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Update on SEL Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum Instruction Review Advisory Committee
Fall AY 2023-24 (OCT 2023)

I. Curriculum Adoption

Last spring, I shared with the Curriculum Instruction Review Advisory Committee (CIRAC) that the curriculum we chose to support Social Emotional Learning (SEL) was an online curriculum called Nearpod (<https://nearpod.com/how-nearpod-works/>). In addition, we were informed that the middle school would also continue to use an SEL-based program called, Responsive Classroom (<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/principles-practices/>).

II. SEL Curriculum Overview

Nearpod

- Organized under the overarching theme of “21st century skills”
- Covers 3rd-12th grades, ie. all the grade levels we serve
- Online materials for teachers to use with students (e.g. lesson plans, slides, etc.)
- Lessons are organized under the following domains:
 - *Relationship skills*
 - *Responsible decision-making*
 - *Self-awareness*
 - *Self-management*
- Nearpod also provides lessons in the additional areas of:
 - *Digital citizenship*
 - *Career exploration*
 - *Financial literacy*
- Assistance and additional training resources are available

Responsive Classroom

- Is most effective with elementary and middle school-age students (our 5th-8th graders)
- Aligns well with restorative practices as activities are all grounded in “meeting circles”
- Teachers are trained on how to plan and facilitate “morning meetings” in Homeroom
- Students practice a variety of social-emotional skills during the meetings
- Activities range from basic check-in prompts, to answering questions and scripted play



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III. Implementation

Successes

- Those few teachers who were trained in *Responsive Classroom* “morning meetings” are still practicing it, which could be helpful in providing a place to see the protocols modeled
- We are tracking *Nearpod* use across the school and teachers across grades are using it
 - We see a trend of increased use from August to September
 - 44 total instances of use in AUG
 - 146 total instances of use in SEP
- There are a higher number of teachers using *Nearpod* in middle school grades
 - 5th-6th grade uses - 117 instances in SEP
 - 7th-8th grade uses - 3 instances in SEP
 - 9th-12th grade uses - 26 instances in SEP
- Teachers who are using it can help inform approaches to training moving forward
- Both programs align well with and reinforce/support restorative practices through developing empathy among students and giving them tools to better communicate

Challenges

- Limited use of *Responsive Classroom* in the middle school as most have had no training (the result of the # of teachers who have left over the last 3 years)
- Very little training on either system in August as it was not prioritized among higher priorities of instructional focus and MTSS transition process
- Adaptive change is difficult, particularly when doing this across multiple areas
- No position fully owns this work, as of yet; the positions that could have owned it are at capacity (social workers and the former position of Director of Student Support)
- Competing priorities for evaluation and training time against prioritization of new instructional playbook core practices
- Inexperienced teaching staff; less sense of the value of student relationships
- How to support the substitute teachers, particularly in classes with vacancies

Next Steps

- Poll and get feedback from teachers using both systems to inform training approaches
- Create a system of support, observation, and evaluation of their use
- Identity who will lead and support these efforts
- Discuss an approach for training, observation, evaluation, and support for next year
- Initial talk with Dr. Jackson about adding a full-time or part-time coordinator/lead position
 - Coordinator (FT) - would lead these efforts across the school - evaluation, training, observation
 - Lead SEL Coordinator (PT) one in each division; would also teach half-time