

LSS Laboratory for Student Success Field Notes

Capturing Conversations of Procedural Knowledge

**LSS Field Notes document experiences
in context in education, capturing
conversations of procedural knowledge.**

Creating Safe, Supportive, High-Achieving Schools Superintendents Talk About Programs for Better Student Outcomes

The second annual Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) National Technical Assistance Meeting was held on August 5–7, 2002, in Washington, DC. The theme for the conference was *Leaving No Child Behind: Results-Based Strategies For Safe and Drug-Free Schools*. The meeting was attended by 700 participants and featured more than 98 national and international prevention experts and representatives from eight federal agencies.

One of the sessions, “Superintendents Speak: Integrating Academics and Prevention,” highlighted the work of four districts that have achieved significant results in this area. The four education leaders—Dr. Sheldon Berman from Hudson Valley Public Schools in

Massachusetts, Kate Stetzner from the Butte Public Schools in Montana, Dr. Joseph Orr from Palm Beach County Public Schools in Florida, and Dr. Paula Papponi from Jemez Valley Public Schools in New Mexico—shared both their

philosophies and practical experiences. While each district utilizes distinct approaches, the superintendents all share a common vision: to create multiple, system-wide structures of support that simultaneously address the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students.

Participants felt that this session helped to define the role of education leaders in establishing sound prevention practices—not at the periphery of the educational experience, but at its very core.



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An Overview of Integrating Academics and Prevention

by JoAnn Manning

We are all invested in the creation of safe and drug-free schools. As parents kiss their children good-bye in the morning, they want to know that their kids will return safely to them that afternoon. All teachers and principals want to enter their school building each day knowing that it will be a full day for educating. Every superintendent wants the same thing: a safe institution where students, teachers, and principals can get down to the business of education.

But the reality is that a host of inappropriate, disruptive, sometimes violent incidents occur annually. Statistics for 1996–1997 reported by the Learning First Alliance in *Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools* in November 2001 reveal that in that year there were:

- 300,000 incidents in which teachers were the victim;
- 800,000 reports of guns brought to school; and
- uncounted millions of acts of bullying, teasing, hazing, and physically nonviolent behavior.

What is it that drives our children to commit these acts? Truly, all of us here today know the full breadth of the issues that face our students daily. Indeed, what affects the student outside the school affects that student, the teachers, and administrators inside the school. Here are a few statistics presented by the Children’s Defense Fund in its *State of America’s Children Yearbook 2001*. These numbers demonstrate the conditions faced each day:

- 1 in 2 American children will live in a single-parent family at some point in childhood.
- 3 in 5 preschoolers have their mother in the work force.
- 1 in 1,056 will be killed by a gun before reaching age 20.

Clearly, there is enough going on here to see that, in addition to an academic focus, schools need to be attentive to the social and emotional needs of students. We can work with students to help them meet their academic goals, but if those children are unable to cope with the pressures applied by today’s society, they will not attain academic success.

Yet—despite all the media hype to the contrary—schools remain the safest place for our children. But it is also true

that the violence that afflicts society has slowly crept into our schools. In recent years, drastic changes in the family structure, along with other societal changes, have led to new challenges. Schools are pressed to find ways to meet the needs of all children. Parents and other constituencies have found their voice and are crying for the achievement gap to

be closed. Lawmakers have taken heed and now, more than ever, federal and state mandates like the No Child Left Behind Act have brought assessment and accountability into focus. The work of our schools has become incredibly complex as different stakeholders compete for priority.

A critical goal of the superintendent is to establish a clear vision and direction for the school district. If the vision is derived from the information presented by the diverse competing constituencies and based on scientifically rigorous evidence, then that collective vision will be one that all stakeholders can share. The guiding question then is: Given the context within which children come to school, what can schools do to help students develop good social skills so they can interact positively? In light of the changing economic and

social structure, it is clear that adult nurturing, guidance, and support must come from all facets—the home, the school, and the community—if we are to prevent negative outcomes.

