Creating Emotionally Safe Schools

March 8, 2023
March 22, 2023

Dr. Molly McMahon
Mr. Eric Frenette
Virtual Housekeeping Items

- You have the slides
- Please ask questions in the chat
- 9-10am, no breaks
- Be present
Objectives today

- Clarify that “whole adults” create emotionally safe schools for everyone
- Create a shared understanding for the work of supporting “whole adults”
- Define the whole adult 3 “buckets” we will explore in 2 sessions
- Identify practices that create adult capacity building
Our human capital... is our greatest asset

“Ultimately, there are two kinds of schools: learning-enriched schools and learning impoverished schools. I’ve yet to see a school where the learning curves of the youngsters are off the chart upward while the learning curves of the adults are off the chart downward, or a school where the learning curves of the adults were steep upward and those of the students were not. **Teachers and students go hand in hand as learners - or they do not go at all.** (Barth, 2001, p. 23)

“The most important resource in every school will continue to be the professionals in it... They will do more than voice the belief that all students can learn; they will act on that belief. They will create a shared vision of the school they must create in order to help all students learn. They will identify and honor collective commitments clarifying what they are prepared to do to move their school toward that vision.” (Whatever It Takes, DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2004, p. 37)
A report from the CDC published in February 2022:

- ADHD (9.8%) and anxiety (9.4%) most common in children and adolescents aged 3–17 years
- 15.1% of adolescents aged 12–17 years had a major depressive episode in the past year
- 36.7% of high school students aged primarily 14–18 years experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year;
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This is our moment...

In the Ignatian tradition, *cannonball moments are experiences that force us to stop how we are living and invite us to live in a new way.*

~Christopher Kerr
Whole Child Education in US Catholic Schools
Consider the simple directions of a flight attendant:

“In the event of an emergency, oxygen masks will fall. If you are traveling with children, please place the oxygen mask on yourself first and then, and only then, place it on the child.”
Care for the whole adult to “give the oxygen...”

Adult Wellbeing: SEL & Positive School Climate

Teacher Capacity: Training & Professional Development

Adult Relationships: Teachers, Administrators, Families

*Supporting the Whole Teacher (Aspen Institute, 2017)
Whole Adults

- Norms of Collaboration
- 3 Signature Practices
- Productive Communication

Adult Relationships: Teachers, Administrators, Families

*Supporting the Whole Teacher (Aspen Institute, 2017)
What if the hierarchy is wrong?

“It is possible to prepare for the future without knowing what it will be. The primary way to prepare for the unknown is to attend to the quality of our relationships, to how well we know and trust one another.”

- Margaret Wheatley

Lieberman, 2013
How will we work together? NORMS (Aguilar, 2018)

What do YOU need to work successfully on a team?

● Think about a positive experience working on a team
● Think about a negative experience working on a team

What made the difference?

1. Using THREE post it notes, please write the top three things that YOU need to feel like you can work successfully on a team
2. Narrow down the repetitive ones
3. Define
4. Revisit at the start AND end of EVERY meeting
Samples of Norms...

(Aguilar, 2018)

Procedural:
- Start and end on time
- Cell phones silenced and not a distraction
- Let others know if you will be late or have to leave early ahead of time

Behavioral:
- Be fully present
- Keep students at the center
- Presume positive intentions
- Be solutions oriented
- Monitor airtime
- It is okay to agree to disagree
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be willing to put ideas on the table and take them off
- See the goals for the whole school
- Be open to possibilities
- Actively participate
- Asset based approach and growth mindset
- Take an inquiry stance when things get hard
Norms Brainstorm

1. Start and end on time
2. Agenda given with roles
3. Maintain Confidentiality
4. Knowing it is okay to agree and disagree
5. Keep students at the center
6. Goal and solution oriented
7. Presume positive intentions
8. Respect for ideas with open and honest communication
9. Fully engaged and actively participating

Good to do with whole staff... with all teams and committees too!
“St. Joseph School-Tiered Intervention Planning”

- Collaborative approach to student intervention.
- Regularly scheduled meetings where teachers bring cases to the team’s attention.
- Team works together to create an intervention plan, cooperates in assessing effectiveness, redesign if needed, etc.
- Allows for:
  - the sharing of responsibilities,
  - utilizing experience and strengths of colleagues
  - accountability for interventions
  - documentation
More than donuts in the teacher’s room...

How can we support the relationships with and among staff?

For adults:
Oakland Unified School District...

