



The Heart of Learning

Issue 8

June 10, 2020

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Oh, what a year! It has been a challenging period for our district. We began the year in transition as we welcomed our new Superintendent. We were confronted by the challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 crisis, including student's distance learning and the majority of staff telecommuting. And in the midst, issues of racism have been brought to the forefront of our national consciousness.

Given all the twist and turns of the 2019-2020 school year, we have continued to make great strides in the expansion and growth of Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (SEAL) across our district. We are grateful for the addition of Amanda Walker as our SEAL Program Specialist. Amanda's expertise and experience has been a phenomenal asset as we continue our efforts to seamlessly integrate social and emotional learning within the framework of MTSS, as well as, academic instruction.

A small sample of what WS/FCS SEAL has achieved this year include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitated many professional development opportunities for school staff
- Offered numerous consultations with school and district leaders
- Provided various parent/family workshops
- Implemented the Fall 2019 panorama surveys and increased family participation
- Collaborated with district and community stakeholders

National Recognition WS/FCS SEAL:

- Kathy FitzJefferies was a panel member of the national webinar, Leading Adult SEL in School Districts, sponsored by Panorama
- The WS/FCS SEAL Newsletters developed by Amanda Walker is recognized as a model for schools across the nation
- Amanda Walker accepted as a presenter at the national Innovative Schools Summit

In response to the COVID-19 crisis

- 300+ WS/FCS staff participated in the *Belonging from a Distance* webinars
- Established and facilitated *Mindful Moments* webinar series to equip staff with practical ways to cope with stress and share strategies with students

The stressors of our national crises create a critical need to address the social and emotional needs of our student, family, and staff. Our SEAL Team will work diligently to provide support and assistance, including expanding our professional development offerings.

We appreciate all you do to support the social and emotional learning needs of our students, families, and staff members! Please contact Amanda or Kathy if you have any ideas on ways we can continue to strengthen SEAL in our district.



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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, "Yay For You" is based on the CASEL competency of relationship skills as it encourages time to celebrate the end of the school year with your students! A student's ability to develop and deepen relationships with others is vital to success and happiness in life. Encouraging growth in relationship skills can be very challenging via e-Learning! We often think of the need to be physically present to nurture relationships. This week, we will build on the student-teacher relationships that were constructed through the school-year by carving out time to recognize and celebrate the close of e-Learning. Making time to be intentional with celebration not only helps students feel proud and connected, but it also can create the desire to continue engaging in future academic endeavors. See below resources/info to help plan your end of the year celebration!

Video Link:

[Grab-N-Go Activity](#)

Ideas/Activities:

[End of Year Celebration Ideas](#)

[Menu of More Ways to Celebrate End of the Year at a Distance](#)

Questions:

JAValentine-Turner@wsfcs.k12.nc.us

STAY CONNECTED!

Check in with your students and families over the summer to continue a sense of belonging and connectedness!

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



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The Power of Kindness

By: Taneisha Sanders, SEL Specialist

Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Affection, gentleness, warmth, concern, and care are words that are associated with kindness. Kindness takes strength and courage. Amid the management of distance learning and the pandemic, and a time of racial unrest, daily protests and the magnitude of social injustice, the power of kindness can move mountains. Kindness must become embedded in the fabric of this nation in order to bring about effective change. We as educators understand that it is best practice to model kindness every day. When we embody kindness, it becomes ingrained in the fiber of our school communities, neighborhoods, cities, states and eventually the nation. Kindness leads to empathy and empathy leads to peace. Then peace allows us to self-evaluate, change our perspective and responsibly make good sound decisions. It becomes a domino effect that can lead to positive change and outcomes. Let's begin this summer with activities that radiate kindness towards others. You may have some that you are already practicing and sharing. Here are some other kindness videos and activities for students and adults to help you continue this kindness movement. Have a wonderful summer and remember kindness makes a difference.

[Kindness Boomerang](#)

[Kindness Scientist](#)

[Generous Store](#)

[The Key to True Generosity](#)

[Make Kindness a Habit](#)

[Kindness Counts](#)

[Kindness is Cooler Mrs. Ruler](#)

[8 Simple Activities to Teach Kindness](#)

[Service & Kindness Projects](#)

Mindful Moments: SEAL's Webinar Series

The SEAL Team is offering a new webinar series, *Mindful Moments*, to **all** WS/FCS staff. You will not want to miss this opportunity to distress and re-center! You do not need to register for this event. To minimize distractions, you will need to be in the Zoom meeting room by 10:05 a.m.

Mindful Moments Schedule:

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

[Recurring Zoom Meeting Link](#)



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Award Winners: Demonstrating the 5 SEL Competencies in Action

By: Kathy FitzJefferies

Annually our district recognizes students with the Spirit of Rachel and the Character Education Awards. These awards highlight students who demonstrate the strong Social and Emotional Learning competencies of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills.

The Character Education award winners were recognized for exhibiting the character traits of courage, caring, perseverance, self-discipline, respect, responsibility, and integrity. The 2019-2020 District Character Education Award Winners include:

Drake James, 3rd grade student at Jefferson Elementary School

Daniela U. Mendez-Barbosa, 7th grade student at Wiley Magnet Middle School

Carissa Bryant, 11th grade student at West Forsyth High School

The Spirit of Rachel award winners are recognized for exemplifying the five qualities based on Rachel's Five Challenges: looks for the best in others; dreams big; chooses positive influences; speaks words of kindness; and starts a change reaction. The 2019-2020 District Spirit of Rachel Award Winners include:

Ginevra (Ginny) Szabo, 5th grade student at Clemmons Elementary School

Jaya Patel, 8th grade student at Southeast Middle School

Katherine (Kate) Frucht, 12th grade student at West Forsyth High School

Read more about our winners: [Character Education Award Winners](#) and [Spirit of Rachel Award Winners](#).

Congratulations to our district award winners and all the students who were nominated by their schools!

For more information about the Spirit of Rachel and Character Education awards, please contact Kathy FitzJefferies at kefitzjefferies@wsfcs.k12.nc.us.

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

Your SEAL Team is here to support YOU!

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