Our vision at Chester Upland School District— just south of Philadelphia— when I was superintendent, was that a healthy community can collaborate to achieve positive outcomes when guided by the basic principles of academic, social, and emotional learning. And we were successful in attaining partnerships at multiple levels: locally, with the county, and even at the state level. Our program to “Stop the Violence” caught the attention of then-Governor Tom Ridge, who participated in our annual conference. We saw a reduction in discipline referrals and the dropout rate. And we achieved an increase in the number of graduates and the number of those bound for college.

Our goal is to share ways in which superintendents can support the creation of safe, supportive, and high-achieving schools. While the superintendents had different stories to share, their work all began with an individual vision which

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— JoAnn Manning

then blossomed into a collective, community-wide vision. Such core values as academic, social, and emotional learning are an essential part of the big picture. In the end, what is it we hope to achieve?

In the short term, we want to ensure that our schools are safe havens in which all students can learn, and this means safe, drug-free, violence-free schools. But we also cannot lose sight that—in the long term, over time—the creation of safe and supportive school communities should be integrated and comprehensive, not merely an add-on. We also want to ensure that we develop lifelong learners who—because they are well-educated, responsible, and respectful—can be active, contributing members in our 21st-century global society. The creation of schools and districts focused on academic, social, and emotional learning will ensure that we “leave no child behind.”

Social and Emotional Learning Programs

by Roger Weissberg

Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs foster students’ abilities to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively. The attraction and promise of social and emotional learning is that it’s a unifying concept for coordinating school, family, and community partnerships for drug and violence prevention, positive youth development, health promotion, character education, and service-learning.

If you think about effective SEL programming, the goal is to make sure that it is integrated explicitly with academic instruction, coordinated with health promotion efforts and also connected to citizenship efforts. The goal of education is to educate knowledgeable, responsible, respectful, healthy, and caring students.

Paul Houston, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, says superintendents provide four Cs to make social and emotional learning happen: fostering *commitment* at all levels, coherent *coordination* in planning and implementation, *capacity* to support quality programming, and *continuity* from year to year to ensure institutionalization.

Presentations by Panelists

What is your vision for creating safe and drug-free schools in your district or across the nation?

BERMAN: We live in an atmosphere that is often too focused on accountability and testing. In education, we need to enlarge our thinking and actions, not just for the future of our children, but the future of our nation.

I want to make three points. First, children learn as much, if not more, from the climate and culture of the school as they do from academics. Second, we have to think about social and emotional learning as one of the core elements of the curriculum. We need to think about scope and sequence for social and emotional learning in the same way that we provide for them in basic academic programs. There is no difference between the kind of program that we should provide in math, science, social studies, or English and what we do in SEL. And third, it takes time. I’ve been in Hudson for 10 years and we are not done. What I will share with you is some of our work in progress. It may sound significant, deepening all that we do.

In Hudson, we believe that the most effective means of creating safe, secure, and drug-free schools for students and adults is through the integration of challenging academics with a commitment to a nurturing, caring, and civil com-

munity. The most effective schools can give young people a sense of meaning in their own lives, a sense of connection to others, an appreciation for diversity, and the ability to resolve differences. Schools can also give students the experience of making a difference to others in the world around them.

PAPPONI: There are many pieces to the social-emotional learning puzzle. It encompasses service-learning, citizenship, character education, and performance and prevention programs. These are the values upon which our nation’s schools were founded. These are the values that were important several hundred years ago and continue to be very important today, especially in view of what happened on September 11th. They are crucial because Columbine is no longer merely a flower; it has taken on a whole new meaning.

In looking at reform and accountability, we need to remember that, in rethinking what students learn, and at what level, we also need to rethink *how* they learn. I believe that education works best when students are able to see a larger purpose to their actions, when they realize that what they are learning in school can be utilized to solve real problems and help others. Students gain great confidence when they

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see that their knowledge can have a direct and positive impact on their community and their nation.

ORR: Ours is a very large and complex school district, the 14th largest in the country. We have 160,000 students, 156 schools, and 42 different ethnic groups. Our district spans communities that are some of the wealthiest in the country, and some of the most impoverished. My vision is to have 156 schools where every child feels safe, secure in an atmosphere of friendliness, and where each student is educated commensurate with his or her potential.

