**SEAL** — Social, emotional, and academic learning ...the heart of learning — MTSS

Dear WS/FCS Staff,

We hope your spring break was relaxing and filled with self-care. As you dive back into distance teaching and learning, please know that we are here to support you. Navigating this "new normal" may be stressful but just know that YOU ARE ENOUGH! This week, we are bringing you some fresh tips for self-care, resources, and professional development links. In addition, some of your colleagues have contributed to bring you innovative ways to integrate SEL during this time of distance learning. We are so excited to feature our district's "Edu Rock Stars" in this issue and in future issues. Have a wonderful week and, as always, please reach out to your SEAL team if you need additional support.

Warm regards,
Amanda Walker, SEAL Program Specialist
Kathy FitzJefferies, Program Manager Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Visit our website for more information: https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/112572

## Self-Care Ideas
Remember, SEL is not just for the kids.
Be sure to care for yourself so you may care for your students.

- Belly breathing
- Watch your favorite show or movie
- Organize a dedicated work area in your home
- Meditate
- Connect with colleagues
- Dance or Sing
- Take a break from social media
- Think about or plan your dream vacation
- Have a growth mindset: change negative thoughts to positive thoughts

What are some of your ideas for self-care?

## Free SEL Webinars
**Panorama Ed FREE webinars:**

- *Mindfulness Strategies for Adult and Student Wellness*

- *Building Connectedness and Belonging for Students While School Buildings are Closed*

- *Virtual Panel: Strategies for Top MTSS/RTI Challenges*

Click here to access the webinars:
https://www.panoramaed.com/webinars

**CASEL SEL Resources during COVID19:**
https://casel.org/covid-resources/

**Your SEAL Team is here to support YOU!**

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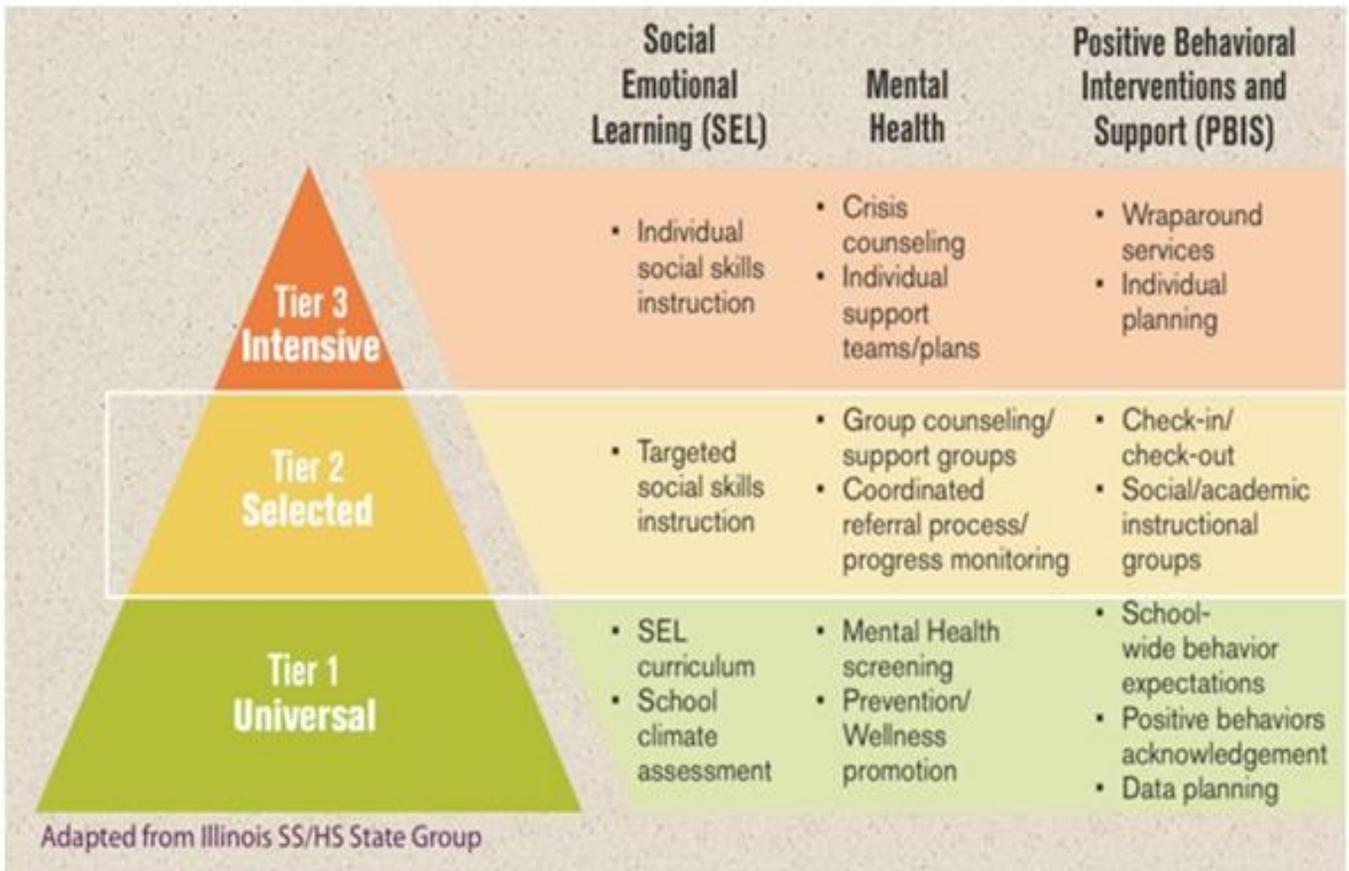## SEL: The Foundation for MTSS

