

Partnering with schools to support student and staff adjustment during the COVID-19 pandemic

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BACKGROUND

- All schools closed to in-person learning in March 2020; some reopened for in-person learning in September 2020.
- School staff became frontline workers.
- The COVID-19 pandemic put students and staff at risk for symptoms associated with chronic stress (e.g., fatigue, worry, trouble with relationships, etc.).
- Social and emotional learning (SEL) can lead to improvements in academic achievement and behavior.^{1, 2}
- School leadership requested our help with assessing student and staff SEL needs.



SETTING

- Suburban school district (approximately 2,000 students; approximately 90% White)

OBJECTIVES

- Provide training on relevant SEL topics.
- Understand staff members' perceptions of existing staff- and student-focused SEL initiatives.
- Understand staff members' perceptions of additional SEL needs.
- Offer feedback and guide next steps.

TRAININGS

- Provided district-wide, virtual trainings on psychological first aid (9/2020) and behavior management for remote learners (10/2020).
- Partnered with the Children's Institute to provide a training on self-care (11/2020).

SURVEY DESIGN

- Items assessed perceptions of existing staff- and student-focused SEL initiatives (e.g., classroom meetings, daily surveys, trainings, etc.) and perceptions of additional needs (e.g., trainings, resources, staff wellness group, etc.).
- Forced-choice, multiple-choice, and write-in items
- Housed on REDCap

SELECTED SURVEY ITEMS

Think of the ways you, your school, and your district are supporting students' wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. What is working best? What could be working better?

How helpful would each of the following be?

- Trainings on staff wellbeing
- Huddles on staff wellbeing
- Informal check-ins with administrators
- Weekly staff support group
- Information about EAP
- Referrals to community supports, such as mental health professionals

SELECTED SURVEY RESULTS

- Responses received in 12/2020.

Workplace	# of respondents
High School	46
Middle School	36
Upper Elementary	35
Lower Elementary	19
Administration	3
Total	139

What is going well?

- Emphasis on SEL
- Seeing students in-person
- Collaboration among staff

What could be going better?

- Student engagement in online learning
- More time to plan
- Communication from administration

Would you like more help with supporting students' wellbeing?

Yes: 23% No: 43% No response: 34%

Would you like more help with supporting your own wellbeing?

Yes: 14% No: 45% No response: 41%

FEEDBACK

- Shared results with leadership (2/2021).
- Recommended that district develop a system for following up with teachers who asked for help.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

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² Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(1), 491-525. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693>