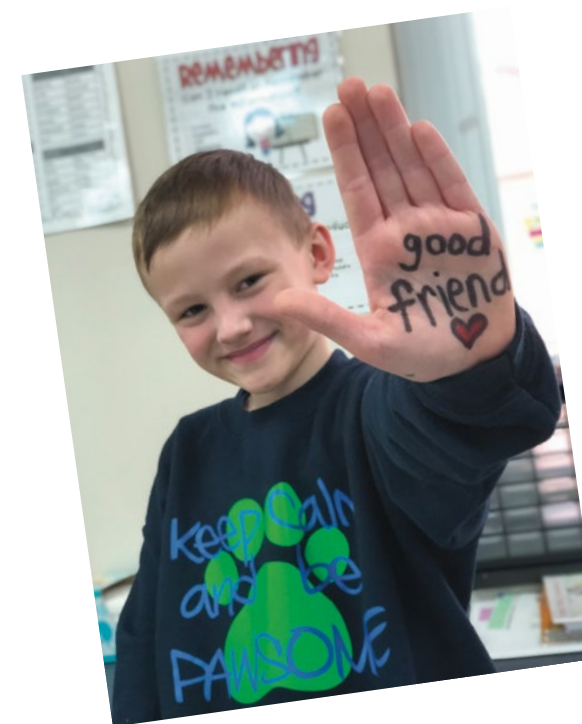
TRY THIS AT HOME!

Start small. Maybe you'll just consider starting your morning with mindfulness or meditation. We have a meeting every morning. I give the kids a chance to talk about their evening the night before or their weekend if it's a Monday.

In my classroom only one person speaks at a time and we all practice active listening.

We also recite positive "I am" statements; I am kind, I am brave, I matter, I love ME, my teacher loves me, etc.

Further, we transition back to our seats in silence with a daily goal in mind. It might be to smile at someone in the hallway, sit with someone who is alone at lunch, to hold the door for someone, etc. Steps as small as these have changed the dynamics of my classroom and my kids can also feel it!



Full day conferences that celebrate today's youth and help them develop leadership skills for tomorrow

Kathy Batty

Mary Muroski

Charlotte Central School
Chittenden Valley School District
Charlotte, Vermont

HIGHLIGHTS

The “Empower Youth Leadership Conference” brings together adolescents with diverse backgrounds to develop SEL learning and leadership skills in a supportive, community-based setting. We offer full-day conferences three times during the school year to students across the state. We focus on building the SEL skills of fragile learners while also recognizing and celebrating peer leaders within the group. Our collaboration with the Children’s Legacy Partnership Foundation (a non-profit organization that aims to provide comprehensive education to students in Uganda) via Skype sessions helps student gain global perspective as they compare their world views with those of Ugandan students.

CHALLENGES

Our biggest challenge is meeting the demand of the growing number of students who want to attend the conferences. Many more students have requested to attend than we have been able to accommodate. Each conference is limited to 50 students in order for kids to connect with each other and fully experience the activities. We are working on providing

a way for students to continue the connections and positive impact from their day together. Our student leaders are working on creating Empower Youth Leadership Clubs at the local middle schools.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

You can host a conference at your own school or district! Our first conference was held with 16 middle school students in our classrooms, which we transformed into activity spaces and a “cafe” decorated for lunch. Our efforts were well worth it based on the feedback from the students. Alternatively, choose one SEL activity from the conference to complete in your classroom. For example, have students experience the power of developing their own vision board. Using magazines, scissors, glue, and poster board, students create a vision they have for their future selves.



Empowering teens to live a meaningful life through self-actualization

Alhassan P. Susso

International Community High School
District 7, South Bronx
Bronx, New York

HIGHLIGHTS

Students were able to cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and others by engaging in emotional mastery during a weekend retreat. Every student was able to design a compelling future through the creation of a Dreamboard.

CHALLENGES

The intimate setting enables students to deeply engage with each other. Thus, expanding the class size presents a challenge both for the facilitator as well as the participants.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Ensure that there is a tangible incentive for the participants. This might include an award ceremony or a field trip. For a resource, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Alhassan P. Susso.



Agents of Change: A postmodern educational approach to teaching the heart and the mind

Mary Haddad

Disney II Magnet Elementary School
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago, Illinois

Additional partners:

Colleen Girard
Michelle Fogel
Katie Gambatese
Kathleen Matthes

HIGHLIGHTS

There is no one pedagogical strategy for teaching in the 21st century, rather multiple subjective interpretations of countless strategies. Every original educational idea has been born. A Postmodern education implements multiple strategies and theories formulating an approach that is collaborative, personalized and fosters the growth mindset of teachers and learners.

My work is a pluralistic approach with main anchors in art making, SEL, integration and collaboration. My work nurtures the head and the heart of passionate empowered learners who are agents of change, communicating their message and identifying who they are while belonging in the world around them.

CHALLENGES

One teacher's mind is not capable of understanding and meeting the diverse needs of every student.

To address this I maintain and seek out collaborating partnerships with administrators, colleagues, students' families, community members, experts in the education field, visual and performing artists, cultural institutions, museums, community organizations and other schools. Collaborating partners enrich the education that I am able to provide my students through authentic and unique learning experiences. Collaboration provides opportunities to learn from others, share my knowledge, develop new strategies and ponder new insights. Some of my most relevant experiences came from collaborating partners who offered learning and teaching opportunities that shaped me as an educator and person.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

It is essential that children can come to school, develop, learn and succeed in a positive way. This is inextricably linked to social and emotional learning. Research shows students who have a sense of belonging, can work well with classmates, solve problems, can plan and set goals and persevere through challenges—in addition to being literate, numerate and versed in scientific concepts and ideas—are more likely to maximize their opportunities and reach their full potential. The "Agents of Change" initiative promotes a sense of empowerment by defining and building community through the development of SEL skills while making art about ideas that the students elect as important and significant to who they are and their place in the world among others.

Visit the Agents of Change on the web:
www.agentsofchange.online

Visit a Postmodern approach to education on the web: www.maryhaddadeducator.com

For resources, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Mary Haddad.



"This project is the best project I have ever participated in at this school. It is so meaningful and what the students need."
— Collaborating Teacher

Growth in emotional intelligence for students with disabilities

Ray Baker

Transition Center
Hinsdale District 86
Hinsdale, Illinois

Additional partners:

Justin Ladas

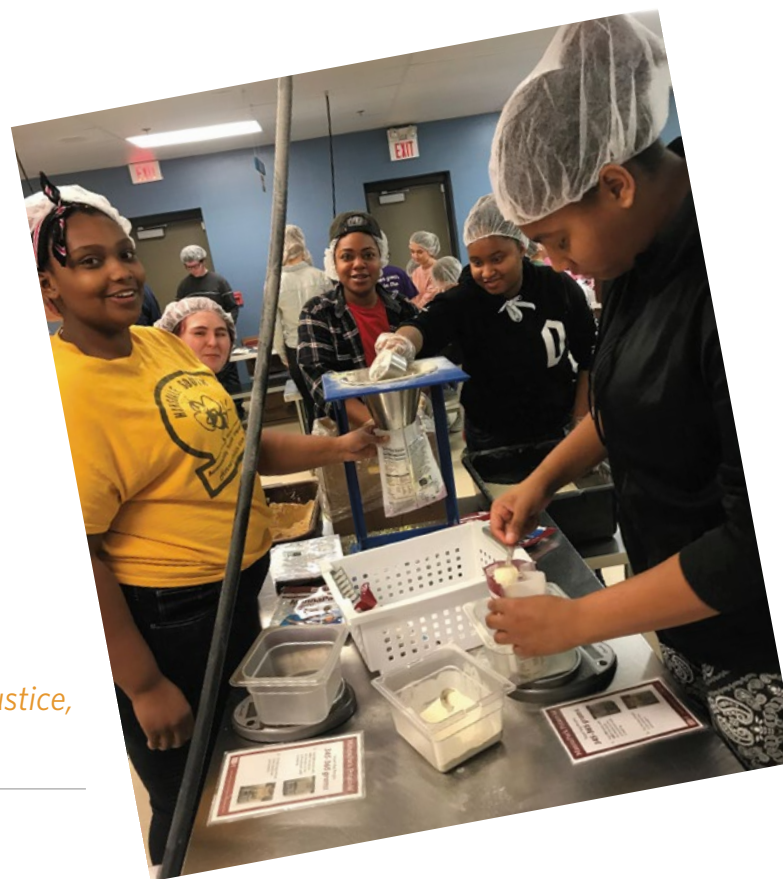
HIGHLIGHTS

Through this work we have been connecting students to community agencies for social work services. This is a related service that they have been traditionally been receiving throughout their K-12 experience. Connecting our students to an adult agency that can continue to support our students in this regard is extremely crucial. Students have identified that participating in the bi-monthly service learning was beneficial for them in connecting to their communities and developing social and leadership skills. It also served as an opportunity for students to gain work experiences in different areas to increase their knowledge about various potential career paths for them.

We captured student growth, as measured through pre/post assessment data, in targeted social and emotional skills over the course of this past school year.

CHALLENGES

The goal of this project is to support growth in emotional intelligence for students with disabilities in a transition program, while taking college classes, and application of these skills to deal with daily stressors, anxiety, and new stress



► For other ideas about incorporating restorative justice, see the Restorative projects starting on page 76.

that is directly influenced by college life (e.g. social, academic, financial). Our grant aimed to support a course and create a framework for a curriculum to address these needs for our students in their college setting, in addition to weekly SEL check-in meetings with staff, and bi-monthly service learning to enhance team building and community awareness.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

We saw a positive change in our learning community once we began to implement weekly SEL check-ins with all students. This gave staff an opportunity to have informal conversations with students outside of academics while still effectively tracking data on their social emotional health.

“I am the first person in my family to go to college and without this program I don’t know if that would have happened.”
— Student



Mentoring

Intentional focus on single-gender interventions show student gains

Jeff Broome

Tumwater High School
Tumwater School District
Tumwater, Washington

Additional partners:

Tim Graham
Kathy Knox
Lisa Perreira
Jordan Stray

HIGHLIGHTS

With a goal of increasing school connectedness and building strong peer and adult relationships, we meet with a targeted small group of female students weekly. Students often choose our discussion topics, which usually center on the difficulties of responsible decision-making and self-management. We saw increases in SEL skills as measured by our diagnostic tool and an increase in academic performance due to this intervention.