Social and emotional learning (SEL) has positive impacts on both academics and behavior within the context of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). It is common knowledge that learning is a social and emotional process. In fact, social emotional learning provides the foundation for students' academic and behavioral success. Students with strong SEL competencies are able to follow behavioral expectations, reflect on and learn from mistakes, build positive relationships with those in their learning communities, and make responsible decisions. Academically, students equipped with SEL skills are able to self manage and self monitor. While MTSS is a framework that provides general guidelines for each tier, it ultimately is up to administration and teachers to come up with specific interventions and supports that meet the needs of their school community.

## MTSS: Coordinated 3-Tiered Practices

| | Social Emotional Learning (SEL) | Mental Health | Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tier 3 Intensive** | • Individual social skills instruction | • Crisis counseling<br>• Individual support teams/plans | • Wraparound services<br>• Individual planning |
| **Tier 2 Selected** | • Targeted social skills instruction | • Group counseling/ support groups<br>• Coordinated referral process/ progress monitoring | • Check-in/ check-out<br>• Social/academic instructional groups |
| **Tier 1 Universal** | • SEL curriculum<br>• School climate assessment | • Mental Health screening<br>• Prevention/ Wellness promotion | • School-wide behavior expectations<br>• Positive behaviors acknowledgement<br>• Data planning |

Adapted from Illinois SS/HS State Group

## GRAB-N-GO SEL CORNER
### By: Jenna Valentine-Turner, SEL Coordinator

Hi colleagues!

Each week, I will provide an elementary SEL resource that will be simple and easy to add to your Power School learning pages or integrate into other e-learning activities for your students. This week's activity is based on the CASEL competency of self-management! As we find ourselves well into the 5th Week of e-learning, students and families may find it challenging to stay motivated when it comes to following a well-balanced routine that provides the cornerstone for academics and overall physical/mental health. To encourage routine and healthy habits, our students and families can link to a simple online game through the Kahoot! Platform. For extra adult SEL, grown-ups can practice creating a daily schedule with items/goals they plan to accomplish for each day.

Click on the links below to access the video where I explain this week's activity as well as the Google Doc that can be copied/pasted to your PowerSchool Learning Pages:

Self Management Activity

Self Management Google Document

If you have any questions, contact **JAValentine-Turner@wsfcs.k12.nc.us**

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**Need SEL infused Social Studies Ideas?**

WS/FCS Director of Social Studies, Rebecca McKnight, has you covered. Read her article on page 5 for more information.

**Lesson Examples**

K-5: Everyone's a Helper

6-8: Messages from the Media

9-12: Digital Tools as a Mechanism for Active Citizenship

# The Heart of Learning
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## Giving Our Students a Voice in Science in This Virtual World
### By: Brad Rhew, Science Coach

During these interesting times of online instruction, we, as teachers, are still trying to find ways to make our students still feel connected and part of our classroom. One way students feel connected is by having the option to express their ideas, views, and opinions during class discussions on certain topics. With us not being in our physical classrooms, this makes it more difficult for students to do this. However, there are many great online tools teachers can use to still give their students a voice in the classroom even from a distance. I have built my classroom around the philosophy that students learn best through hands-on instruction and communicating about science with their peers. This method not only allows students to physically be a part of their learning but also offers them the opportunity to share their ideas with other students as well as take on the role as the teacher and teach new concepts and ideas to others.

