

News & Announcements

LOOKING AHEAD

- CCEE Newsletter (April 2021) - Supporting Inclusive Practices
- [3/24: Assessment for Learning in Extraordinary Times \(Session 2\)](#)
- [3/25: Supporting Student Interactions with Complex Text \(Session 4\)](#)
- [3/30: What Educators Can Do NOW to Accelerate Learning](#)



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- [Leading Through Crisis with Superintendent Diann Kitamura](#) (Leading Forward Podcast, Ep.13)

Resources to Reengage Students

- [Engaging Students During the Pandemic and Beyond](#) (San Diego COE)
- [Refocus on the SEL Roadmap: Actions for a Successful Second Semester](#) (CASEL)
- [School Reentry Considerations](#) (NASP and ASCA)
- [Multi-Tiered SEL and Mental Health in Distance + Blended Learning](#) (Orange CDE)
- [Student Well-being with CCEE Executive Director Tom Armelino](#) (Leading Forward Podcast, Ep.3)
- [Health & Safety Guidebook](#)

Leveraging Relationships to Reengage Students

By Tom Armelino, Executive Director

With the passage of [Assembly Bill 86](#), school districts will once again feel the pressure to speedily match students' needs with the appropriate level of intervention and learning supports to accelerate learning. Although the question of how schools will address the large-scale learning acceleration of students is complex, we know that students need to first [feel safe and secure to learn](#). With a specific focus on reengaging students and building relationships, this month's newsletter features tools, strategies, and resources to accelerate learning, while ensuring we are addressing the whole child.

As schools prepare to reopen, we must be prepared to address the reengagement of students and what that means in our current context. Consider the following strategies to [build or rebuild the fundamental relationships](#) between students, staff, and families.

Staff-to-student: Map out relationships so each student is assigned a staff member who develops and maintains a relationship with the student through regular scheduled check-ins. Greet students at the door, organize fishbowl discussions, and design activities for students to have fun and show school spirit, focusing on strategies that [strengthen relationships and build trust](#).

Staff-to-staff: Conscious efforts should be made to assess and address the mental health of educators who have also struggled to find balance and safety during the pandemic. Promote relationship-building and peer-to-peer support through "wellness committees," mentors, professional counselors, social workers, school psychologists, or other trained professionals.

Student-to-student: Facilitate the process of creating a shared agreement for classroom norms, set the expectation that every voice matters, and provide opportunities for students to develop individual relationships and build a class community (e.g., "mix and mingle" activities, team projects)—virtually and face-to-face (as deemed safe).

Staff-to-family: Using [culturally and linguistically responsive approaches](#), regularly communicate with families to schedule individual check-ins and distribute climate and culture surveys. Listen to what worked and didn't work for them during the pandemic and use these opportunities to understand the needs of their children. Additional resources can [help families talk with their children](#) about COVID-19 and prepare them for the transition back to school.

"They talked about scar tissue... The damage has been done, and healing is actually more important in a way than learning in the traditional sense. Without healing, without recognizing and attending to the deep social, emotional traumas that students have gone through, we can think we're focusing on learning and we can think we're making up ground, but we won't make much."

Dr. Peter Senge, Co-founder of the Center for Systems Awareness, [Leading Forward 2021](#)



Click [here](#) to read Tom's full article.

School Re-entry and School-based Mental Health Supports

By Jeannine Topalian, Psy.D., Licensed Educational Psychologist #3365, CASP President



As we prepare to welcome students back to campus, one thing is abundantly clear—status quo will never be the same. Returning students will need unprecedented access to mental health supports to overcome trauma stemming from the COVID-19 crisis, social injustice, wildfires, and a multitude of other experiences. Schools must prioritize the psychological safety of all students, families, and educators as never before. Left untreated and without appropriate supports at school, trauma, anxiety, and depression will impair students' ability to engage in learning, leading to greater academic skills gaps and exponentially increased social-emotional/behavioral needs.

The research is clear—early intervention yields positive outcomes. Key to unlocking student success are credentialed school-based mental health professionals (school psychologists, counselors, and social workers) who play an integral role in the early identification of mental health issues. These highly trained professionals must be included in each phase of the school reopening plan, as they collaboratively support the social-emotional well-being of students, families, and educators. Within the Multi-Tiered System of Support framework, they implement culturally sensitive, trauma-informed supports for the whole child by: helping teachers embed social-emotional learning into the curriculum; helping students reconnect through back-to-school events, peer buddies, looping, and more; developing and communicating [re-entry plans](#); [examining infrastructure](#) to conduct [universal screening](#) and informal [check-ins with students](#); and managing a referral system for students at higher risk. Administrators—now is the time to embrace your Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) team as mental health providers.

Click [here](#) for *Fostering the Whole Child: A Guide to School-Based Mental Health Professionals*.

Meeting Strategies to Support Social-Emotional Well-being of Staff

By Roni Jones, Assistant Director, System of Support

As educational leaders plan to return to campus, expand existing plans to return to campus, or continue to support staff who have been back on campus for a while, effective meeting strategies are vital in supporting the social-emotional well-being of adults. Specifically, leaders can [acknowledge the needs of staff](#) during meetings, provide emotional and moral support, and develop [empathetic understanding](#) by implementing thoughtful meeting designs. Below are three strategies to consider:

Implement the CASEL 3 Signature Practices: 1) Include an inclusion activity, routine, or ritual to build community and connect with staff, 2) embed engaging strategies, such as movement, breathing practice, or energizer, throughout the meeting, and 3) end with an optimistic closure to highlight the importance of the work, provide a sense of accomplishment, or support forward-thinking.

Design opportunities for dialogue - Dialogue uses inquiry to build a shared understanding of an issue without the pressure and anxiety associated with making a decision or advocating for one's own ideas ([Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman, 1999](#)). By holding the space to release and acknowledge emotions, dialogue supports healthy communication in times of stress and provides opportunities for individual reflection and collective learning. The National Equity Project advocates for a variety of [listening practices](#) to "allow new and clearer ways of thinking and acting to emerge."

Practice the Consultancy Protocol - Provide opportunities for staff to reflect, write about, and frame challenges, leading to thoughtful discussions, new perspectives, and improved practices. The [Consultancy Protocol](#) from the School Reform Initiative provides a structured process to support expansive thinking about a concrete dilemma. It helps participants understand and deal with challenges by building their "capacity to see and describe the dilemmas that are the essential material of their work."

If you would like more information or additional strategies to design meetings that support social-emotional well-being, please contact Roni Jones, Assistant Director of the System of Support, at rjones@ccee-ca.org.