Strategies for Educators to Support the Social and Emotional Needs of Students Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Demand for Racial Justice

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Webinar Series: Supporting the Social and Emotional Needs of Educators and Students

- **April:** Strategies for Districts to Support Self-Care for Educators During the COVID-19 Pandemic (archived)
- **Today:** Strategies for Educators to Support the Social and Emotional Needs of Students Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Demand for Racial Justice: Plans for Reopening Schools
- **September:** The State Role in Encouraging Social and Emotional Learning in Schools in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (working title)
Today’s Speakers

Dr. Christina Pate

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Dr. Kaylene Case
Overview of Research on Social and Emotional Needs and Conditions for Success

Dr. Christina Pate
Deputy Director, National Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd
Two Crises, Two Narratives

For Some…

Anxiety, Fear, Stress

Proximity to School Support Networks

For Others…

Agency, Purpose, Leadership

Proximity to School Support Networks
The North Star

- Safe and supportive *relationships* and *environments* promote resilience, provide protective factors, and create the conditions in which every person – regardless of age – can learn, grow, and thrive.

  - For some, schools were places where this happened – so there was a real loss when schools closed.
  - For others, however, schools were NOT places where this happened.

*What do we need to reconsider, rethink, revise as schools reopen?*
Consider One Important Process – 3 steps – In this order!

Regulate: physically and emotionally calm and settled

Relate: socially and emotionally connected through safe and supportive relationships attuned to needs

Reason: ready and able to engage in teaching and learning

Perry, 2017
Regulate

• Regulation looks different for everyone
• Regulating activities for students may differ from those that help adults or make them feel comfortable
• This may also differ across races and cultures
• Consider your biases and work towards developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive practices

Pate, 2020; Perry, 2017
Regulate

- Begin meetings, classes, and lessons with grounding and centering exercises
- Create structure and consistency: re-establish or co-create new routines and school or classroom expectations
- Create safe and welcoming rituals through a student-centered lens

Pate, 2020; Perry, 2017
Regulate

• Create more opportunities for breaks and physical activity
• Encourage self-awareness by creating opportunities to communicate feelings
• Promote self-regulation by providing relaxing or calming activities or invigorating activities. Consider various sensory needs.
• Offer meaningful opportunities to exercise voices and make choices

Pate, 2020; Perry, 2017; Zarate, Maggin, & Passmore, 2019
Relate

Behavior is Communication!

Fight, flight, or freeze responses may look like defiance, noncompliance, or task avoidance

Consider how you perceive and respond to challenging behaviors:

- Reframe
- Respond vs. react
- Consider biases and apply culturally responsive practices

Pate, 2020; Perry, 2017
Relate

• Be intentional about creating space and opportunities for healthy interactions
• Explicitly address the importance of safe and supportive social connections
• Ensure consistent connections to a caring, reliable adult
  – Similarly, ensure that new staff are connected to a buddy or a mentor

Kleim & Connell, 2004; Lenzi et al., 2017; Pate, 2020
Relate

Create opportunities for self- and collective care

Emphasize caring connections and well-being – even when discussing academic content or performance

Healthy mindsets and behaviors

Identity, connectedness, and belonging

Healthy boundaries and interactions

Kleim & Connell, 2004; Lenzi et al., 2017; Pate, 2020; Zarate, Maggin, & Passmore, 2019
Support executive functioning and self-management skills by breaking work into smaller pieces.

Before using lessons, texts, activities, and videos, ensure that they are not activating for students and their families.

Create opportunities for voice, choice, agency, and leadership.

Kleim & Connell, 2004; Lenzi et al., 2017; Pate, 2020; Perry, 2017; Zarate, Maggin, & Passmore, 2019
Guiding Actions for the Return to School

- **Listen, Trust, and Co-Plan**
  - Listen first, then co-develop a plan in partnership with students, families, and staff

- **Co-create Conditions**
  - Co-create the conditions for healing and success for all school community members

- **Reflect and Refine in Partnership**
  - Continue to reflect on and refine policies and practices with students, families, and staff

Epstein, 2019; Kleim & Connell, 2004; Lenzi et al., 2017; Pate, 2020; Perry, 2017; Zarate, Maggin, & Passmore, 2019
Student Perspectives on Strategies to Support their Social and Emotional Needs

Zoë Jenkins
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence Student Voice Team

Emanuelle Sippy
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence Student Voice Team
STUDENTS AS PARTNERS IN CREATING A NEW NORMAL
WHO WE ARE

- 100 plus members
- Statewide
- Ages 11-21
- Self-selected
WHAT WE DO

• Amplify and elevate student voice
• Support students as partners to improve Kentucky schools
• Extend the reach of the Prichard Committee
MEANINGFUL STUDENT VOICE

- Expression
- Consultation
- Presence + Participation
- Partnership
- Activism + Leadership
Part I: Survey
- ~13,000 responses
- All 120 counties represented

Part II: Interviews
- 50 peer-to-peer

With funding from Teach for America Reinvention Lab, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, National Geographic, and Pathway 2 Tomorrow
Created by the Prichard Committee Student Voice Team, with dissemination help from KY YMCA and Kentucky School Council Association
Help from researchers at the University of Kentucky and REL-Pacific
WHAT WE ARE SEEING

• Students in metro areas (250K+) averaged meeting with their teachers once or more a week while rural students (<2,500) reported meeting less than once a week
• Students who have more frequent contact with their teacher are more engaged and motivated with their schoolwork
Decrease, No change and Increase in Understanding by SES

Decrease, No change and Increase in Motivation by SES

Decrease, No change and Increase in Meaningfulness by SES

Decrease, No change and Increase in Manageability by SES

Scale: 0 = Never; 1 = Some of the time; 2 = Most or All of the Time.