For more information:
- 3 Signature practices from CASEL (video)
- Two pager summary to adapt
- Signature Practices Playbook
Individually...Plan YOUR April Faculty Meeting

Objectives of the Meeting:
1. *
2. *
3. *

1. Welcoming Activity -
2. What engaging strategies will help us meet our objectives?
3. Optimistic Closure -
How do we communicate with one another?

SENTENCE STARTERS TO SHIFT THE TONE

Jennifer Abrams, author of *Having Hard Conversations* (Corwin, 2009), said some sentence starters are better openers to change charged situations and affect the tone of a conversation. She suggests trying these:

- “Tell me more about what makes you say that.”
- “I’m not willing to agree with that generalization.”
- “Do you think that’s true generally? Do you have a specific student or example in mind?”
- “Some of the words you just used make me uncomfortable.”
- “I don’t agree with what you just said. Could you please share more about what you mean?”
- “That makes me feel uncomfortable. Can we talk about it?”
- “That seems unfair to me. Do you really feel that way?”
- “Could you explain that to me, please?”
- “Tell me more about what makes you say that.”
- “I have a different opinion, but I’m willing to listen and share.”
- “Here’s an example of how I feel differently.”
Whole Adults

Adult Wellbeing: SEL & Positive School Climate

- Adopt SEL Practices
- Inquiry Stance
- Shift the tone

*Supporting the Whole Teacher (Aspen Institute, 2017)
What is Emotional Intelligence?
Emotional Intelligence matters...

**Emotional Intelligence** - the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively

- In multiple studies, EI is the strongest predictor of success in job performance
- EI is the foundation of trusting relationships
- Emotional Intelligence is not fixed... it can grow
The Cycle of the Emotion... CBT
The Cycle of an Emotion (Aguilar, 2018)

What are the entry points with which we can pause an emotion? How can we change the outcome by pausing?
Stop and Jot...

Think of a time that you didn’t intervene in the cycle of your emotions...

What could you have done differently with your own self-awareness?
Stance of Curiosity...
Asking Questions... Problems to be solved

Pocket Guide to Probing Questions (SRI Protocols)

Clarifying questions... simple questions of fact
Ex.
- How much time does the project take?
- How were the students grouped?
- What resources did the students have available for this project?

Probing questions... help someone to think more deeply
- If it doesn’t get to that, then it was actually a clarifying question OR you offered a solution...

Ex.
- Why do you think this is the case?
- What would have to change in order for...?
- What was your intention when...?
- What do you assume to be true about...?
- What is the connection between...and...?
Attentive Listening... Seek to understand

Tools for your Toolkit... and let’s try it...

How Do I Listen: Resource for reflecting on own listening skills

How Do I Listen?

Read through the kinds of listening activities listed here. Ask someone to talk for a minute or two. Notice what kinds of listening activities your mind does, and check off the boxes as you notice your mind going into these places. Alternately, listen to someone talk, watch your mind wander, and then use this tool afterward to record your observations.

☐ Listening to find connections. Your mind thinks, “Oh, I remember when that happened to me too!”
☐ Listening to find a story of your own to share. Your mind thinks, “I can tell her about that time that I...”
☐ Listening but wanting to jump in and finish the speaker’s sentence.
☐ Listening to find a point you agree or disagree with.
☐ Listening to find something you can ask a clarifying question about after because you want more information.
Personal Reflection

What is a recent problem that came your way?

- What types of questions did you ask?
  - What could you have asked?

Reflection on who you are as a listener...

- What type of listener were you in this situation?
  - In what ways do you want to seek to be a more attentive listener?
Thank you...

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Resource list will be sent
PAUSE... Day 2 next
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**Adult Wellbeing:** SEL & Positive School Climate

**Teacher Capacity:** Training & Professional Development

**Adult Relationships:** Teachers, Administrators, Families

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Whole Adults

Adult Wellbeing: SEL & Positive School Climate

- Adopt SEL Practices
- Inquiry Stance
- Shift the tone

*Supporting the Whole Teacher (Aspen Institute, 2017)
Shift the “tone” in your community

Venting...

- Carefully pick who
- Relationships
- Perspective
- Solutions oriented
“There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.” -Lundin, p. 21

“Get to do” attitude...