CHALLENGES

Continuing this intense work while still supporting new students next year will continue to be a challenge. We are looking at ways to increase our connection and build skills so that kids can be successful with less support.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

FOOD! Kids will respond if you have food and a safe place for them to gather. Single-gender environments have been a great way for us to explore ideas and problems in a safe place. Dig in and step out of your comfort zone while you invest in the lives of kids!



Want to know more about this project? Read their blog post!
<https://education-first.com/sel-makes-difference-struggling-students>

“When you are doing work like this you can’t go halfway in, you must invest of yourself and dig in deeply with kids. Sometimes we learn as much about ourselves as our kids learn from us. Deep mentoring and support is heart work and it can be painful but it is what our kids need.”

— Jeff Broome



Senior Mentors support freshmen in their transition to high school

Jaime MacEwen

Cumberland Regional High School
Cumberland Regional High School District
Bridgeton, New Jersey

Additional partners:

Matt Lawrence-Evans
Terence Johnson
Lauren Taniguchi



HIGHLIGHTS

A highlight of the program is a team-building day of training featuring ropes course activities and brining freshman and Senior Mentors together in an ice-breaking, orientation event that emphasizes teamwork and peer partnership. Another highlight is Family Night. Students' families joined their children, Senior Mentors, and staff at a family event featuring dinner and a guided painting experience, which encouraged family bonding and reinforcement of program efforts at home.

CHALLENGES

One challenge we've had is with continuing our work and reaching our freshmen during the second semester of our school year. Our year has two semesters and the Freshman Seminar course only runs first semester. Although our Senior Mentors have no formal obligation to do so, they often continue to meet with and check in with their freshmen on their own time.



TRY THIS AT HOME!

A wonderful event to plan for any program or school is Role Model Day. It is the culminating event for the Freshman Seminar course. Students write a letter to a significant role model in their life. The role models are invited to the school on Role Model Day. Each student reads his/her letter to their selected role model in front of an audience of all invited guests. It's one of the most meaningful and valuable events of the school year!



Want to know more about this project? Read their blog post!
<https://education-first.com/sel-can-make-high-school-little-less-scary>

An additional tool in our toolbox: Cross-age peer mentoring reaches students

Karyn Rabe

Desert Cove Elementary School
Paradise Valley Unified School District
Phoenix, Arizona

Additional partners:

Sharon Denny

HIGHLIGHTS

Students deemed at-risk due to adversity can lay the foundation for resiliency through relationships with older peers. Cross-age peer-mentoring gives Desert Cove an additional resource for relationship-building. Relationships are a catalyst for resiliency, the ability for students to recover more quickly from difficulties. The mentoring program gives students structured opportunities that enable them to experience feelings of competence, belonging and optimism.

CHALLENGES

The only challenge was structuring the students' time together within the regular school day without encroaching upon traditional academics. Once students were matched with a mentor, the duo established times to regularly meet. At times, this proved difficult but not impossible. Teachers were flexible and understood the value of this resource.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Fifth and sixth grade students were trained to mentor younger students using a model following Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The activities used to train the mentors benefited both the mentors and, via proxy, the mentees. Further, the training activities for the mentors had the state standards integrated within them allowing for an effective use of time.

"The mentor program provides our older students critical opportunities to develop as leaders and serve as role models while serving the mentee in the most important developmental factor: relationships. It's a win-win."

— Principal Stacey A. Orest



The most important thing a girl wears is her confidence

Shawana Ridley

Burnside School
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago, Illinois

Additional partners:

April Price

HIGHLIGHTS

Brown Girl Magic is an empowerment program for girls. We wanted to develop strong, intelligent and confident young ladies to grow up to be successful women in our society. We spent the majority of our time building a sisterhood among the girls because we believe that it is important to gain strength, respect and accomplishment through solidarity. Our mission is S.P.I.R.I.T.E., a promise to Support, Protect, Include, Trust and Encourage one another.

CHALLENGES

Our challenge was time management. Although we had regularly scheduled meetings, the girls were encouraged to utilize before classes, lunch, recess and after school to complete the task we put in place. However, conflict with other activities within the school environment did create obstacles and some of our girls struggled with management of time.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Our end of year component to our BGM program was designed to expand and create other empowering programs for young Brown Girls in our district through Step. Step is an African tradition that uses movement, words and sounds to communicate allegiance to a group. We invited other schools within our district to compete in a SEL All-Girl Step Show Competition hosted by Burnside School's Brown Girl Magic. It received positive feedback and was described as an excellent tool for SEL inspired programs.



Grandparents helped us plant gardens and experience plant life cycles

Elizabeth Syria

Ibapah Elementary School
Tooele School District
Ibapah, Utah

Additional partners:

Baylee Gardner

HIGHLIGHTS

Tribal Elders and ranching seniors got to know students at our school and helped them build and plant our garden. We planned activities such as a musical program, planting and working our garden. We provided special invitations for Tribal Elders and Seniors to join us in our school field trip and other activities.

CHALLENGES

I did not realize how difficult it would be to get Elders and Seniors to participate. It took special programs to get them into the school. We had a grandparents program with musical numbers, planting activities, and refreshments. We invited them to our school activities. We ended up with great support from our "Grandparents."

TRY THIS AT HOME!

We had a great time building planting boxes and planting flowers. I would make sure to know your planting zone. We had some unhappy plants as it is too cold and windy for many plants to thrive in our area.



An apple a day will help you find your way ... Building resiliency through The Big 3

Dana Davis

Sandy Shoemaker

Glover Community Learning Center
Akron Public Schools
Akron, Ohio

Additional partners:

Christopher Milo
Teresa Noland
Nancy Ritch

HIGHLIGHTS

Tremendous effort was put into truly embracing SEL strategies that would help our students be successful in the classroom and in life. Students embraced the many SEL activities and strategies that allowed them to give voice to their emotions in a non-threatening atmosphere. Students were eager to share experiences and were excited to offer guidance to their peers as student mentors. Additionally, students took ownership of the 13 Messages from Milo and incorporated them into their daily lives. As a result, Glover students showed growth on MAP assessments and improved social-emotional development.

CHALLENGES

Knowing that change is needed is not the same as knowing how to produce that change. One of the challenges in developing and implementing this project was creating staff buy-in for social and emotional learning and restorative practices. By inviting staff, students and parents to be stakeholders in building a positive climate, and through the sharing of evidence based research such as the five SEL competencies and brain-based strategies, we were able to move forward collectively.

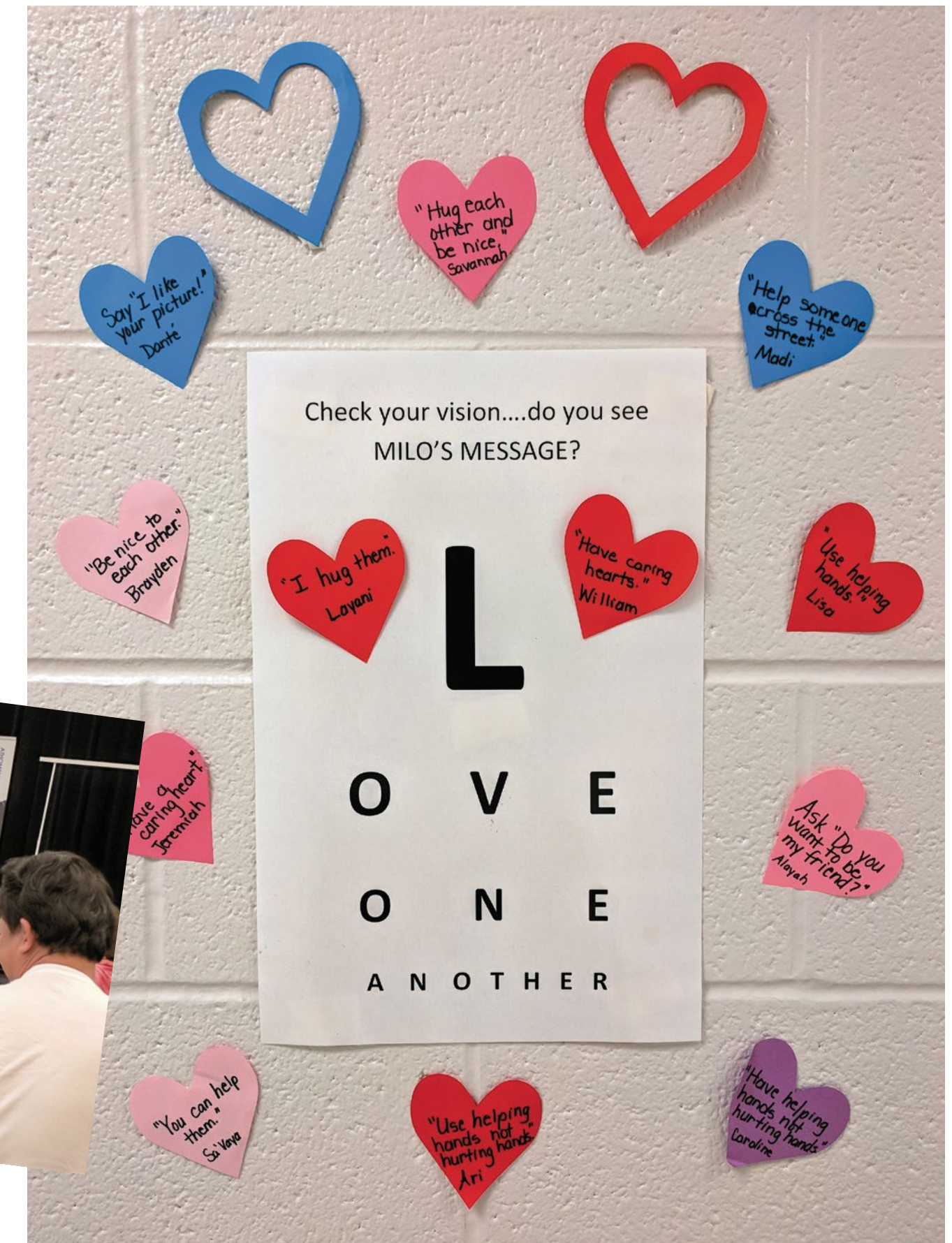


*“My favorite message is Love One Another.”
— Kindergarten student*

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Teacher leaders researched and developed SEL activities for school and home to support the three focus goals: Treat Others Right, Maximize Your Potential and Make Smart Decisions and the 13 Messages from Milo: Be Positive, Love One Another, Trust, Work Together, Accept, Use Your Talents, Be Creative, Inspire, Coach, Be Curious, Listen, Communicate, and Be Genuine. Information about Christopher Milo and the 13 Messages can be found at: www.christophermilo.com.