STETZNER: It's so important for children to be in a safe learning environment where social and emotional needs are met—not just for children, but for all who participate in that learning environment.

That includes everyone who works in or with schools.

Q How are academic, social, and emotional learning promoted in your district to ensure that all students' needs are met?

BERMAN: I wrote a book called *Children's Social Consciousness*, and realized from my own research and the research that others had done that there are three common themes of why people act in moral ways and take moral action in the larger environment.

(1) A connected sense of self. When someone feels a deep connection to another, or just simply a connection to someone else's suffering, the kind of response we have when we hear about an earthquake in a different country, or our response to 9/11 and the pain that we knew others were experiencing. It could be environmental as well, knowing that species are dying and feeling in some way the devastation that is occurring in our environment.

(2) A moral identity. This is a deep moral commitment to a code of ethics and values that are important. Acting on that, Pearl and Sam Oliner focused their research on rescuers during the Holocaust who said that they

Guidelines for Effective SEL Programming

An effective SEL program:

- Is grounded in theory and research
- Teaches children to apply SEL skills and ethical values in daily life
- Builds connection to school through caring and engaging classroom and school practices
- Provides developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction
- Helps schools coordinate and unify programs that are often fragmented
- Enhances school performance by addressing the affective and social dimensions of academic learning explicitly
- Involves families and communities as partners
- Establishes organizational supports and policies that foster success
- Provides high quality staff development and support
- Incorporates continuing evaluation and improvement

had to intervene because the Nazi doctrine of hatred went against their ethical values.

(3) A larger sense of meaning. One of the motivators of action is a sense that you are trying to do something larger than yourself. This is a sense, sometimes religious and sometimes secular, that you want to leave the world a little better than the way you found it.

In terms of fostering a connected sense of self, we focus in our district on the teaching of empathy and social skills. To develop a moral identity, we focus on ethics. To develop a larger sense of meaning, we focus on service. To create a caring, ethical, and engaged community means to convert what we know about why people take action into the kinds of programs that we can provide in schools.

• **Teaching empathy and social skills.** We know that allowing children to become sensitive observers of the feeling states of others is a critical skill in helping them develop empathy. We also have to help them understand the causes of those feelings and learn appropriate ways to respond to others' feelings and to resolve differences. First, we teach cooperation through structured activities. Second, we teach empathy through two programs: one created by Educators for Social Responsibility and called "Adventures in Peacemaking," the other from the Committee for Children in Seattle and called "Second Step." Third, we develop prosocial values through a range of ethics-based literature that we've including in our curriculum. Fourth, we're trying to create a sense of community in the classroom through a program called "Responsive Classroom." And finally, we're teaching children about helping skills through community service-learning activities. Though these are the programs that we have selected to use, there are a whole variety of excellent programs available to schools.

• **Fostering ethical development.** There's little evidence to show that moralizing to children or giving them direct instruction in moral principles has much impact. What seems to work best is considered dialogue about

moral dilemmas, practicing situations of moral conflict, and role modeling by adults. How we've transformed that into practice is by integrating prosocial literature and dialogue about ethical dilemmas into every grade level. We've developed a ninth-grade core civics course that integrates English and social studies. It uses a curriculum called "Facing History and Ourselves," which is probably the most profound, ethics-based curriculum available. It deals with genocide and helps young people look at the key questions about how a society can become complicit with a state policy of genocide. Students walk away with the understanding that you are either part of the problem or part of the solution, but you can't sit on the fence.

In terms of role modeling by adults, it means that we need to focus on our behavior, on how we project ourselves. We can provide strong role models while practicing situations of moral conflict or through participating in the social action of service-learning. Again, it is crucial to take service-learning to another level by having structured reflection time that includes raising ethical questions about the implications of the service experiences. And finally, it is important to have student involvement in decision making. When students become involved in decisions, they are able to see the ethical dilemmas that we all face and begin to struggle with those dilemmas.