One platform that has helped my students stay connected in science and communicate with their peers is Flipgrid. Flipgrid allows the teacher to post a question or activity for your students to interact with. Your students respond by creating a short video that they upload to a secure site for you and their peers to view. Other students then have the option to create a video response back to them. After students have submitted their responses, teachers can give feedback either as written comments or they can create a video to send back to the students. For example, I created a Flipgrid where students had to find an example of force and motion happening in their house. They had to record the example as well as explain on their video response. Students then had the opportunity to view and respond to their peers' videos. This activity allowed them to not only show what they are learning but also take a full part in their learning and teach their peers about a concept. For students who might be academically struggling with this particular topic, they were able to watch other videos first to get ideas and to help them understand the concept in better detail.

If you are interested in other SEL integrated science ideas, please feel free to contact Brad Rhew at btrhew@wsfcs.k12.nc.us .

## Teaching Tolerance and SEAL

### By: Rebecca McKnight, Director of Social Studies

In 1996, I remember looking for a teaching resource to help me talk with students about injustices in American History. My search lead me to a resource from the Southern Poverty Law Center called "The Shadow of Hate." This video and collection of stories talked about moments in American History when our nation was not welcoming or tolerant of those who were considered "different." I was able to share the stories of intolerance in a way that my students could understand. They learned about Chinese exclusion, religious intolerance, the massacre at Rosewood and Japanese Internment camps. We talked about why these moments happened and what could be done to keep them from ever happening again.

More than twenty-five years later, I still use the materials from Teaching Tolerance to find resources, tools, and strategies to help students learn how others were treated over our nation's history and how to make sure that those moments of inequity do not continue to happen. Teaching Tolerance's mission is "to help teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy." This means teaching students to embrace diversity and the identities of others as they look for ways to be civically engaged.

Over time, the resources provided by Teaching Tolerance have grown to include lessons plans and videos to teach about tolerance and intolerance, professional development for teachers on topics ranging from teaching student anti-bullying strategies to digital literacy and frameworks for teaching about "hard history" and social justice through the lenses of identity, diversity, justice and action. They also help promote "Mix it up," a national day to encourage students to meet and eat with new people at lunchtime. All the resources are free to teachers, just visit the site and look for what you want. There are lessons for K-12 students on a wide variety of topics. The texts can be downloaded and then placed on Power School Learning for students to read.

In this time of historic change and uncertainty, how we treat others is one thing that can, and should, remain constant. How we uplift each other, support each other and fight for each other are part of the DNA of America. Children can be taught how to do this through looking at examples of people's behavior in life, in books and in history. Teaching Tolerance is a resource that we can use to integrate multiple content areas with social emotional learning in order to cultivate these ideas of empathy, diversity and acceptance in students at all levels.

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# STOMP OUT CYBERBULLYING:
## Tips for teachers and parents
### By: Tia Bradley, School Counselor

There has been an inflation in kids and teens usage of digital platforms for online learning and personal usage during the COVID-19 pandemic. With there being an increased usage of social media apps and digital devices, students who are prone to being bullied in school are now likely to be cyberbullied. During these unprecedented times, kids and teens are experiencing spikes in anxiety levels and the opportunity to cyberbully is present.

Parents are also at home with their children more now than ever before. During this time, parents can be more mindful than ever about their child's technology and social media use. One of the best ways to protect your child from cyberbullying is to talk openly about it. Listed below are some cyberbullying warning signs to look for along with tips on what teachers and parents can do to prevent cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying warning signs adapted from "STOMP Out Bullying":

- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed or loses interest in people and activities.
- A child hides their screen or device when others are near and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device.
- A change in eating habits and sleep patterns.
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- Increased physical complaints (headaches, stomach upset, etc.).
- Kids and teens experience self-destructive behaviors such as self-harm or talking about suicide.

Tips on what teachers can do to prevent cyberbullying from "Stop Bullying":

- If you think a child is being cyberbullied, speak to them privately to ask about it. They may also have proof on their digital device. Speak with their parent/guardian about it to make them aware of the situation.
- To understand children's digital behavior and how it relates to cyberbullying, increase your digital awareness.
- Develop activities that encourage self-reflection, asking children to identify and express what they think and feel, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Help children develop emotional intelligence so that they can learn self-awareness and self-regulation skills and learn how to have empathy for others.
- Role model, reinforce, and reward positive behavior towards others.
- Encourage peer involvement in prevention strategies.