Information regarding the SEL school and home activities/resources can be obtained by emailing Dana Davis: ddavis3@apslearns.org.



Helping English Learners feel at home with multilingual mentoring

Tina Vasquez

Charlottesville High School
Charlottesville City Schools
Charlottesville, Virginia

Additional partners:

Aleena Haidari
Kara Menfi



HIGHLIGHTS

While the mission of Multilingual Mentoring is to create a safe environment in order to help new English Learners feel connected and capable of succeeding in school, we found mentors reported great benefits as well. They felt increased confidence and satisfaction from helping the new students.

Another highlight was a group project created by the mentoring groups. They made posters with messages about their cultures for their peers and posed together with the posters. This was made into a video that was presented to the student body at our annual Diversity Assembly.

CHALLENGES

Communication with mentors and holding them accountable was a challenge, as we didn't have a class together. We didn't see some of the mentors at all outside this program, so we attempted sending emails, creating a shared Google Drive, and texting students who said they didn't use email regularly.

Another challenge was building community within some of the groups. Just because they speak the same home language doesn't mean they feel comfortable together.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Have students create a simple video with a topic that is important to them!

Provide prompts, have students brainstorm and then choose their top two or three. Students can hold up the posters and speak or stand silently for three-second videos. Piece the clips together with some music, and voila!

"This program was really helpful for those who were new in here and it was helpful for me as well because I learned a lot from them."

— Afghan Mentor



Intensive mentoring for 9th grade students who experience increased challenges with the transition into high school

Jessica Williams

South Anchorage High School
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

► For other ideas about community building, see the Leadership Development projects starting on page 32.

HIGHLIGHTS

With the funding and support from this grant, we were able to create a specific committee dedicated to planning and support for 9th graders who are having a harder time transitioning in to our school. We were also able to create a “community space” to promote gatherings for students, separate from the classroom, so that they can find a sense of togetherness in each other.

CHALLENGES

Our biggest challenge in our work this school year was an entire turnover in leadership in our building. We have an all-new administration team, which has slowed down our progress, although they have been highly supportive of the program. In addition, we lack time to spend with the “intensive needs” students built in to our school schedule. We were able to meet with students with the support of teachers allowing us to take students away from their normal class time to meet with us. This is not an ideal situation.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Our class website with resources, including a Mentorship Handbook created entirely by our Mentorship class student leaders:

<http://bit.ly/SAHSPeerMentorship>

A webinar we partnered on about student leadership and peer mentorship through Sevenzo:

<https://www.sevenzo.org/get-involved/teacher-talk/archive/student-student-mentoring-impacts-students-2-2/>

The training program we use:

<http://www.ignitionmentoring.com>

Support and recognition of an “Innovative Education Technology Program” because of our webinar work from the State of Alaska (click on the drop pin in the center):

<https://education.alaska.gov/edtech>

To view these resources, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Jessica Williams.

“I love the new community space in our school. It’s nice to go to a space in our school where we can feel relaxed and where there is no agenda. We can make this space be what we want it to be and if we want to, we can just be with each other.”

— SAHS student



Mindfulness

Promoting wellness, focus, engagement, self-regulation and positive mindset for success

David Genovese

Nicholas Mazzearella

Linda Noble, Ph.D.

Brooklyn College Academy

District 22

Brooklyn, New York

Additional partners:

Audrey Delgado

Michele Israel

David Perin

Kelli Peterman

Malgorzata Powietrynska Ph.D.

Erica Steele

Cathy Trentalancia

Arlene Sola Vargas

HIGHLIGHTS

Brooklyn College Academy's Mindfulness Center is a newly renovated space launched by the Mental Health by Design in Schools Award.

BCA mindful curriculum and programming is being researched, designed and implemented in partnership with MNDFL ED, BCA and Brooklyn College faculty. Our Mindfulness team is trained to empower all BCA students to cultivate non-judgemental, present awareness in the context of a highly competitive Early College setting.

CHALLENGES

First Lady of NYC, Chirlane McCray recently stated, "It's so important to reclaim time for mental health" highlighting the challenges and the need for exemplary models for student social emotional learning and wellness in schools, as noted in Huffington Post ([getsmall.link/f91a7af3](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mental-health-in-schools)).

We face the challenges of the initial "buy in" due to preconceptions and time limitations.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Are YOU feeling overwhelmed or just plain stressed out from testing, teacher evaluation, lack of time and funding? YOU are not alone! Connect with BCA Mindful Student Ambassadors, and/or the BCA Mindfulness Team at <https://www.bcaminfulnesscenter.com/>

We can be Mindful together! To view this resource, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on David Genovese.

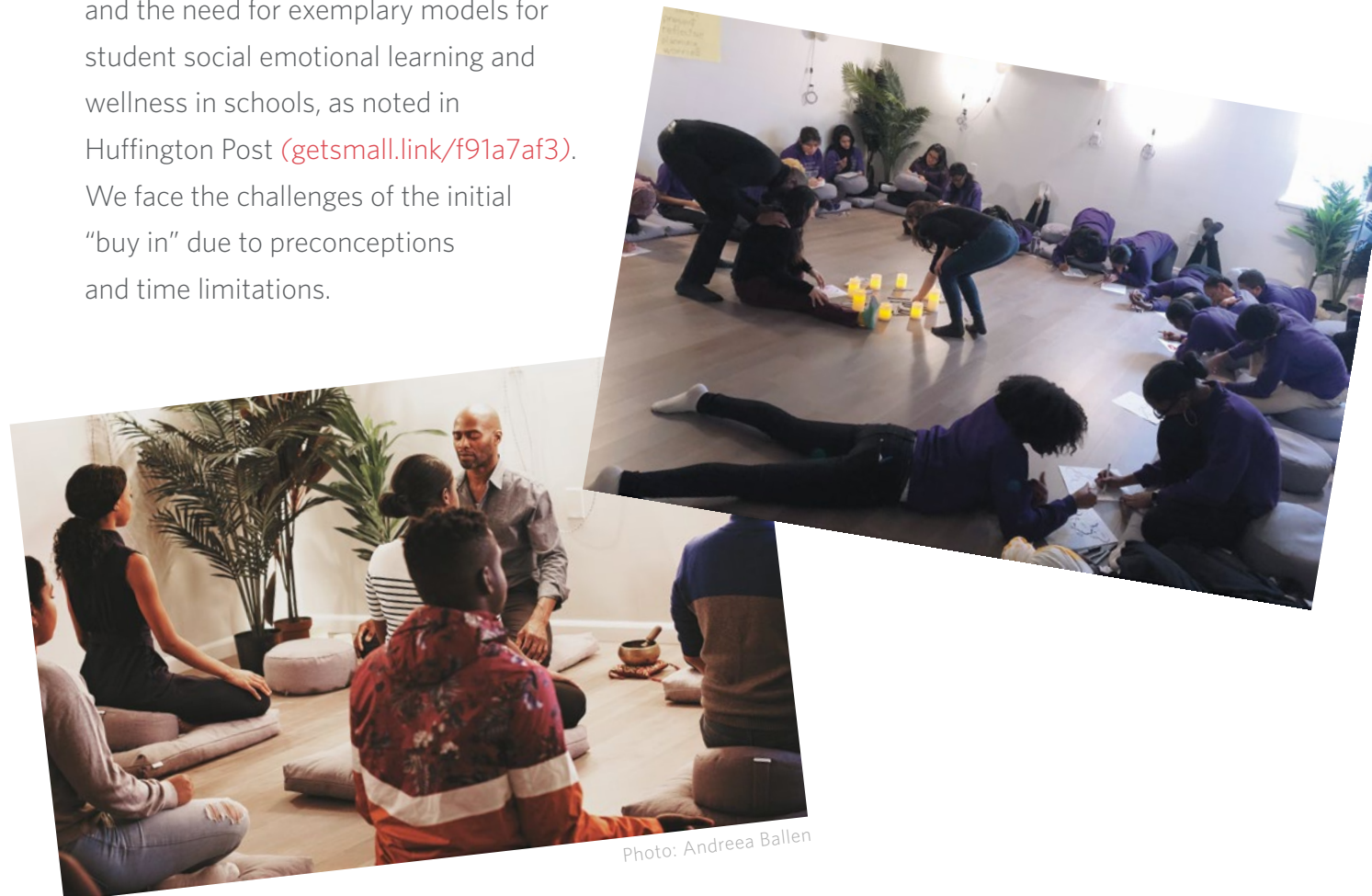


Photo: Andreea Ballen



Photo: Andreea Ballen

The ABCs of EQ: teaching emotional intelligence can improve performance and well-being

Christopher Poulos

Joel Barlow High School
Regional School District No. 9
Redding, Connecticut

Additional Stakeholders:

Henry DelAngelo
Carolyn Huminski
Brian Luzietti
Julie McTague
Gina Pin
Jack Powers
Joe Sopko

HIGHLIGHTS

After our team of six teacher-leaders and two administrators (The EQ8) attended the High School Anchors of Emotional Intelligence workshop at Yale, we developed and implemented four SEL Advisory lessons for half of the ninth grade class and we measured the impact on students. The lessons focused on helping students to recognize, understand, label, express and regulate their emotions. The result: Nearly ten percent more of the Grade 9 cohort who received the lessons improved their GPAs (from the first to the third quarter), as compared to their peers who did not participate in the pilot.

CHALLENGES

Two challenges emerged concerning content and data: What did we want students to learn, and how would we know what we were doing was working?

While using four 20-minute advisory meetings already in the schedule accommodated our work without additional disruptions, segmenting EQ content into isolated and explicit chunks of information to learn seemed counterintuitive to the ultimate aim of infusing and evolving a cultural mindshift.

