

January 2018

The Chill Out Space

SEL News, Info, and Fun



Welcome to The Chill Out Space!

This space is brought to you by the Department of Social Emotional Learning. In here, you can find out what others are learning/doing in our journey toward better SEL practices, self care tips, resources, and maybe a smile or two!

Think something belongs in this space? Share your stories directly with alcohen@cpsd.us.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to understand and manage emotions, achieve goals, and show empathy in order to maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

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What's Happening

- 800 students are currently getting mindfulness instruction.
- 1400 staff have received training in how to work with traumatized youth.
- 96 parents have attended an SEL workshop to learn how to support SEL at home.
- The City Wide SEL team is a group of 40 folks representing teachers, parents, CPS Admin, and Out-of-School time partners. Our third meeting is December 6th, and we will be working on how to improve communication between schools and after school programs.

Overheard

A group of 2nd graders were walking to PE. One girl said, "I love this school. This school is the greatest place ever." She walks a few more steps. "Except Dunkin Donuts."

Comments From Cohen

I'm wondering now, at the start of this new year, if people are thinking about how isolating teaching can be. Can we remember that there are others, alongside of us and across the district, who are engaged in similar daily enterprises/? Can we feel connected to them, to others in our school? Can we create communities of belonging for adults that mirror the sense of community and belonging that we know our students need? If we don't treat the impact of our own isolation, isn't it harder to help our students? Find your people, people!

Oh, and Remember

Something joyful will come your way today! Don't be so busy that you can't take time to see and revel in and notice it!

Self Care: Now More Than Ever...

Did you Know?

- Inadequate self care sets up the brain for negative neurological responses.
- Stress narrows our sense of options.
- Neglecting self compassion gives your inner critic space to roam freely and wreak havoc.
- This increased self criticism or neglecting needs of self sets the brain up as both victim and perpetrator. The brain becomes distracted by the need for self protection and becomes more tense and anxious and is at times rendered unable to function at peak flow.
 - In this state, the brain loses the capacity for a moment of appraisal.
 - It becomes difficult to keep issues/problems the "right size" and over-reaction or under-reaction can occur.

Strategies to Go

Stay in the present:

- Notice what is happening inside yourself.
- Open the window.
- Breathe and provide some sensory input
- Turn away from issue/situation then look back.
- Encourage folks to find mindful presence in everyday moments such as walking into school.

Address stress directly:

- Start with activities of affirmation in yourself and in meetings.
- Stress that beyond a certain pretty low point, stress is not useful and can hurt you.

Practice/model self compassion

- We are human and we are in this together.
- Desperate feelings want to be soothed, not herded into submission.
- Know which activities will soothe you.

Provide opportunities for grounding to staff. Share techniques.

Take time to celebrate success. Celebration elevates the brain in positive ways that increase the capacity to handle difficult moments.