- *Community service-learning.* Community service-learning is a teaching methodology that seeks to engage students in active civic participation through thoughtfully organized service experiences. What we've tried to do is integrate community service-learning into all classes and grade levels in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the instructional program so it isn't just community service. It is really service-learning that is tied deeply to the curriculum. We do this in a way that provides students with service-learning experiences

Participants

Chair: JoAnn Manning, Executive Director of the Laboratory for Student Success, Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory at Temple University

Moderator: Roger Weissberg, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Education; Executive Director, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), University of Illinois at Chicago

Panel Members

Sheldon Berman, Ph.D., Superintendent, Hudson Public Schools, Massachusetts

Joseph Orr, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer, Palm Beach County School District, Florida

Paula Papponi, Ed.D., Superintendent, Jemez Valley School District, New Mexico

Kate Stetzner, M.A., Former Superintendent, Butte Public Schools, Montana

marked by continuity, depth, and meaningfulness. In fact, 80% of our student body experiences at least one service-learning project every year.

In our kindergarten center, for example, we have four different themes that we integrate into service. First graders do an intergenerational project with a senior center. Second and third graders work with a food pantry; fourth graders work on environmental issues; fifth graders have a number of buddy programs, with reading buddies or handicapped children; and so on through the grades. In fact, in part of the ninth-grade core course, every student has the assignment—either in a group or individually—to find some way that they can make a difference in the world around them.

This is what it looks like to have a comprehensive and systemic approach. We focus on empathy, ethics, and service. We began Adventures in Peacemaking as a pre-K program; we work with Second Step in the elementary and middle schools and Responsive Classrooms in preschool to middle school. A prosocial literature program goes all the way through middle school and we have our core civics course in 9th grade. Students take an ethics course in 12th grade and we provide a variety of other courses that focus on ethics at the high school level. We're creating Responsive Schools at the elementary level by involving students in decision making. We're taking the bold step of creating a democratic high school in which small groups of students, facilitated by students, will have regular opportunities to discuss school-related issues. And finally, students at every level are engaged in service-learning.

PAPPONI: Jemez Valley sits in the beautiful Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico. We have a richly diverse student population, including young people from two Indian pueblos, Jemez and Zia. Our student population is 60% Native American, 20% Hispanic, and 20% Anglo. We have

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a program that addresses our unique population and meets our students' needs. A number of our students come to us from Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and many of those students score well below the 40th percentile. On the other end of the spectrum are very high-achieving, self-motivated students; our program tries not to lose anyone in the middle.

Service-learning is a wonderful means for helping students learn to solve real-world problems and gain needed academic skills at the same time. Our service-learning projects are tied to the curriculum as well as to the community and let students apply their skills as they are being learned. Students should not have to wait until they graduate to apply the knowledge gained in school. This kind of engagement creates a much more successful learner, allowing students to simultaneously improve self-concept and academic achievement. This is not a new concept; it goes all the way back to John Dewey and his theories on experiential learning.

Each student has 40 minutes each day for remediation and enrichment. When students are doing well in their studies and classes, they move from 40 minutes of remediation and can choose an enrichment class. That can be art, music, computer, creative writing, or a number of other options to meet students' interests. Service-learning and character education are part of the core curriculum. What we emphasize is that these are not add-on programs. That concept is a difficult one and takes a long time for teachers and school boards and communities to understand. Ongoing professional development is crucial in having them gain this understanding. Teachers are expected to look for the teachable moment and impart character education through literature, history, and other discussions.

Our SEL programming has been quite successful. Our scores have been on the rise. Our elementary school has been cited by our state legislature for academic improvement; our high school has been recognized for its academic achievement. On the New Mexico High School Competency Exam, required of all tenth graders, our students have demonstrated substantial gains. Comparing student disciplinary referrals for the past 3 years, our success has been dramatic.

ORR: We have been involved with safe and drug-free schools for many years. The staff of our Safe School Center works

with our 11,000 teachers as well as all administrators and support staff who are involved in our schools. Our board has as its top priority safe, secure schools where our children feel cared for and where they can get the best education possible in the country. We have in place many, many different programs that speak to the physical and psychological safety of children. We have built many partnerships, including one in school mental health. Our Safe School Center involves all kinds of activities to support students, teachers, administrators, and families. We strive to provide an environment where children can have an appreciation for each other's culture and feel comfortable with their differences. Let me share with you some details of the programs that we have.