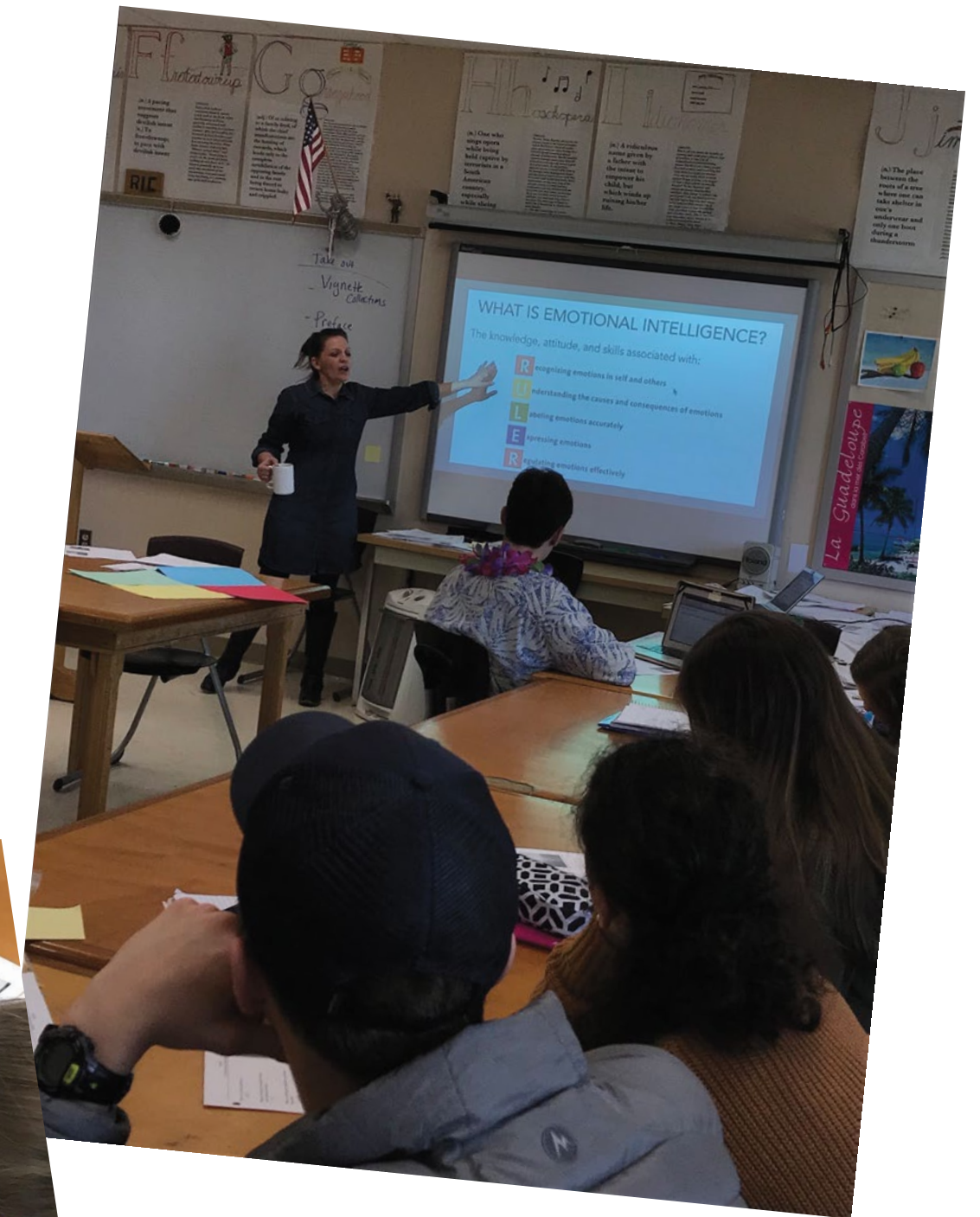
Secondly, tracking progress, specifically a correlation between emotional intelligence and academic growth, has been difficult to show, though our science partner (Yale) has provided powerful measurement tools to bolster other in-house data.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

The EQ8 team harnessed structures already in place, such as creating Student Learning Objectives that were SEL-based for their annual evaluation and professional learning plans. Doing so provided some times already scheduled for SLO collaboration throughout the process. We also formed a partnership with Yale, whose expertise in and access to research-based practices, policies, and tools helped make our work more substantive and efficient. Lastly, we aligned our work with existing aspects of our school culture, showing colleagues how SEL language is explicitly and implicitly already at the heart of our school-wide expectations for students.

To view resources, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Christopher Poulos.

“SEL isn’t something that we do. We do not view this work as a specific program or add on to include when we have time; rather being responsive to social and emotional learning is who we are, and we aim to model emotional intelligence for our students as we embed these competencies into our curriculum.”
— Principal



The Jefferson Middle School Mindful Kitchen: Savoring being fully present in the kitchen and at the table

Chrissa W. Sullivan

Jefferson Middle School
Mt. Lebanon School District
Pittsburgh, PA

HIGHLIGHTS

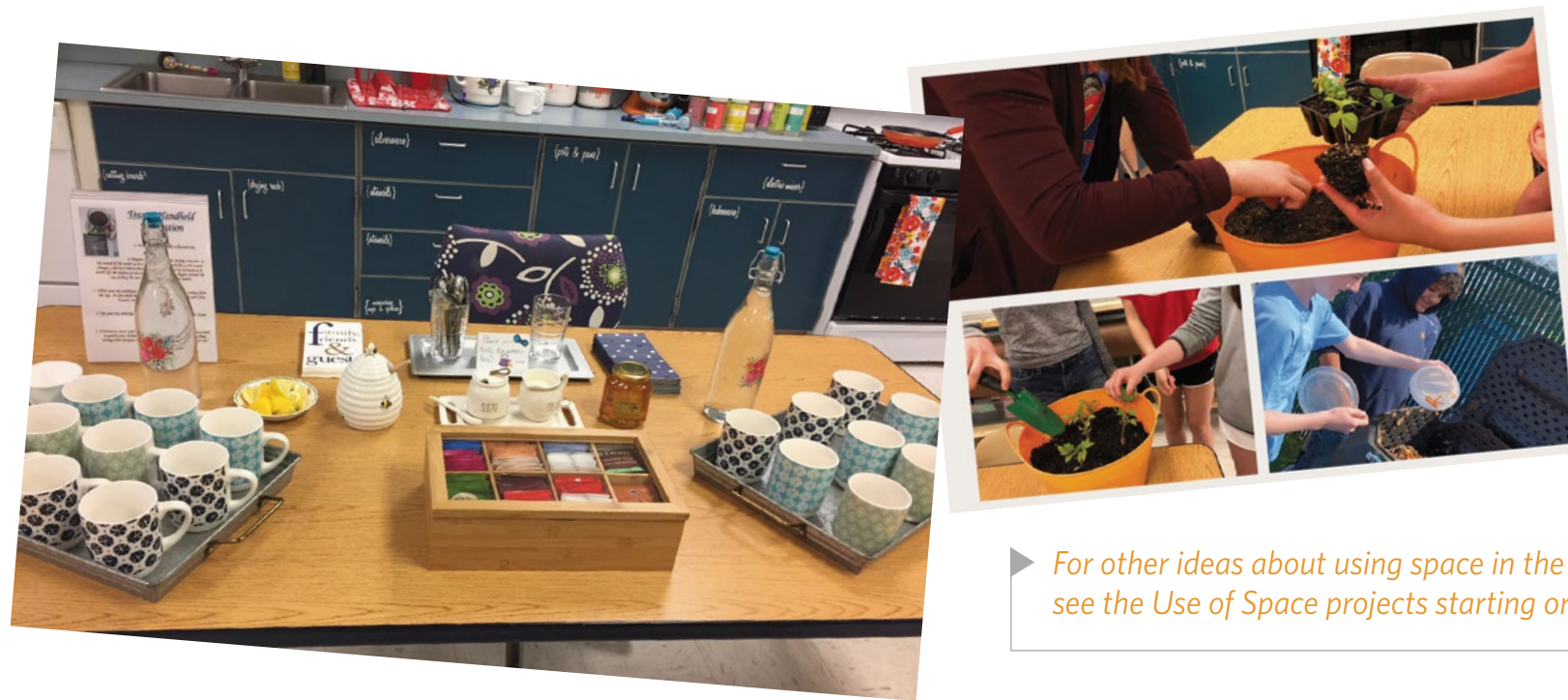
Beyond getting kids and families back to the dinner table to learn basic SEL competencies, the program showcases the kitchen as a meditative practice space with cooking and eating offering unique opportunities to explore core mindfulness concepts. Think about it. What better way to learn to practice mindfulness than with a treat and a hot cup of tea, especially for hungry middle schoolers?

At the foundation of the JMS Mindful Kitchen is a hands-on, eight-week mindful eating integrated curriculum that sends the students on weekly mindful sense adventures: The Chocolate Kiss Experiment; Teacup Meditation, Hot Cocoa Breathing Exercise; Thank the Farmer and the Edible Herb Garden; 5-4-3-2-1 Knife Skills; Dishwashing with Mindfulness; Setting our SEL Table; and Table Etiquette 101.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Teacup Meditation: In FCS we stop and have tea, learning to anchor our attention to the textures, smells, and flavors at our fingertips and to be attuned to the reactions going on in our bodies and in our minds as we slowly sip a cup of tea. Normally students would suck down the entire cup of tea in one gulp and cram the whole tea cookie in their mouth without even thinking...all while probably also snap chatting their friends or playing Fortnite. But not now—they are curious about the vivid colors that result from different tea combinations, they enjoy the sensation of the warm cup in their hands, they practice taking a few deep breaths using the ‘hot tea’ technique, and they have lively conversations with their friends around them.

To view resources, visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Chrissa W. Sullivan.



For other ideas about using space in the classroom, see the Use of Space projects starting on page 98.

*“With mindfulness, the simple act of drinking a cup of tea becomes a profound experience.”
— Thich Nhat Hanh*



Restorative Practices

Universal systems to support student self-regulation

Susan Bernhagen

Glendale Elementary School
Madison Metropolitan School District
Madison, Wisconsin

Additional partners:

Amy Agnew
Emily Golliher
Kristen Guetschow
Dana Kartos
Sara Knueve
Sara Milewski
Amy Riege

HIGHLIGHTS

This project expanded upon the foundation Glendale Elementary school has built around social and emotional learning. Our plan was to strengthen teachers' capacities to support students' sensory and emotional regulation. This grant allowed our multi-disciplinary team to strengthen universal practices around sensory regulation using Zones of Regulation curriculum and mindfulness lessons in conjunction with continued development and implementation of our Tiger's Den, a sensory regulation room. The Tiger's Den is a short-term intervention with the goal of students becoming more aware of their sensory needs and solutions and to carry that awareness back into the classroom and other school environments.

CHALLENGES

We found a number of challenges in implementation of our grant work. As with any innovation it takes a level of consistent dedication and staffing. We were challenged to provide staff coverage for student time in the Tiger's Den. Also, we found it took additional effort to support consistency in staff practices surrounding our SEL and ZONEs work. Lastly, we found the management of materials challenging in both the classroom-based sensory boxes and Tiger's Den.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Visit our Facebook group, The Zones of Regulation in Action: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/617901991629596/> or visit selfforteachers.org/2017-resources and click on Susan Bernhagen.



"I like Tiger's Den because it helps me stay calm, it is fun and it helps me learn."
— 2nd grade student

► For other ideas about using space in the classroom, see the Use of Space projects starting on page 98.