Gratitude
Whole Adults

**Teacher Capacity:**
- Training & Professional Development

*Our Human Capital is our greatest asset*
- A culture of learning for ALL
  - Teacher Leadership
  - Data + Observation = goal setting and the creation of professional learning

*Supporting the Whole Teacher (Aspen Institute, 2017)*
Teacher Leadership Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Leadership Competencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visionary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a Vision for Leadership</td>
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<td>Distributed leadership</td>
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<td>Inquiry stance</td>
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<td>Goal-Setting</td>
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<td>Models of implementation</td>
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<td>Development of vision of self as leader</td>
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<td>Reflective Practice</td>
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<td>Supporting Adult Learners</td>
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<td>Humble</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a culture for learning among adults in school community</td>
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<td>Needs of adult learners</td>
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<td>Communication skills</td>
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<td>Conflict as opportunity-courageous conversations</td>
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<td>Leading Teams</td>
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<td>Adaptable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a shared vision among team members</td>
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<td>Shaping team culture</td>
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<td>Developing goals for student learning outcomes</td>
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<td>Crafting meaningful meetings (norms, agencies)</td>
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<td>Teacher Observation &amp; Feedback</td>
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<td>Attentive</td>
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<td>Fostering trust among colleagues</td>
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<td>Development of collaborative professionalism</td>
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<td>Non-evaluative peer observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn and utilize the practice of lesson study</td>
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<td>Art of meaningful feedback</td>
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<td>Leveraging Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptable/Attentive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use data to inform decision-making &amp; advance school mission</td>
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<td>Linking metrics to goal-setting</td>
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<td>Data collection and goal-setting</td>
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<td>Data tracking process</td>
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<td>Data-informed improvement and change</td>
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Teacher Leadership occurs as an action and stance when teachers — in collaboration with their school leaders and fellow educators — utilize their professional knowledge and gifts and strive for ongoing growth to support the holistic development and formation of students in a mission-aligned, data-informed manner that centers equity and justice.
Teacher-Leadership Belief Statements (ex. CRN Teacher Lead Program)

Our Teacher Leaders will know and understand the following while working with colleagues (Aguilar, 2018):

- Learn within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in order to meet colleagues where they are and take them forward
- Lead with an assets-based approach and build upon successes
- Create cultures of learning for adults so that student learning and holistic formation increases
Personal Reflection...

1. Do you believe in teacher leadership? As a stance? As an action?

2. Is there a culture in your school that allows for teacher leadership?

3. Are there structures in place that allow for teacher leadership?
Liang and Klein’s Value Archetypes (from *How to Navigate Life*)
Guided Exercise...

List your educators

All of them... don’t skip anyone

List their gifts/ talents/ passions

How do these gifts align with the goals / vision / strategy or cultural needs of the school?
Principles of Adult Learning (Aguilar, 2018)

1. Adults must feel safe to learn
2. Adults come to learning experiences with histories
3. Adults need to know why we have to learn something
4. Adults want agency in their learning
5. Adults need practice to internalize learning
6. Adults have a problem-centered orientation to learning
7. Adults want to learn
Mind the Gap... Learning Needs of adults

A Longer Explanation

MIND THE GAP: Identifying Learning Needs

- **SKILL**: The ability to execute the technical elements of a task. Can be the application of knowledge.
- **KNOWLEDGE**: The theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. Can also be information.
- **CAPACITY**: The time and resources to do something. Can also be emotional and physical capacity.
- **WILL**: Desire, intrinsic motivation, passion, or commitment. Usually has an emotional tone.
- **CULTURAL COMPETENCE**: The ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures or social systems different from one's own. The skill to navigate inter-cultural differences.
- **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**: The ability to be aware of, manage, and express one's emotions; the ability to recognize, empathize with, and manage other people's emotions.

Lynch School of Education and Human Development
Rochester Center for Catholic Education
Goal Setting & Professional Learning

Data Informed Practices

● Quantitative data
● Qualitative data
● Survey data
● Anecdotally
● Observations

“But small moves, that’s the stuff. Small effective moves done with consistency over time can change a classroom, a school, a community, and quite frankly the world.” - @meghanlawsonblog

Goal setting...
Diocese/Network level
School level
Teacher level
● Determines the professional learning needs
Goal Setting & Professional Learning

Data Informed Practices

Individual Time to think about a goal to set:

1. What is a goal you have for your school?
2. What data is this based on? (More than just test scores)
3. What action steps would need to happen to achieve this goal?
4. How could you measure meeting the goal?

Without data, all we have is an opinion.

-Edward Deming
I used to think.... And now I think...

Take a few minutes to think about how your thinking has changed about "whole adults"

In the chat...

I used to think... and now I think...
Whole Adults...

Adult Wellbeing: SEL & Positive School Climate

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