• Our Children's Behavioral Health Initiative was begun in 1999. It represents a partnership between the school district and the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, Florida Department of Children and Families, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, and a number of state and local organizations. The program is supervised and largely funded by the Health Care District, and we have received additional funding from several major foundations. Through this initiative, we not only have a nurse in every school, but have a full-time behavioral health professional on site in 40 of our elementary schools. The Behavioral Health Initiative focuses on identifying children, primarily in kindergarten through third grade, who have problems that are interfering with their education. The intent is to help children at a very young age, before their problems become chronic and severe. Every child in kindergarten and first grade is screened, and those showing social, emotional, and/or behavioral problems are assisted. Assistance for students can take many forms. The behavioral health professionals regularly sit in on classes, observing children and helping them to learn. They facilitate in-school support groups for the children, with five or six children in a group. They work with families and help to find appropriate school and community resources to support them. They suggest strategies to teachers for more effectively helping students.

• Our Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinator, Dr. Allison Adler, is spearheading a Single School Culture



“Service-learning is a wonderful means for helping students to solve real-world problems...”

— *Paula Papponi*

effort. What this means is that rules are the same from classroom to classroom. At one school, for example, we found that each of the teachers had a different interpretation of what was meant by “tardy.” As you can imagine, there were a lot of problems with tardiness and both teachers and students were confused and frustrated. Once we helped teachers to arrive at a common definition of the policy, and once the teachers were able to communicate that understanding to students and parents, the school virtually ceased to have problems with that issue.

A Single School Culture also means that teachers handle most of the disciplinary issues in their own classrooms, rather than referring them to administrators. Once you have consistent rules, it is important to empower teachers to be effective classroom managers who are confident about and capable of enforcing rules. The result is that we’re seeing fewer suspensions and expulsions, and administrators are able to deal with truly serious issues, rather than having their time taken up by meeting with students who forgot their homework or talk back to a teacher.

- Our Safe and Drug-Free Schools office has initiated a variety of other efforts to foster social and emotional learning with our students. We utilize service-learning in many of our schools. We have a program called Helping Hands, in which older children with behavioral problems are taught to recognize problems in younger children and work with them to help them improve. Both the older and younger students experience beneficial chang-

Organizations Sponsoring SEL-related Programs

Committee for Children, a nonprofit organization, is a leader in social and emotional learning and violence prevention. Its programs and prevention curricula focus on the topics of youth violence, bullying, child abuse, and personal safety. www.cfchildren.com

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), recognizing the strong relationship between academic achievement and social and emotional development, CASEL works with leading researchers and practitioners in the fields of social and emotional learning (SEL), positive youth development, character education, and school reform. CASEL’s work has developed a strong base of scientific evidence of SEL impacts, and provides assistance to school leaders, teachers, and teacher preparation programs in the selection and implementation of SEL programs. www.casel.org

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) helps educators create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments. It also help educators work with young people to develop the social skills, emotional competencies, and qualities of character they need to succeed in school and become contributing members of their communities. www.ersnational.org

Learning First Alliance is a permanent partnership of 12 leading educational associations that have come together to improve student learning in America’s public schools. The three major goals of the Alliance are to ensure that high academic expectations are held for all students; ensure a safe and supportive place of learning for all students; and engage parents and other community members in helping students achieve high academic expectations.

www.learningfirst.org

The Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning fosters safe, challenging, and joyful classrooms and schools, kindergarten through eighth grade. This approach consists of practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day. www.responsiveclassroom.org

See also the extensive website of the U.S. Department of Education, **Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools**, www.ed.gov/offices/OFSDFS/index.html

es in their behavior from this relationship. We use Ronald Slaby’s program “Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders” for bullying prevention. We have a student mediation program in which students help other students to resolve differences. We employ a Peace Education Program, developed in Miami, which allows for in-school suspension of students and gives students opportunities to reflect upon their behavior and suggest alternatives. All 29 of our middle schools have after-school programs with guided recreation and other activities.