Change was calculated by subtracting pre scores from post scores.
STUDENT BEHAVIORS

- Latinx and Asian students are communicating much less than other racial groups.
- Students with less consistent WiFi access more likely to report sleeping, communicating with friends, and having fun less.
WHAT WE NEED WHEN WE RETURN

• Flexible attendance policy
  ◦ Students in chairs ≠ engaged learning
• Re-examine the role of SROs
• Re-thinking discipline
How can schools and districts work with students, not for us?

- Co-creation
  - Virtual dialogues
  - Surveys with meaningful shareback
  - Include students on committees
- Move School Forward Guiding Principles
  - Ecosystem approach
  - Anti-racist education
STUDENT DEMANDS FOR JUSTICE IN SCHOOLS

moveschoolforward.org
CONNECT WITH US!

studentvoiceforum.org

@pcstuvoiceteam

Get Schooled: Student Stories from Across KY
Family Perspectives on Strategies to Support their Social and Emotional Needs

Veronica Crespin-Palmer
Co-Founder and CEO, RISE
Colorado
Story of Self:

Veronica Crespin-Palmer
Theory of Change
What does the research say?

There is a significant positive correlation between school, family, and community involvement and student success.
Grounding Reality

Average span of time in a school community:

- **Superintendent**: 6 years
- **School board**: 5 years
- **Student/parent**: 18 years
What do families and communities need as students return to school to feel connected and supported?

- **Cared for, listened to, and validated** – families have been through a lot during the pandemic
- **Holistic wraparound services** (think Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs) – food, mental health, housing assistance, direct cash assistance
- **Opportunities to share input and feedback often** during reopening and recovery so their needs and challenges are being met in real-time
What does the research say?

Family-Like Schools: “In a partnership, teachers and administrators create more *family-like* schools. A family-like school *recognizes each child’s individuality* and makes each child feel special and included. Family-like schools *welcome all families*, not just those that are easy to reach.”

School-Like Families: “In a partnership, parents create more *school-like* families. A school-like family recognizes that *each child is also a student*. Families reinforce the importance of school, homework, and activities that *build student skills and feelings of success*.”

Epstein, J. et al., 2019
How can schools and districts work with families (vs. doing to or for families)?

- **Adjust mindsets.** Really and truly believe that low-income families of color care, value, and have time for their children’s education.
- **Seeing families as the experts and leaders.** They are key to their children’s education.
- **Trust families and students!** Provide them with the space to share their challenges and the conditions to co-create solutions with education systems to address those challenges.
“When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. And when families and communities organize to hold poorly performing schools accountable, studies suggest that school districts make positive changes in policy, practices, and resources.”

Henderson, A. & Mapp, K., 2002
RISE With Your Families and Students!
School District Perspectives and Strategies to Support Staff and Students

Dr. Kaylene Case
Behavior Specialist, School Psychologist, Douglas County School District, Colorado
Staff Needs from School and District Leadership

**Critical: Staff need to feel valued and esteemed**

- Empower relationships among all stakeholders
- Build confidence to access available school and district resources
  - Mental health
  - Multi-tiered systems of support
- Create natural platforms for parents, students, and educators to come together, share experiences, and identify their needs
- Create partnerships with community agencies
How Do Staff Rebuild Conditions of Success for the Entire School Community Upon Return?

Create a sense of community, characterized by **cohesion**, **participation**, and **safety** to build resilience

- Focus on building relationships, listening, and acting based on feedback. **Inclusive**, influential, and ongoing community collaboration is essential.

- Consider **culture** in reestablishing supports. There are different values, beliefs, and preferences for accessing support.

- Ask community-building questions. Some examples include:
  - What makes relationships work out well?
  - How do you manage stress?
  - When is a time that you felt stereotyped?
Know Community Contexts to Rebuild Conditions for Success

- Social Determinants of Health
  - Food, housing, interpersonal safety
- The Importance of Self-Assessments
  - Leaders model vulnerability
  - Set boundaries
  - Accept feelings
- Community Pulse
  - What is important?
  - What is our “why”?
  - What are we accomplishing?
Additional Strategies for District Leaders to Support Conditions for Success

- Use a trauma-informed lens to foster collective care
- Use clear, concise communication that is relevant and meaningful
- Assign group to serve as peer support systems
- Provide staff with tools and resources to develop social and emotional skills, beginning with self-awareness and self-management. Practice together
- Collegial activities through a variety of platforms
- Create safe spaces in the building for staff to renew and reset
Action Planning

Dr. Christina Pate
Deputy Director, National Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd
Action Planning

What are your top 3 priorities?

What’s one action you can do now toward addressing each of those priorities?
Action Planning Example

**Priorities**

1. Listen to students and families to understand their needs and co-plan with them using equity as a design driver.
2. Create a space where staff feel valued, heard, and offered a voice in the decision-making as plans are created.
3. Reconsider policies including attendance and discipline with a focus on equity and inclusion.

**Actions**

- Gather existing data and create time and space to better understand challenges, needs, and hopes of students and families. Begin to co-plan and co-create solutions to address needs (schedule listening forums, co-planning sessions).
- Design and schedule a staff retreat before students return to listen, learn, acknowledge, and affirm (stresses, concerns, successes) and create opportunities for community care and connection.
- In partnership with students and families, conduct a review of discipline and attendance policies to determine if they are inclusive, equitable, trauma-sensitive, culturally appropriate. Revise as needed.
Thank you!

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References – Overview of Research


References – Student Perspectives


Move School Forward. https://www.moveschoolforward.org/


References – Family Perspectives


References – Staff Perspectives and Strategies


Healthy Steps. HealthySteps.org