Building SEL culture through restorative practices, mindfulness, and explicit instruction for newcomer English Learners' empowerment

Samantha Curtis

ENLACE
Lawrence Public Schools
Lawrence, MA

Additional partners:

Nelly Alba
Aric Avina
Allison Balter
Stephanie Basora
Lindsay Brennan
Jeannette Jimenez
Matthew Clements

HIGHLIGHTS

Our students now share more openly about their needs, emotions, life experiences, and aspirations in class. All staff received training in restorative practices, leading to a new school-wide routine of weekly circles led by advisors. Circles have permeated school culture and are a way for students to have voice and solve problems on their own.

Our students have planned circles to address community issues, including our Peer Mediators leading a circle on respect in school and Student Government facilitating a circle about keeping our school clean!

CHALLENGES

We saw benefits to using advisory as a space dedicated to SEL, and so we are excited to tackle the challenge of embedding SEL practices even more into our classroom routines, content and schoolwide systems. We're hopeful that we can build on the foundation laid this year to improve support for our Newcomers who come

to us with trauma. We hope these expanded approaches and support students who present difficulties with managing emotion in the classroom, developing peer relationships, and forming positive identity.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Our students have learned social and emotional learning skills and mindfulness strategies with our Advisory Curriculum and Morning Restorative Circles.

Use the Mindful Monday activities to develop a mindfulness routine. If you're looking for more resources on Restorative Justice circles in school, take a look at "Circle Forward" from Living Justice Press and look into some of the amazing trainings from Suffolk University in Boston.



► For other ideas about supporting Newcomers, see the Arts & Literature projects starting on page 10.

Implementation of restorative justice helps Homer Flex High School strengthen relationships between students and build a stronger, safer school community

Chris Brown
Ingrid Harrald

Homer Flex High School
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Homer, Alaska

Additional partners:

Lindsay Martin
Collette Choate
Elizabeth Schneider
David Lefton
Ella Parks
Hailee Fisher
Audnia Carlson

HIGHLIGHTS

School-wide community building circles each morning quickly became an important space for safe and accepting student sharing. As an alternative school with a transient population we wanted to create an easier path for students to feel part of the school community quickly. Circles made these transitions smoother.

Approaching discipline in a restorative way has had a profound effect on our school. One student with a history of insubordination and expulsions acted out in class and was sent to the administrator. Although District policy would have required detention, we were able to hold a restorative circle where the student recognized her behavior and was able to work with the teacher to find better solutions, remain in school and repair the relationship.



As one student stated: "I like circles. The circles made me feel like I can speak up without being judged. I am usually a super quiet person but the circle times we have had made me open out and be able to speak up without feeling pressured."

CHALLENGES

Finding the time to implement Restorative Practices fully was challenging. It takes dedication to do it right and buy-in of all staff involved. We were lucky to have the funding from this grant to allow us appropriate time for training and preparation.



Circle Guidelines

- * Active and attentive listening
- * Help each other stay focused
- * Be prepared
- * Support others and give them time to share, don't interrupt
- * no judgement
- * NO distractions - phones, technology, snacks
- * Respect - treat others how you want to be treated
- * Speak Confidently
- * Don't pressure people to talk, you are free to pass
- * Confidentiality of the Circle

Building capacity in schools to support Restorative Reentry for students who have been suspended

Jillian Meade

Succeed Boston

Boston Public Schools

Boston, Massachusetts

Additional partners:

Jodie Elgee

Eileen Lara

Micha Martin

HIGHLIGHTS

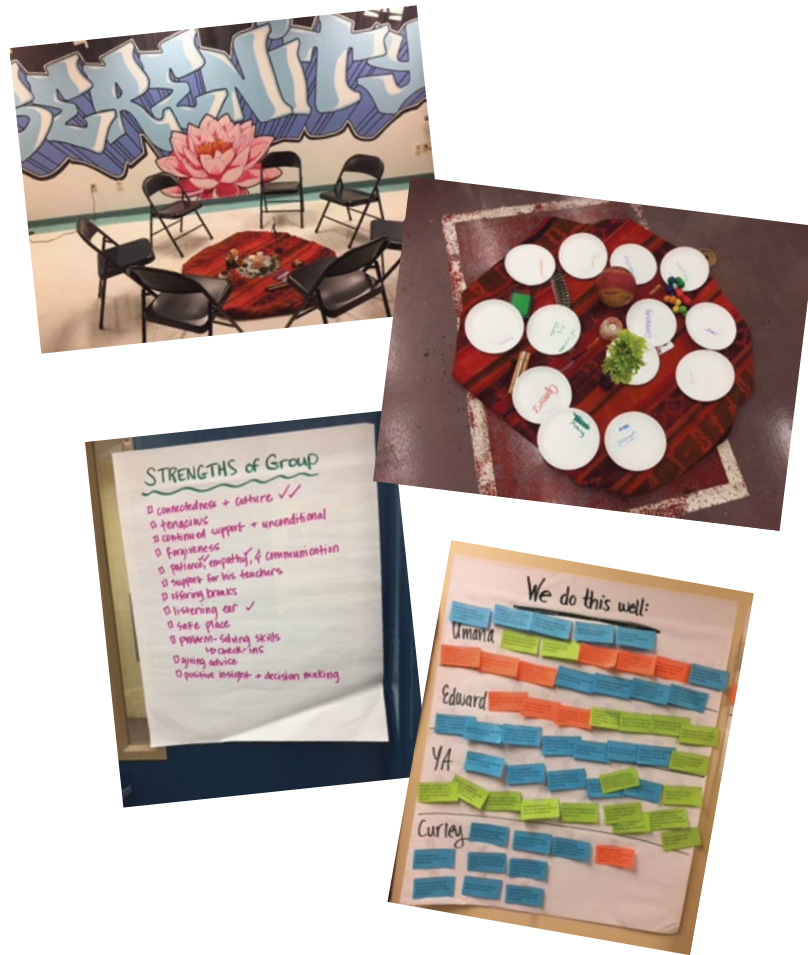
- Staff at four partner middle schools were trained in Restorative Justice
- Reentry Circles were implemented at partner middle schools for returning students
- Students, families and school staff were able to come together in productive ways to listen to one another, voice concerns, repair harms, and create collaborative plans for success
- We developed a new partnership with a community-based organization to continue to support Restorative Reentry at Boston Public Schools

CHALLENGES

- Coordinating the preparation work necessary for effective Reentry Meetings involving students, families and staff in time for the student's first day back
- Implementing Restorative Reentry Circles with partner schools that had varying levels of knowledge and experience with Restorative Justice

TRY THIS AT HOME!

- To see Oakland Unified School District's guide for Restorative Justice Whole-School Implementation Guide, visit selfforteachers.org/2017/resources and click on Jillian Meade.
- Have school staff map their own School Restorative Justice Culture at the outset, to better gauge the areas of strengths and challenges for effective implementation



► For other ideas about community building, see the Leadership Development projects starting on page 32.

Empowering our students' identities: honoring their languages, cultures, and perspectives as immigrants and refugees

Carrie Stradley

Foster High School

Tukwila School District

Tukwila, Washington

Additional partners:

Colleen Bjurstrom

Luis Escamilla

Hongyan Newton

HIGHLIGHTS

In the Narrative Project, students wrote their own stories that highlight their families' experiences and identities. This self-awareness had many students, for the first time, articulating their experiences in English. Students' stories highlighted intense struggle and determination. Students then came together to share their work and create connections in order to build a collective Narrative. Students from all levels of English language acquisition worked together to bring their combined Narrative to the stage, incorporating not only their experiences but their languages as well. Creating a space to highlight our students, and validating first languages promotes learning and honors students' funds of knowledge.

CHALLENGES

From this work the need to address SEL in a more systemic manner was made abundantly clear. How can we involve all content areas in this work? How might we bring in social services to reach out to our communities? How can we find other unique ways to honor students' funds of knowledge? These are questions our teachers will begin to address.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Using drama techniques across the different language acquisition levels has been one of the greatest assets to the Narrative Project. A local theatre company has worked with us in the use of different strategies that allow all students to participate and understand the nuance of language and usage. In addition, using translanguaging methodologies has encouraged more collaboration and language learning. When a community honors and promotes other language and culture in an authentic way, students and their cultures are given legitimacy in their environment.



► For other ideas about literature and SEL, see the Arts & Literature projects starting on page 10.

Families that play together, stay together: Family reunification project

Carol Tureski

International H.S. at LaGuardia C.C.
NYC DOE
Queens, New York

Additional partners:

Bridget Filarski
Sean Galvin
Arlene Gonzalez
Blanca Loria
Younas Saleem
Jackie Valane
Joelle Vescey

HIGHLIGHTS

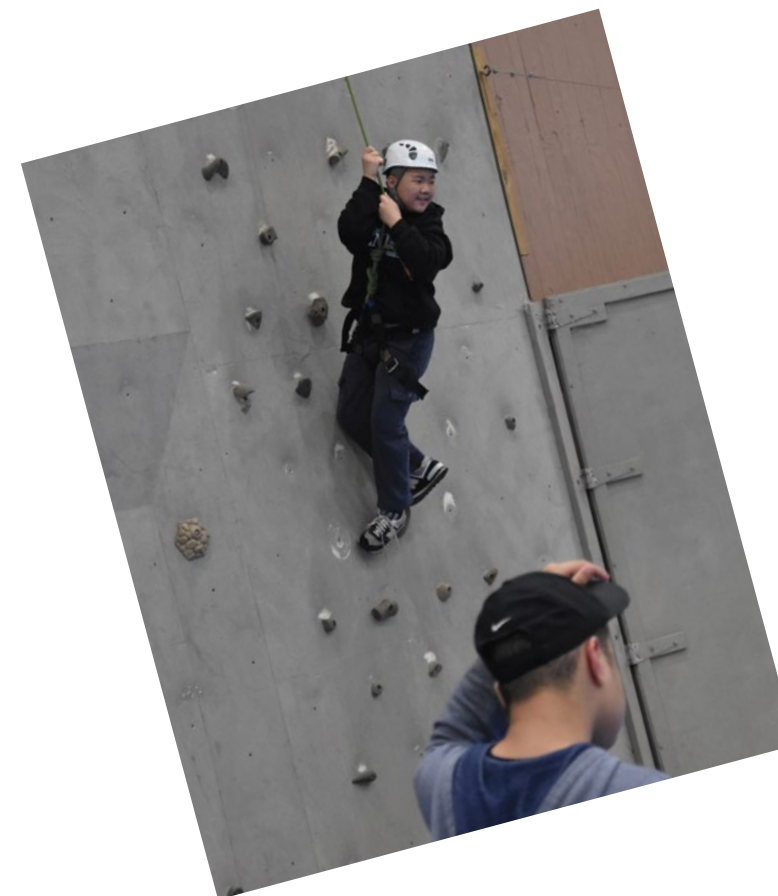
The turnout of families that participated in our school Family Reunion events was our major highlight. Educators wrestle with how to engage parents at the high school level. We realized that structuring our events as community gatherings as opposed to PTA meetings led to increased attendance. Each event included interactive family activities, parent-to-parent conversations, representatives from community organizations and family reflection and share out. On a freezing night in January, we set up for 25 families. By night's end, the room was full to capacity with over 75 people. Together we created a list of family favorite day trips in NYC and practiced partner yoga poses. And on a rain-filled day in May, families arrived in numbers to complete an outdoor adventure course. The adage, people vote with their feet, proved true.