STETZNER: Eight years ago, I was the principal of an elementary school in Butte, Montana with about 500 children in my school, kindergarten through 6th grade. On April 12, 1994, a 10-year-old child brought a .22 semi-automatic handgun to school. Before school started, in front of all of the children waiting at the door to enter for the day, he reached into his backpack, pulled out the gun, and fired five shots. He killed one 11-year-old student and injured another one.

This terrible tragedy prompted all of us in the school community to come together and ask, “What can

we do to ensure that each school is safe? What can we do to help the secondary victims of violence, including students, parents, teachers, and other community members? What things are going on in students’ lives that are so bad that they are willing to bring a gun to school and use it?”

- The first thing we did was to develop site-based school safety teams. The teams are composed of administrators, parents, students, teachers, school resource officers, child protective services workers, health de-

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partment staff, probation officers, and other important players. Each team has no more than 12 members including a chairperson. The teams meet a minimum of twice a month with minutes taken at each meeting. Every aspect of school safety runs through these committees. Committee minutes are posted on the school website so that everyone in the school community can have access to them and have the information necessary to follow mandates and make decisions.

- Through a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, we developed a strong intergenerational mentoring program to ensure that every student has at least one trusted adult that he or she can turn to in the school. Our mentors are senior citizens who are recruited through RSVP—Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Unlike in other communities, RSVP in Butte is based in the schools and we were able to hire an associate superintendent to be the one in charge of these efforts. The mentors are present everywhere—in classes, in after-school programs, in the cafeterias, in athletic activities.
- We hold an annual Walk against Violence that involves students, parents, state legislators, and even the governor. It's a huge event, with upwards of 5,000 people attending. Prior to that event, we have a whole week of activities at the schools with conflict resolution programs and assemblies featuring college football players giving anti-violence messages.

Suggested Readings

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- We also decided to build a soccerfield next to the school so the students would have more access to athletic activities. First, a local company donated 40 acres of land to the school for this project. Then students in all grade levels collaborated on service-learning projects with a community agency to help build these fields. We now have a beautiful sports complex that is the pride of the school and students.

Personally, I made a commitment when the shooting happened to do everything possible to make schools safe for children. As terrible as the shooting was, there were many precious lessons that I and so many other people learned from it. We realized the importance of looking at the whole child and surrounding every child with an effective support system. We knew that we had to address these issues at the youngest possible age so that the problems don't get worse as children get older. We became committed to teaching conflict resolution skills to kids so that they could address problems effectively.

What we did not know at the time of the shooting was that both of his parents were in the final stages of AIDS, leaving him alone and afraid and isolated. Two years after the shooting—he was only 10 at the time of the incident—the courts allowed

him to go back to public school in a community 60 miles away and he graduated from public school eight years later.

Q What recommendations can you offer Safe and Drug-Free School Coordinators so their superintendent and principals commit their leadership to SDFS-related programming?

BERMAN: In terms of implementing this program, it's taken professional development of the faculty, curriculum

planning time, teacher leadership, student leadership development, and administrative mandate and support. Without my support and the support of principals, this would not happen. And it takes strong school board support. In Hudson Valley, the school board is deeply committed to this work. Recognition is a final and significant piece. We provide awards and different forms of acknowledgment for the work we've been doing.

What we've seen is that social and emotional learning improves the school climate, enhances learning, empowers positive student leadership, and demonstrates to parents that school is a caring and respectful environment. It also re-engages the public and builds confidence in public education. We recently distributed to parents a 50-item survey on indicators of school success. Three of those items related directly to social and emotional learning, asking parents if they perceived the student body demonstrating pride in its community, being involved in community service, and showing concern for the well-being of others. Between 80% and 90% of parents indicated that they value those qualities highly.

In essence, restoring civility, nurturing character, and developing civic commitment in young people means reconnecting them with their community, providing them with basic social skills to negotiate their differences with others, and teaching them that they can make a difference. Social and emotional learning is the instructional methodology that can accomplish this.

PAPPONI: Leadership is a very important concept in not only the beginnings of a program like this, but in sustaining it. Change is a great challenge for leaders, and it's also important to have the orientation and training of the entire learning community. Updates to the board of education are very important because, without a strong and supportive board, you are not likely to get the program underway. Resiliency is the mark of a good leader, and a good leader is not captivated by the negative situation. As Hannibal said, we will find a way, or make one.

