



The Heart of Learning

Issue 4

May 6, 2020

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Dear WS/FCS Staff,

It has been several weeks since you have been able to be in your classrooms and offices. This reminds us of the saying “you don’t know what you miss until it’s gone.” We are sure you are missing the smiling faces of colleagues and students, the many noises of students filling your hallways and classrooms; and, even, the staff meetings where you could sit with your teaching team. We recognize that connecting virtually is not the same as being in the physical presence of students and co-workers. Hang in there. Your SEAL Team is here to support YOU! In fact, we will be hosting a three-part mindfulness live webinar series where you can practice guided mindfulness strategies while also collaborating with other staff throughout the district in virtual break out rooms. As always, this newsletter issue includes valuable information and insights from your colleagues throughout the district such as the Grab-N-Go resource, self-care ideas, links to resources, ideas for FLEX Friday, tips on positive thinking, and information about vaping. Remember to be patient with yourself. Take care of yourself. All the rest will fall into place.

Warm Regards,
Amanda Walker and Kathy FitzJefferies

Visit our [website](#) for archived newsletters and more information about SEAL.

Self-Care Ideas

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

- Join the WS/FCS SEAL Team’s *Mindful Moments* webinar series
- Take time to reflect on happy memories
- Write in a gratitude journal
- Get sleep for at least 8 hours
- Practice yoga and/or exercise

What are some other self-care ideas?

Your SEAL Team is here to support YOU!

Amanda M. Walker

amwalker3@wsfcs.k12.nc.us

Kathy FitzJefferies

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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/>



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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, "Weather Report Feelings Check-In," is based on the CASEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management. Being able to identify and describe our emotions shows strength in self-awareness and self-management. Research indicates that when children and adults are skilled at being able to check in emotionally, they are easily able to verbalize and reach out for help when they experience an uncomfortable feeling rather than reacting in a manner that is hurtful to themselves or others. Being able to detail personal feelings and emotions can present a challenge for young children as they are often times more reactive to the actual physical feeling of the emotion. This week's activity tackles this challenge by providing a "weather report" scaffold for children to report their feelings.

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/Google Classroom.

Video Link:

[Grab-N-Go Activity](#)

Google Doc:

[Weather Report Feelings Check-In](#)

Questions:

JAValentine-Turner@wsfcs.k12.nc.us

The Heart of Learning Podcast:
featuring [Syreeta Carter-Smith](#)



Click above to listen



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F-L-E-X Fridays: Exploring Great Opportunities

Parent Resource

By: Shanta Reddick, Parent Involvement Coordinator

As a district, **F-L-E-X** Friday has been introduced and implemented. When we think of the definition of flex it means to bend as well as the action or state of flexing. For families and teachers, it gives everyone the opportunity to make choices that benefit you for the day. Everyone's **F-L-E-X** can look different according to your students' needs which is differentiated learning that increases the success of our students.

Each letter of **F-L-E-X** has a different meaning and expectation. On Thursday, prepare for **F-L-E-X** Friday by looking at each area and decide how much time your student will spend on each one and what they will do. Remember to keep it flexible, engaged, and fun.

F- Find something fun to do!!!! Fun can be varied for all families and students. We will have multiple things that we enjoy so it's the one day during the week you get a moment to focus on something fun to do.

L- Leisure Learning - What does leisure look like and what does it really mean? Leisure learning is an opportunity for our teachers and families to tap into our creative side. Teachers can share virtual field trips with their families, students have a chance to engage with their school's specialists. Some ideas include: participating in fun activities, drawing, taking nature walk, playing an instrument, etc...

E - Emotional Time and Connections - During this time, everyone had to adjust and change normal routines fairly quickly. How we connect and deal with our emotions affect us and all of our daily interactions. Your classroom teacher may share ideas; but if not, there are [district resources](#).

X- **EX**tra Learning and Support - If you are having any issues with the week's work or assignments this time is for you. If you need to reach out to your student's teacher as a follow up this time is for you. If you're unsure if your students' work was turned in correctly this time is for you? This is an **OPPORTUNITY** for families and teachers to be engaged and continue molding the success of the student!

Families, Parents, Teachers, and Schools embrace **F-L-E-X** Friday and the **OPPORTUNITY** for improving and molding student success!



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POSITIVE THINKING AND E-LEARNING

By: Taneisha Sanders, SEL Specialist

Positive thinking is used to help minimize stress, resolve problems effectively, increase your decision making skills, and boost your overall health. Life is full of ups and downs. During this pandemic, positive thinking enhances self-management of everyday fears and anxieties by changing your perspective for the better. Looking at situations differently can be the difference between making a positive or negative choice. Students' attitude towards eLearning is vital to their success as we help them journey through the last week of school. Positive thinking helps them to focus and retain information faster and more effectively. Creating a positive environment for enjoying the eLearning experience increases motivation and achieves academic success.

