

Working Towards a Compassionate, ACES-Informed Learning Community

Working Document including components of a Compassionate Learning Community

(adapted by Dr. Linda O'Neill and the teachers and staff from Quinson Elementary School, Prince George, BC from the Puget Sound Educational Service District rubric)

1: Understanding Trauma

2: Safety/Assurance of Wellbeing

3: Cultural Competence

4: Supportive School Climate

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*This document is simply intended to be a working guide as schools work towards incorporating elements of trauma informed, best practice. Sections can be deleted or changed to reflect the culture of the school, the beliefs of staff and the unique needs of the students served

Understanding Trauma

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
Knowledge and awareness of: Each student comes to school with different life experiences that will influence how they behave and learn			
The potential impact that trauma and adversity can play on a student's ability to learn.			
Neurological development of the brain through its various stages,			
How trauma and adversity play a role in a student's behavior based on freeze, flight or fight response,			
How to separate ourselves as teachers from the negative attitudes we can have regarding student behavior,			
How body functions impact the brain and how the brain conversely impacts body function, and			
The experiences we have in our life shape the neural pathways and overall brain health and how we respond to the world around us.			

Safety/Assurance of Wellbeing

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
A physically and psychologically safe and inviting culture and climate for staff, students and visitors,			
Active programs to reduce harassment, intimidation and bullying (direct and cyber),			
Policies, procedures, and protocols that support safety and wellbeing including suicide prevention			
Encouragement for staff regarding a comprehensive self-care approach, individually and collectively.			
Training for staff is ongoing and focused on the wellbeing of staff, students, and families.			
The knowledge that students and families are heard and actively involved in setting the culture and climate,			

Cultural Competence

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
Regard each cultural group individually,			
Encourage staff to understand their position in relation to power and privilege,			
Recognize diverse cultures within their school as a resource rather than a barrier,			
Have high expectations for all students, and use instructional techniques to support multiple intelligences and cultural founts of knowledge			
Build on the strengths of the culture and make efforts to allow diverse cultures to support one another—as such, each culture is celebrated within the school,			
Rely on cultural norms as a path of healing for many students and families,			
Recognize the power and importance of cultures in healing from trauma and adversity.			

Supportive School Climate

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
Have staff who genuinely care for students and family wellbeing and see the connection between wellbeing and the ability to learn,			
Encourage a sense of belonging and attachment for students, staff, families, and the community			
Include positive physical, social/ emotional, and learning environments designed to inspire learners,			
Understand that physical environment includes all of the factors that can affect students in a physical way,			
Encourage family and community stakeholders engagement and being meaningfully included in a culturally-sensitive, solution-focused approach to support student learning.			

Social-Emotional Skills/Personal Agency

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where We Are	Where We Want to go	What we need to get there
Implementing Evidence Based curriculum that promote the development of social/emotional skills and personal agency,			
Supporting students' abilities to interact with others in socially acceptable ways,			
Supporting the use of cognitive skills to succeed in emotional development as well as academic learning,			
Teach resiliency skills for students as a part of every day curriculum, reframe reactions to events to help students toward responding rather than reactions,			
Supporting the use of executive functions (e.g., set goals, determine steps, anticipate consequences, make decisions and evaluate results) in daily classroom work and in life,			

Behavior/Emotion Regulation

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
Help students identify and differentiate their feelings,			
Help students identify emotional cues of others, Link their feelings with internal and external experiences,			
Help students identify immediate resources to safely express their feelings,			
Help students use strategies to modulate their response to emotions,			
Help students behave in a manner appropriate to the classroom setting			
Help students return to a comfortable emotional state after arousal.			

Positive Boundaries

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
<p>Positive discipline:</p> <p>Utilizes students as part of the discipline solution, Teaches respect, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills which solve behavior issues and enhance classroom management, refocuses students toward learning and not just punishment,</p> <p>Sees behavioral issues as “teachable moments,”</p> <p>Utilizes “unconditional positive regard,” and “maintain high expectations” for all students.</p>			
<p>Aspects of Compassionate School discipline includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student accountability. • Conflict resolution. • Respect for ourselves and others. • Seeking alternatives. • Taking responsibility for our actions. <p>Understanding cause and effect.</p>			

Family Partnerships

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
Within the operation of the school, families take on many different <i>meaningful</i> opportunities,			
Family partnerships with the school ensures that families will have a “voice” and action in the operation of the school,			
Parent partnerships guarantee inclusion for parents and provide a platform for communication between parents and the school,			
Schools invite and include parents in training activities whenever appropriate.			
Schools empower parents to make decisions on behalf of their students. Decisions are made with families, not for them.			
Schools train families to advocate with and for other families (especially those of a different culture) who are experiencing challenges.			

Community Partnerships

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
Community partners (public and private) maintain common goals with schools in producing thriving citizens,			
They participate in assessment, training, provision of social/health services, reviews, fund raising, in-kind services and goods, developing action plans that are both internal and external to the school, and continuous quality improvement.			
Community partners are essential to school operation and provide support to vulnerable students and their families, especially partnerships focused on student mental health.			
Developing true school/community partnerships enhances school operation, allows the school to focus mostly on their mission of educating children, and contributes to building quality community members for the future.			
Schools invite community partners to training events that are applicable for cross training.			

Student/Learner Partnerships

Components and Ideas for best practice	Where we are	Where we want to go	What we need to get there
<p>Student voice and action are vital parts of school operation. Creating partnerships with students creates a platform for meaningful involvement. A school run for and by (as much as possible) students provides a sense of belonging at the school and ownership in its operation.</p>			
<p>Meaningful ways for students to be involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring • Mentoring • School assessment • Fund raising • SIP participation • Activities/events planning • Outreach to vulnerable students • Teaching assistants • School staff assistants • Special project coordinators • Special assignments • Liaison between school and community 			