When conducting interviews with prospective teachers and administrators, we look for people who have knowledge of and experience with social and emotional learning. We ask them questions about this topic and are able to hire them to be part of the team. It's a team effort that helps to achieve this.

It's also helpful to have collaboration with teacher preparation programs. It's imperative that teachers come to you with some sort of knowledge about social and emotional learning so that you can then build upon that knowledge in your professional development plans.

We as educators are obligated to seek new opportunities to improve education and be innovative. Further, in our quest for accountability, let us not lose sight of the fact we are responsible for teaching the whole child: mind, body, and

heart. High academic performance and social and emotional learning are very much connected, and only when we integrate them are we truly preparing students for this 21st century and our global society. Schools with high student achievement and morale create a culture of excellence.

Be sure to use data to attract and support interest in social and emotional learning; there's lots of it, and it's exciting to discover. There's wonderful data in service-learning as well as character education. Keep your community informed and supportive. People overwhelmingly endorse social and emotional learning once they know about it.

You must own a vision of what is possible and be able to articulate that vision with great intensity. There has to be so much intensity that all those who hear it will own it as well.

“What we've seen is that social and emotional learning improves the school climate, enhances learning, empowers positive student leadership, and demonstrates to parents that school is a caring and respectful environment. It also re-engages the public and builds confidence in public education.”

— Sheldon Berman

ORR: We place a great emphasis on staff development. Every 9 weeks, students go home for half a day. At that time, we do staff development for teachers. For our administrators, principals, and assistant principals, we schedule six Superintendent's Academies every year. We publish a number of topics, usually about twelve, that we are considering for presentation. We then gauge the reactions of administrators and see which of the twelve hold the most interest for the group. But aside from interest, there are some things that we want them to know. So about three of the academies are based on what they would like to know, while the other three are based on what we would like for them to know. We want our principals and assistant principals on the same page, since at every school there is a division of responsibilities between the two of them. Administrators are mandated to attend the academies and become familiar with implementation strategies for safe

— continued

schools. It's not a matter of whether we have time to do it; we take time to do it.

STETZNER: I just collaborated on a large research project on new teacher mentorship programs with staff of Western Montana College. We distributed a survey to 500 new teachers in Montana to find out about their priorities for training. Academic teaching—teaching content in subjects such as math and English—was fifteenth on the list. The top concern was classroom management—how to create a safe, productive, and respectful classroom environment. The second most prominent concern was what teachers could do to help kids when there is a problem. I would guess that these are the same top concerns you would see almost anywhere in the country.

Professional development can't be stressed enough. We need to make sure that we can give teachers evidence-based research that addresses the social and emotional learning needs of students. Teachers need to understand that SEL does not conflict with their need to reach standards and improve test scores. In fact, by paying attention to issues such as mental health, bullying, and conflict resolution, teachers will also help their students to raise test scores.

Classroom teachers frequently feel that they're out of the loop. Often we use a train-the-trainer model and the needed messages get diluted by the time they reach the classroom teacher. The teacher is our first line of defense. The first person who sees every single child in crisis or showing some kind of warning sign is the teacher. So we need to take some time as a group to find ways to get to the classroom teachers and make sure that professional development addresses their needs.

What I have found out from my experience is a lot of this is about relationship issues; a lot of this is about helping students to assume increasingly responsible, respected roles in the adult society around them. A lot of this is how we help secondary victims of the violence; and a lot of this is about educational leadership and the kinds of skills that educational leaders need to be effective in today's world.

We need to find educational leaders who give top-down support for bottom-up reclamation. Our education leaders are no longer managers of a facility. They have to be good listeners, role models, and team players. They have to be

facilitators of learning who can address the needs of their particular site. They have to make certain that the school is safe and inviting at all times, including at night and on weekends when many activities happen.

We have to have a safety net developed across our schools and district so that we can continue to find ways to protect our most valuable resource, our children.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The panel session offered time for a few questions from the audience.



Q I'm a student and have been ignored by several school boards. It seems like when youth want to prevent school crime or start a program in the school, their voice is not heard. What is the best approach to show your school board that youth are not just a problem, but that youth can make a difference in people's lives?