Positive thinking begins with speaking a few simple self-affirming statements to yourself each day when facing difficult situations. The results of using self-affirming statements instills in students the belief that potential is present and personal achievements are possible. Students experience a freedom in the process of moving away from negative thinking. Moreover, this type of thinking is powerful and unlocks infinite possibilities. This lends itself to the age old adage that "positivity breeds positive results". Positive thinking goes beyond having a bright smile and a positive attitude. Along with other social and emotional learning skills and support, positive thinking strategies help promote lifelong skills and real-life value during this time of distance learning.

Click here for resources on positive thinking:

[Positive Thoughts & Affirmations](#), [Ideas for Using Positive Affirmations in Your Classroom](#), [Unleashing the Power of Positivity in Your School](#), [Importance of a Positive Attitude for Students](#), [Four Activities for Positive Thinking Day](#).





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Suggested Resources from Caitlin Fernandez, EC Resource Teacher:

[Teacher weekly to-do list example](#)

[Teacher to-do list example](#)

[Parent Resource](#)

[Trello link](#)

[Setting up Trello Board Video](#)

SEL Resource:

I know many of you miss having face-to-face interactions with students in your classroom. I created these digital kindness notes you can utilize to encourage your students during this time of distance learning. [Click here](#) for the resource.

Enjoy,

Amanda M. Walker

E-mail me @ amwalker3@wsfcs.k12.nc.us with any questions on how to use on various virtual platforms.

Description: Belonging at a Distance

All staff in WSFCS are welcome to join a 75 minute webinar led by Panorama and our SEAL department on *Belonging at a Distance*.

During this time we will:

- Model and share strategies you can use to maintain student belonging virtually
- Align our work on sense of belonging in particular and SEL in general to our Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)
- Build in time for connecting with peers through the use of breakout groups

WHEN: May 8, 2020 @ 10:00-11:15 am & 1:30-2:45 pm.

10:00 - 11:15 AM Live Webinar: [Click here to REGISTER.](#)

1:30 - 2:45 PM Live Webinar: [Click here to REGISTER.](#)

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



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ASK AMANDA:

Advice on SEL Implementation and Distance Learning

What are some suggestions for integrating SEL once school starts next year?

What a thought provoking question! There is no clear guide on how to implement social emotional and academic learning because *not all* schools, classrooms, styles of teaching, or methods of student learning are the *same*. Each teacher should consider assessing students based on CASEL's five competency areas as well as Panorama Ed data. The assessment should be just as intentional and meaningful as the instruction piece. Sometimes, observing can be a way to assess where a student is. For example, if a student is consistently blurting out, the student may have deficits in self-management and self-awareness. You can delve further into these two competency areas to assess the student before deciding on targeted SEL strategies and interventions you may integrate into this student's day. Consider using a goal card to track the student's progress as data collection on how well the student is doing. Empower the student by including them in tracking their goal(s). You may have to take a "trial and error approach." Some things take time. Be patient and consistent.

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

Mindful Moments:

SEAL's New 3-Part Webinar Series

The WS/FCS SEAL Team recognizes that mindfulness is essential during this challenging time of distance learning. We are here to offer a new webinar series, *Mindful Moments*, to all WS/FCS staff. During this webinar, we will practice guided mindfulness activities together before working with other colleagues in breakout sessions where you will engage in a virtual activity. You will not want to miss this opportunity to distress and re-center!

****You do not need to register for this event. For CEUs and DL credits, you will need to attend all three sessions.**

Mindful Moments Schedule:

May 15, 2020: 10:00-10:45 a.m.

May 29, 2020: 10:00-10:45 a.m.

June 12, 2020: 10:00-10:45 a.m. (*last student day celebration*)

[Recurring Zoom Meeting Link](#)



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SEAL AND THE DANGERS OF THE YOUTH VAPING EPIDEMIC

By: Kathy FitzJefferies, SAFDS Program Manager

Student drug use has a direct impact on Social, Emotional and Academic learning. Students who use alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs have a higher incidence of absences and academic underachievement.

In recent years, youth use of e-cigarettes (vaping devices such as mods, vape pens, and Juuls) continues to soar. The 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey indicates middle and high school e-cigarette use has drastically spiked. In 2018 more than 3.6 million youth were using e-cigarettes, in 2019 these numbers exceed 5 million.

Although vaping devices have been advertised to youth as safer alternatives to cigarettes, these devices contain higher levels of nicotine, a highly addictive substance. Youth are also vaping other substances such as liquid THC (the active substance in marijuana), synthetic cannabinoids, and other illegal substances. Use of these substances can lead to an overdose and possibly result in convulsions, heart problems, or even a psychotic break.

In addition to the risk of addiction and overdose, the use of vaping devices creates further concerns for the health and well-being of youth and young adults.

The aerosols from vaping products contain harmful chemicals that can cause damage to lungs, including EVALI (E-cigarette or Vaping product use-Associated Lung Injury).

Information is surfacing that vaping may increase susceptibility of COVID-19.

In response to the stressors of the COVID-19 Pandemic, some students may increase their use of vaping devices, which may escalate the risk of addiction and/or other serious health problems. For other students the stay at home restriction may decrease their access to vaping products and some may experience withdrawal from nicotine or other substances.

Resources are available at the following link to support students that use vaping devices:

<https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/113458>

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