CHALLENGES

Our grant targeted families who experienced separation due to immigration. Getting students and family members to speak openly about their experiences of separation was a challenge. We shifted gears and decided to focus more on the reunification rather than the separation of the families. We created opportunities for these families to communicate and form bonds that would lay the foundation to building healthy relationships between students and their parents. We learned people can talk about difficult things, but it is a process.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Cover the basics. Provide nutritious food and transportation cards for families that attend school functions. Get people talking. Keep people talking. Include activities that require dialogue and movement at school meetings. Take time for reflection. Have participants at school meetings reflect on what they learned and what they want to do with the information before they leave.



“Your program is truly fantastic and the positive energy in the room is infectious. The families were amazing and completely involved.”
— Yoga instructor

Inclusive, differentiated mathematics instruction for refugee students experiencing interrupted education

Daniel Schneider

Amphitheater High School
Amphitheater Unified School District
Tucson, Arizona

Additional partners:

Devahi Balachandran
Jon Lansa

HIGHLIGHTS

Students learned mathematics through a blend of hands-on manipulatives, visual problem solving and one-on-one tutor mentors. Students participated in class through a blended model of instruction, working online at their own pace while also engaging in real-world mathematical discussions and debates. As a result, a high percentage of our refugee students successfully transitioned to mainstream math classes.

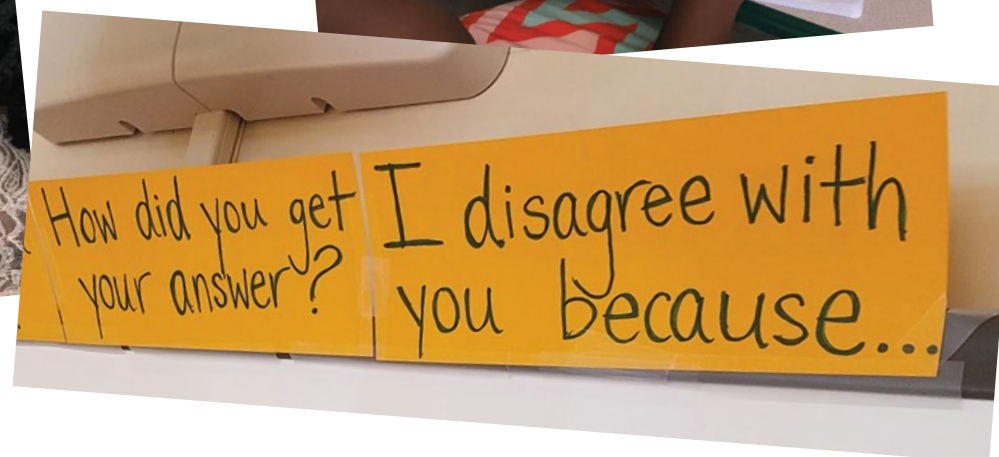
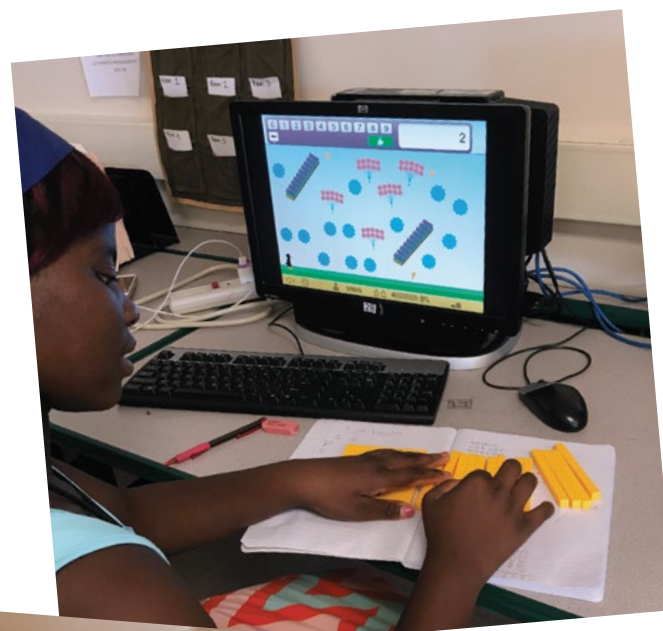
CHALLENGES

Students who enter this program often experience interrupted education and trauma as a result of their long, often challenging journey to our classroom. This requires flexibility, patience, compassion, and understanding in order to create a healthy, safe, and inclusive learning environment for all students regardless of their circumstances.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

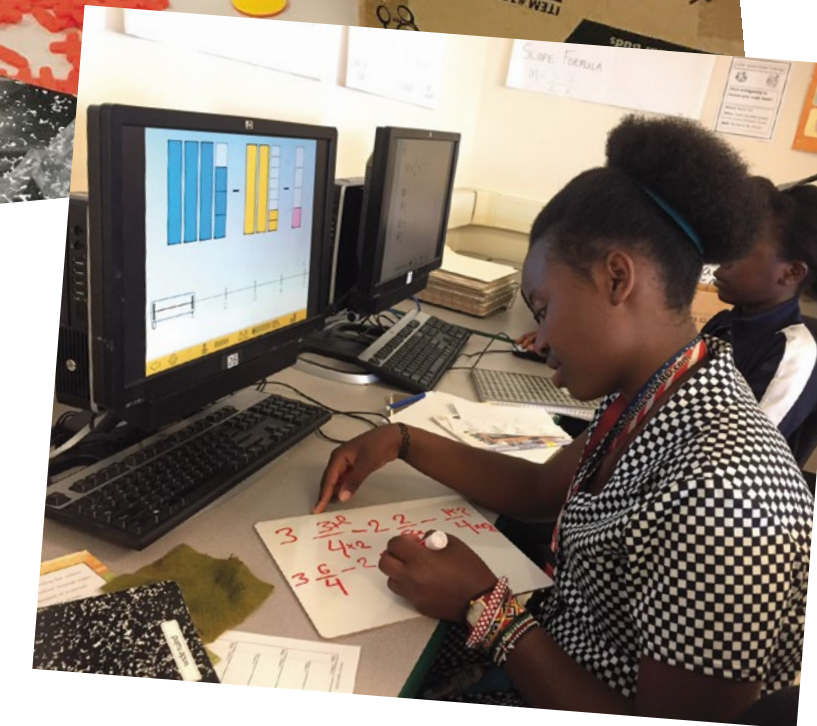
Students often find success when using the ST Math visually-based math instructional program, which introduces mathematical concepts first through puzzles and games before transitioning to symbols and words. <https://www.stmath.com/>

Another key aspect to our success is the use of manipulatives in the classroom for hands-on, tactile experiences. Many of these items were purchased or donated over time through grants and other organizations. This is a list of the manipulatives we currently use in our classroom: <https://tinyurl.com/AmphiSEL>



"I have been searching for years for a class that would encompass the teaching tools that would give high school English learners who have interrupted education a fighting chance to catch up in math...with this program design you have found it!"

—District Administrator



Sports & Activity

Girls work together to inspire teamwork, positive self-esteem and healthy living practices

Kaitlyn Hundt

Jodi Kromke

Northern Hills Elementary
School District of Onalaska
Onalaska, Wisconsin

HIGHLIGHTS

- Weekly runs positively influencing over 30 girls.
- Five races in the community promoting healthy living practices.
- Friendships developed between grade levels to encourage community at school.

CHALLENGES

Wisconsin weather is COLD—running outside sometimes was not possible so using other areas around the school helped! Transporting girls to races was a barrier this year.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Start small—the momentum will come! Girls on the Run is a great organization if they are in your area. Unfortunately, there is not one near us.



*"Don't give up and keep on trying new challenges."
—Student*



Using the art of kickboxing to teach discipline and develop 'Power, Perseverance, Patience and Pride' in our students

Jessica Hubbard

Fairley High School
Achievement School District
Memphis, TN

HIGHLIGHTS

Through the Grindhouse Boxing Program, students are held accountable to behavior and academic expectations. As a result, student grades improved and there was a decrease in behavior incidents with these students. Additionally, these students became a team, holding each other accountable and encouraging each other to make positive decisions.

CHALLENGES

Due to limited trained instructors, it has been challenging to offer the program more than two times a week, which also limits the number of participants that can have access to this program.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Students are motivated by structure and clear expectations. Once they were aware of our program guidelines and procedures, I no longer needed to verbalize expectations. Participants started to self-correct their behavior or encourage their teammates to be accountable.