BERMAN: There is no more important effort than including young people in this whole conversation. One of the things that we are doing is to create a more democratic environment, especially in our high school, but at all levels. I think it starts even at the elementary level. For example, many schools are using class meetings as a way to bring out youth voice. The adults in our society often think that young people don't have something of value to contribute.

It's important for you to be persistent; it's important for you to gain allies. Look for adults who will bring you forward to the board to talk about the kinds of wonderful things that you have been doing, and to build those alliances and not give up. Keep coming back to the school board with whatever initiatives you would like. And keep coming back to administrators to show that you have something of value to offer. It is key that your voice is not lost in this dialogue.

MANNING: I want to add that this is the most important question or statement that we will hear today. I was in a very unusual district in Pennsylvania where we had the highest homicide rate, highest incidence of HIV, and faced many, many other issues. And when I was a new superintendent—

“People overwhelmingly endorse [SEL] once they know about it.”

— Paula Papponi

and I don't want you to do this—students marched to my office. They got my attention. From that point on, they were part of the solution. When we had our strategic planning for the community, they had a representative helping to create that strategic plan, and they were at all the updates and every activity. You need to get the attention in a positive way. Even though some students marched through town to my office, it was done in a very orderly fashion. Frankly, I was very pleased to think that in this district students understood that they had the right to demand a quality education and a safe school.

ORR: If you want to get the school board's attention, show up every time and take the three minutes or whatever time allotted for guests to speak. They won't want to ignore you, especially when they are running for re-election. Make an appointment with each school board member and visit with him or her individually, since they all have office hours. You will have their attention.

Q In general, who initiated the SEL-based programs in your district?

PAPPONI: Oddly enough, it was myself, the superintendent, who planted the seeds in Jemez Valley. Teachers who were there for a long time saw it as an add-on program and were not willing to go for the trainings that were provided. They had a few years left before retiring and really didn't have time for such concepts as social-emotional learning and service-learning. The new teachers who came in were very willing to learn. A superintendent or a principal cannot do it alone. There have to be teachers in the school who are aligned with these philosophies. Start a pilot program and collect the data, and the data will be very impressive. Then the board and other teachers and the community cannot doubt what the data shows. There are many places to plant those seeds. You have to have perseverance. It's not easy, but it's certainly worth it.

BERMAN: As superintendents and administrators, we are interested, but we work within a political context. And in fact, there are certain things we are capable of doing and certain things we are not. When I was a teacher, I learned from one of my principals a philosophy of "let your fast horses run." In other words, find the people who are your advocates and let them do the things that they would like to do in terms of social-emotional programming and other areas in

which you want to move forward. Many times, we're surprised about where the seeds come from.

For example, about 3 years ago, a couple of our teachers went to a training on Responsive Classroom, which is a classroom management program that allows teachers to run their classrooms in a way that creates a sense of community and involves class meetings and other strategies. These teachers, who are well respected by the rest of the faculty as capable teachers, came back absolutely enthusiastic. Then I had 19 people ask to go to a summer institute on Responsive Classroom. They came back enthusiastic and then I had requests from the majority of our faculty to take institutes. We should be open to surprises and look for those people who really care about this, but may not know how to proceed and encourage them to take action.

STETZNER: In this country, one of the biggest things we have done is said that children need to be in school in a safe learning environment. It's the goal of almost every district in the country. If it's the goal, then every superintendent should hold the administration accountable for making sure that there is substantial progress towards that goal. The principal also has to hold the staff accountable. I think we need to start forcing the seeds, not just planting them.

Q What role do guidance counselors play in SEL-based programs?

BERMAN: In our district, the people who do the training now in Second Step and Adventures in Peacemaking and to some degree in Responsive Classroom are elementary guidance counselors. Our middle school and secondary school guidance counselors are now being trained in Responsive Classroom and will provide a leadership role there. The guidance counselors are key in creating a positive climate and culture. They can be instrumental in moving the district forward in social-emotional learning.

Linda Fredericks, a consultant with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, contributed to the development of this issue of *Field Notes*.

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