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Tips on what parents can do to prevent cyberbullying from "STOMP Out Bullying":

- Learn the Internet. In other words, learn the ins and outs and become familiar with the language.
- Teach children if it's not something you would say to someone in person, then it doesn't need to be said to that person online, through texting, or posting on any social media platforms.
- Explain that cyberbullying is harmful and unacceptable. Discuss appropriate online behavior and make it clear that there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior.
- Communicate with your children. Let them know that it's okay to come to you if they are being cyberbullied, digitally harassed, cyberstalked or if they have been approached by a digital predator.
- Be sure to keep your computer(s)out in the open, such as a family room or kitchen.
- Install parental control filtering software and monitor your child's computer. Tell your child that you are not spying on them, but you may review their online communications if you think there is a reason for concern.
- Notify the police if the known or suspected cyberbullying involves a threat.

# More Professional Development Opportunities

**Association of Middle Level Education:**

*Growth Mindset in the Middle School Classroom: Lessons for Teachers*

*CASEL:*

*Cultivating Adult SEL Through Staff Meetings*

Need additional resources or lesson ideas?
Contact Amanda M. Walker at amwalker3@wsfcs.k12.nc.us

## ASK AMANDA:
### Advice on SEL Implementation and Distance Learning

**What are ideas of integrating SEL into video conferencing with my students?**
SEL can still be taught during this period of distance learning so this is a great question. First, building community is an essential SEL component. Connecting with your students by facilitating virtual morning and/or afternoon check-ins. Students may have issues on their minds and hearts during the pandemic, so virtual check-ins would be a way to address these concerns as a class community. Lastly, try to come up with ways for students to work together on assignments to encourage relationship building.

*Send your questions to amwalker3@wsfcs.k12.nc.us and Amanda Walker, SEAL Program Specialist, will answer them in the upcoming newsletter.*

## The SEAL, Substance Use and COVID-19 Connection

The COVID-19 crisis has created quite an upheaval impacting every aspect of our lives. The social distancing, self-isolation, health/safety concerns, and financial stressors have triggered feelings of stress, worry, loneliness, boredom, depression, and/or anxiety for many adults and children. Paralleling this crisis, information is surfacing of the increase use and/or sales of alcohol, marijuana, and other substances.

A few things we need to keep in mind:
- For some adults, the influx of alcohol use to cope with stress may not have long term implications, however for others the increased consumption of alcohol, nicotine, and/or other drugs may possibly evolve into an addiction.
- For students, use of alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, and other drugs can negatively impact physical, emotional, mental, and social development, as well as, undermined their academic potential.
- For those in recovery, the stress of this crisis could trigger substance use reoccurrence/relapse.
- Use of substances to cope with feelings of depression and anxiety can exacerbate underlying emotional and mental health issues in adults and youth.
- For adults and youth, use of alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, and other drugs can reduce immune function, weaken lungs, and lead to chronic health problems, which can increase susceptibility to COVID-19. Of particular concern, there are indications that adults and youth who smoke and/or vape are at an increased risk of COVID-19.

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In order to be better equipped to support our family and students' social and emotional needs, we must make it a priority to take care of our own social and emotional needs.  Below are a few suggested resource links to help cope with the challenges presented by this health crisis:

- Take care of yourself and reach out for support  https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885
-  Monitor your use of alcohol, nicotine, and other substances https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/step-by-step-guides-to-finding-treatment-drug-use-disorders/if-you-have-problem-drugs-adults/how-to-recognize-substance-use-disorder
- If you recognize difficulty with your drug use or a potential for relapse, reach out for help and support.  One option is on-line support groups such as https://www.12step.org/social/online-meetings/
- If you need assistance to address substance use or emotional/mental health concerns, resource options include WS/FCS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/cms/lib/NC01001395/Centricity/Domain/29/ComPsych%20Brochure%202017.pdf  and/or accessing a provider through the NC State Health Plan https://www.shpnc.org/find-doctor

If you have concerns about a student's possible drug involvement:
- Be aware of the signs of student drug use  https://drugfree.org/article/look-for-warning-signs/
- Resources for teens to quit vaping https://teen.smokefree.gov/quit-vaping or https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/quitting-smoking-vaping/quitting-e-cigarettes
- Contact your School Counselor, School Social Worker, or School Psychologist to discuss any concerns about your student and/or to request resources to support your students through this crisis.

For additional resources or information contact Kathy FitzJefferies, LCSW LCAS CCS, Program Manager, WS/FCS Safe and Drug-Free Schools (kefitzjefferies@wsfcs.k12.nc.us or 336-413-8395).

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- Grab-N-Go SEL Corner
- Parent Engagement Tips during virtual learning
- Signs and Implications of Vaping During COVID-19
- Parent Podcast-WS/FCS parent discusses how to set up home for productive distance learning
- Free Resource: Digital kindness notes for students

**…and MORE!**