Hands for those in need — prosthetic hands through 3D printing

Courtney Tara Weiss-Chromeck

Ridgedale Middle School
Florham Park School District
Florham Park, New Jersey

HIGHLIGHTS

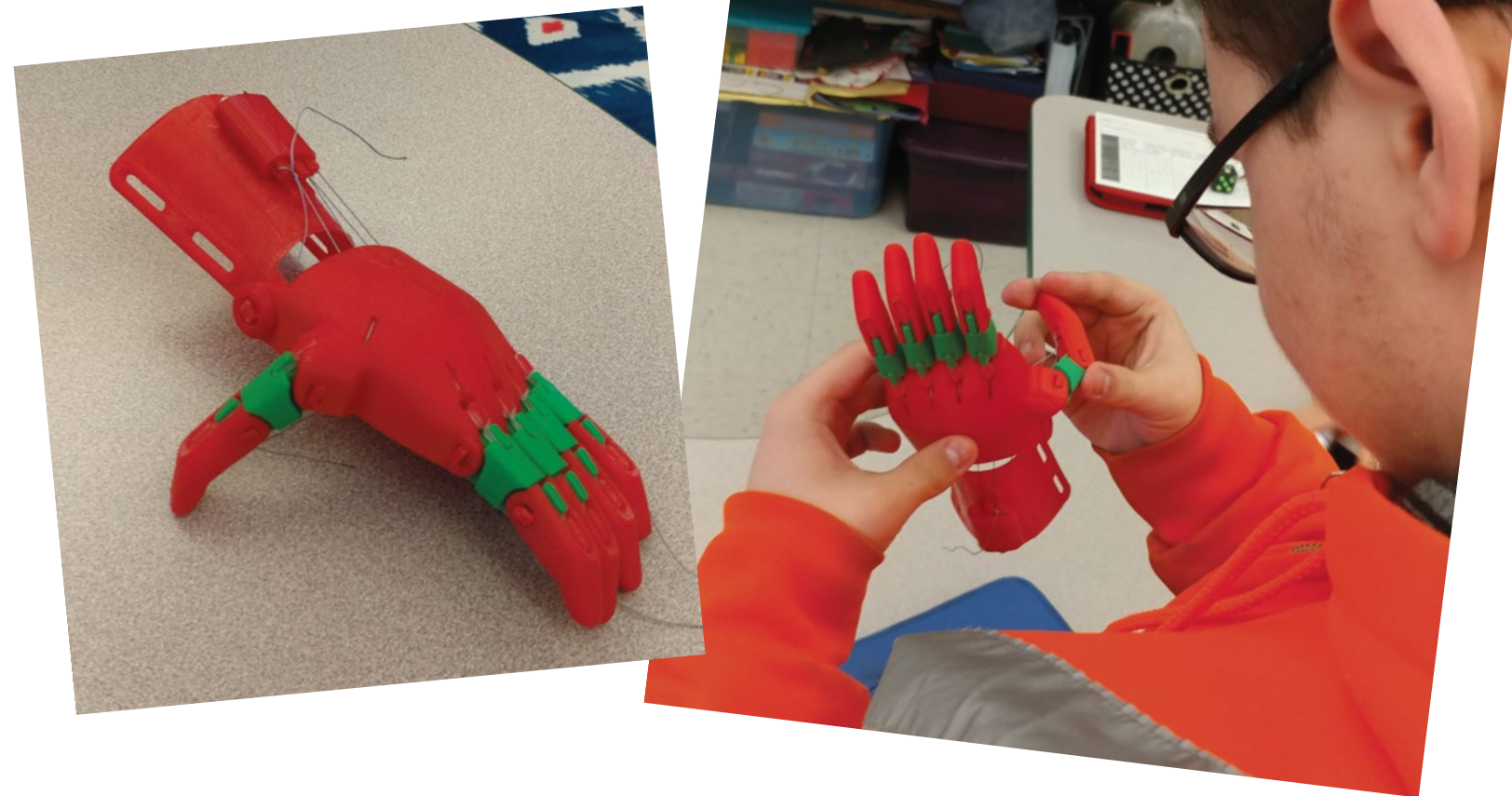
The goal of this project was to introduce special education students to the needs of those around them. They worked to determine the best possible hand to print. Once the printing was complete, the students assembled the hand. We worked to recognize that there are those less fortunate and in need. The students had to use reasoning skills to decide how to compile the parts to create the best possible hand for donation.

CHALLENGES

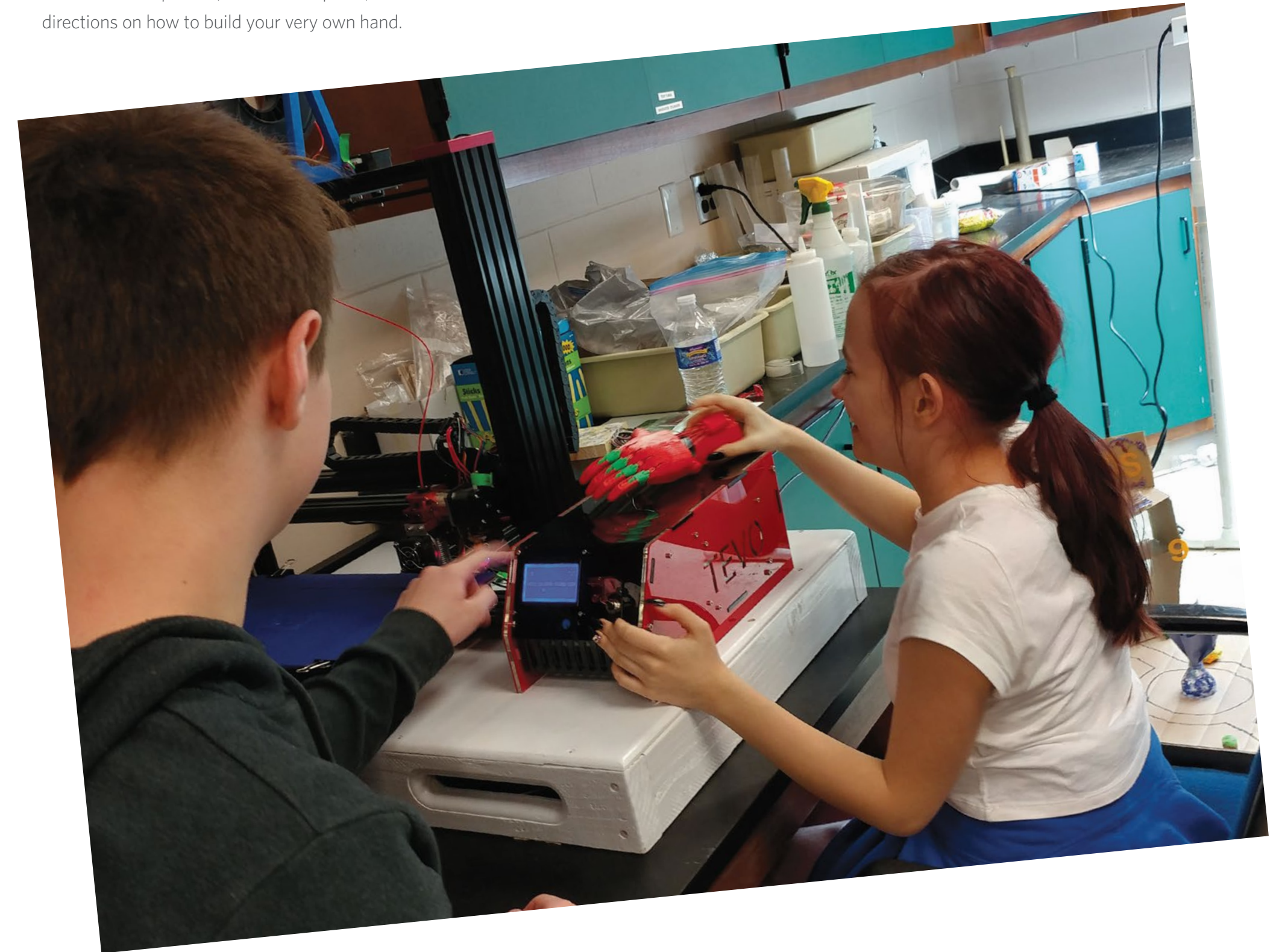
Challenges in this project included the need for students to persevere when things were not easy. They could only be successful with repeated attempts at completing the project.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Check out the Prosthetic Kids Hands Challenge at: <http://www.handchallenge.com/> for details on where to find a pattern, materials required, and directions on how to build your very own hand.



*“Can we go back to the printer? One hand isn’t enough!”
—Student*



Use of Space

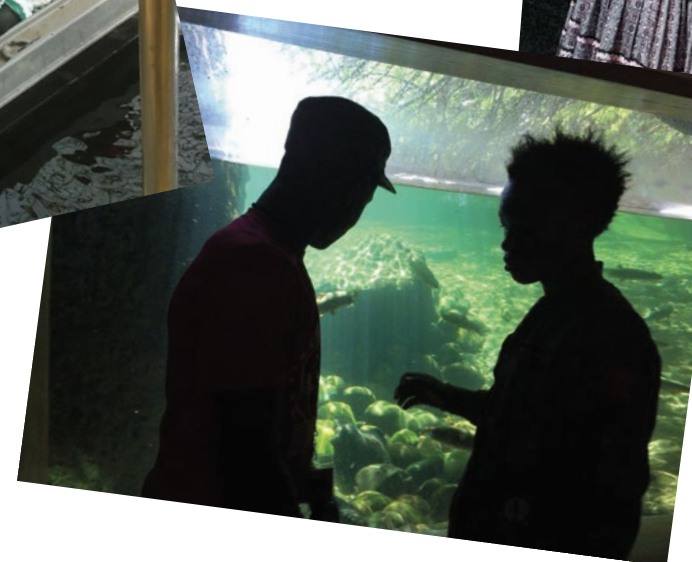
Grammar in the Greenhouse: Social-emotional development and language learning through urban school gardening

Katherine Engel

Amphitheater High School
Amphitheater Public Schools
Tucson, Arizona

Additional partners:

Dev Balachandran
Therese Downey
Julie Faulkner
Carla Garcia
Denise Heagle
Corey Smith



HIGHLIGHTS

The grant gave an opportunity to unite about 100 students into a family of language learners, garden growers, confident and caring individuals through multiple joined activities, such as garden work, field trips, science exploration, and community sharing.

CHALLENGES

It is not easy to combine meeting all the State Standards of language teaching with the real life activities that the students need to prepare for success in a country and culture new to them. Our language learners have so much to learn!

TRY THIS AT HOME!

This PowerPoint captures the work of our English Language Development Department with its joys and challenges: To view, [visit selforteachers.org/2017-resources](https://selforteachers.org/2017-resources) and click on Katherine Engel.



"After a year of growing the herbs and sharing them with the community, one student asked in amazement, 'We can eat them?' He did not realize that we were growing food."

How can we create a flexible space, adaptable to students' psycho-evolutionary stages while promoting play, diversity, autonomy and understanding of individuals within groups?

Claudia Fitzwater

Drew Charter School
Atlanta Public Schools
Atlanta, Georgia

Additional partners:

Jeff Mather

HIGHLIGHTS

Students took the classroom as a canvas and looked genuinely into what space teaches them formally and informally.

This project gave students the power to design, craft ideas and materialize them for their classroom. Students engaged in the Design Process rooted in empathy and understanding of their own and others' emotional needs as learners. Students came to understand and accept different type personalities, styles, and needs. The result was a classroom designed for students by students that welcomes diversity and inclusivity and fosters SEL skills.

CHALLENGES

In order to create a studio culture in the classroom that reflects the needs of students and that will help to develop student-centered experiences, it is necessary to shift and change the traditional and institutionalized classroom setup. It is difficult to bring students a voice and choice when schools remain traditional and attached to standardized practices. It is the job of administrators to support teachers and provide necessary tools to bring change and innovation to the classroom. Teachers need to place themselves as co-learners and co-builders of learning experiences that will allow them to build a space and classroom culture that weaves social and emotional learning into the curriculum.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

Giving your children purposeful work can change emotional dynamics in the family. It will provide them with a sense of pride and confidence, helping children find meaningful jobs is a powerful way to redirect "misbehavior." Less is more. Cluttered and excessive amount of toys and tools can trigger anxiety in children. Consider the space as a third teacher, as an area that can help them to discover who they are and nurture their personality. Children need to play. Give children the opportunity to play and learn through their bodies and senses.

"The LEGO wall helps me to lower my anxiety. Whenever I am feeling overwhelmed I know that I can step into the hallway and create some art. After that, I feel better."
— 2nd-grade student



Flexible seating for social, emotional and academic learning

Amber Chandler

Frontier Middle School
Frontier Central Schools
Hamburg, New York

Additional partners:

Laura Klein

HIGHLIGHTS

It has been my pleasure to see how students respond to seating that better meets their development needs. The fidgety kids are happy, and so are those who just need to stretch out. The seating matches the “everyone is unique” atmosphere of my classroom, so I love how safe the environment is for everyone.

CHALLENGES

Honestly, the biggest challenge to flexible seating is about me. The kids love it, but I have to let go of the perfection that gets instilled in teachers of straight rows and perfect posture. I have to be okay with yoga balls being bounced on because that is what they are for. I’ve been teaching for nearly 20 years, so some habits are hard to change; however, I know that this is an atmosphere that is best for kiddos, so I’m learning too.

TRY THIS AT HOME!

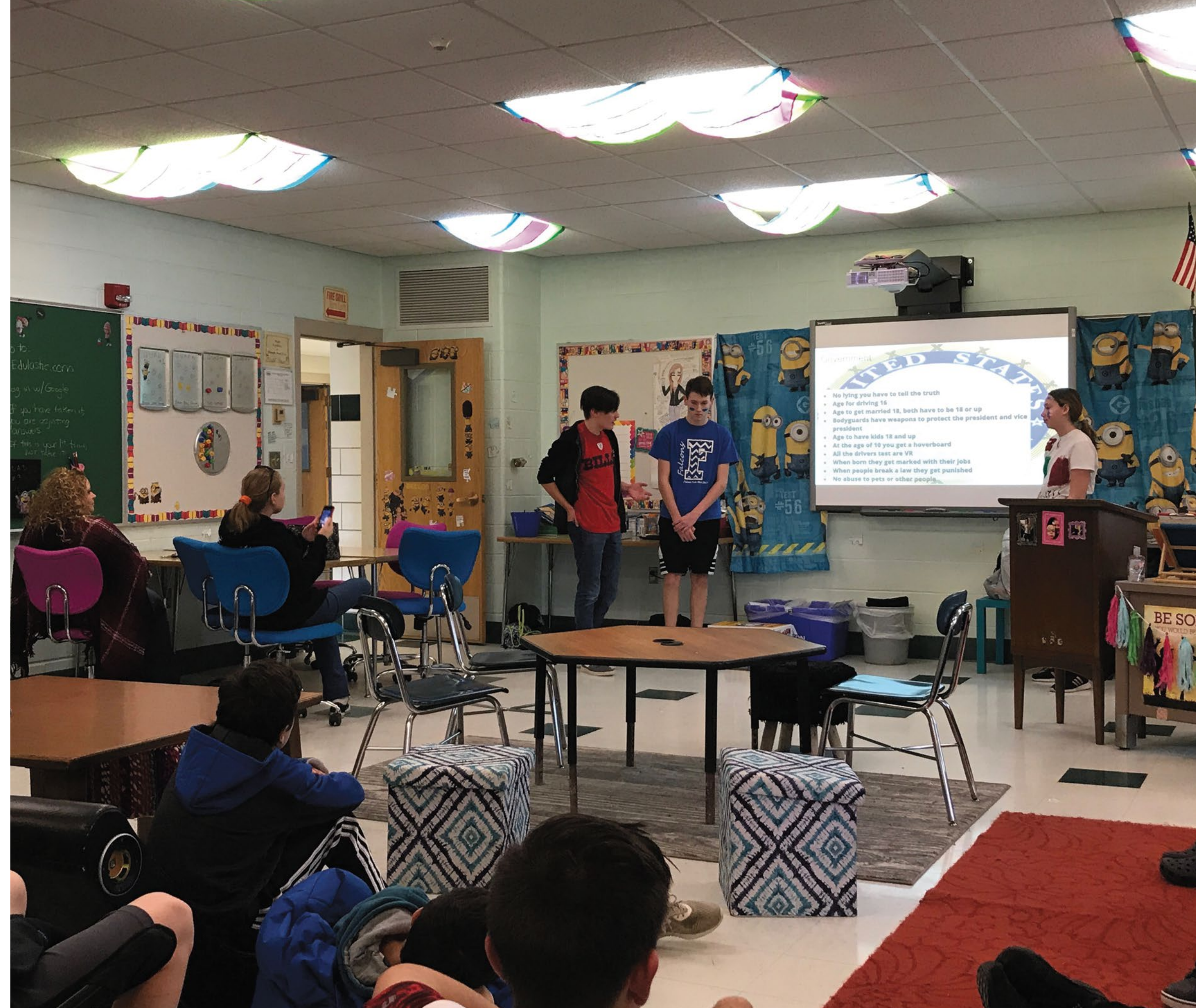
One of my big takeaways is that there need to be systems in place to allow for the controlled chaos. My students are assigned a number that they use for computer sign out and to indicate where they are sitting for the day.

For a list of resources, visit selforteachers.org/2017/resources and click on Amber Chandler.



“We couldn’t believe it when we walked in. It was crazy. We thought you might be crazy!”
— 8th grade ELA student

Want to know more about this project? Read their blog post!
<https://education-first.com/reimagining-classroom-support-students>



Conclusion

CONCLUSION

This book offers dozens of ways to bring social and emotional learning to classrooms, pioneered by teachers who are leading the way.

There are also many other resources available to help teachers, parents, school administrators and district leaders as they consider how to weave SEL into their work with students. Additional information and resources for implementing SEL in districts, schools and classrooms can be found at CASEL's District Resource Center, CASEL's School Guide, Transforming Education and Turnaround for Children. You can also learn more on the Education First website, including publications, blog posts, and personal stories from teachers and districts: <https://education-first.com/topic/social-and-emotional-learning>.

Great, practical resources can be found at www.selforteachers.org, providing additional ideas about how to implement SEL at the classroom level. You'll also find a digital (and shareable!) copy of this book, as well as additional resources provided from the teachers highlighted in this book.

Take a deep breath. Exhale. And together, let's work to create opportunities for students to thrive.

THE EDUCATION FIRST AND NOVO FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

Social and emotional learning (SEL) refers broadly to the practices, processes and strategies through which students, and adults, gain crucial skills such as responsible decision-making, self-awareness, understanding and management of emotions, and empathy. Many teachers have long known that SEL skills are absolutely critical to students’ ability to master academic content — and to their futures as healthy, productive adults.

The NoVo Foundation and Education First are proud to be in deep partnership with a national movement for social and emotional learning. We seek to build momentum for high-quality SEL practices through education, technical assistance and networks. Here are some of the efforts we have supported:

- Together and with the [Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL), we support and coach the [Collaborating Districts Initiative](#). The CDI consists of 10 districts, reaching a million students, supported by our organizations to implement and share the sustainable and systemic changes that will help students grow critical social and emotional skills.
- In 2016, the NoVo Foundation and Education first launched the [SEL Innovation Fund](#) to support teachers with fresh ideas and creative strategies to incorporate social and emotional learning into their classrooms and schools. Through the Innovation Fund, NoVo and Education First awarded over \$1 million in grants to teachers and districts to support their efforts to address student trauma, build adult SEL skills, celebrate cultural diversity and other goals.
- In 2017, in partnership with the NoVo Foundation, Education First released the publication [Social and Emotional Learning: Why Students Need It. What Districts are Doing About It](#). The publication focused on what the implementation of social and emotional learning looks like at the school district level. The publication identified six key areas for successful implementation of SEL at the district level and highlighted SEL practices in Anchorage School District in Alaska, Bridgeport Public Schools in Connecticut and Sacramento City Unified School District in California.

Now, we aim to illustrate great SEL teaching practices, to inspire and support teachers in all kinds of different contexts. And to elevate excellence in the classroom, this book seeks to show, rather than just tell.

NOVO FOUNDATION

NoVo Foundation is dedicated to building a more just and balanced world. Created in 2006 by Jennifer and Peter Buffett, NoVo seeks to foster a transformation from a world of domination and exploitation to one of collaboration and partnership. The Foundation partners with movement leaders working to advance adolescent girls’ rights, end violence against girls and women, promote social and emotional learning, support Indigenous communities and advance local living communities. Across all of its work, NoVo supports the development of capacities in people—individually and collectively—to help create a caring and balanced world. **For more information, visit** www.novofoundation.org

EDUCATION FIRST

Education First is a national, mission-driven strategy and policy organization with unique and deep expertise in education improvement. Our mission is to deliver exceptional ideas, experience-based solutions and results so all students—and particularly low-income students and students of color—are prepared for success in college, career and life. We work closely with policymakers, practitioners, funders and advocates to design and accelerate policies and plans that support strong systems, outstanding educators, engaged students and effective investments.

Since 2013, Education First has partnered with NoVo Foundation, RPA and CASEL to provide strategic guidance and support to the CDI districts and others aiming to begin or strengthen their SEL implementation. **For more information, visit** www.education-first.com

ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY ADVISORS

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) is a nonprofit organization that partners with individuals, families, corporations, and major foundations to help make philanthropy more thoughtful and effective. Continuing in the Rockefeller family’s legacy, RPA remains at the forefront of philanthropic growth and innovation, with a diverse team led by experienced grantmakers with significant depth of knowledge across the spectrum of issue areas. Founded in 2002, and having facilitated more than \$3 billion in grantmaking to over 60 countries, RPA has grown into one of the world’s largest and most trusted philanthropic service organizations.

RPA has partnered with NoVo Foundation, Education First and CASEL to manage grant funding and technical assistance support to the CDI Districts since 2013 through its fiscally sponsored project Social and Emotional Learning Fund. **For more information, visit** www.rockpa.org





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Advisors