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Strategies for School and District Leaders to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Well-Being and Success

Wednesday, August 23, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Transcript

Greta Colombi:

Good afternoon and welcome to today's webinar, Strategies for School and District Leaders to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Wellbeing and Success. This is the second webinar in our miniseries on supporting students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing and success. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, we are pleased to have you with us. In fact, over 1,700 people have registered for this webinar. This webinar is part of our lessons from the Field webinar series. This series highlights effective tools, techniques, and strategies employed by everyday practitioners to address topics that are on the top of educators' minds. You can access recorded webinars from the series on the webpage now being shared in the chat, and we will tell you more about the miniseries in a moment. As always, as you participate, if you have additional strategies that are working for your community, please reach out to bestpracticesclearinghouse@ed.gov to share.

Our work is stronger together and we all benefit from sharing effective strategies. Please note that the content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policy reviews of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. My name is Greta Colombi, I'm the director of the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, or NCSSE, and I have the pleasure of kicking off today's event. NCSSE is funded by the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and together we work to build the capacity of state education agencies, districts, and schools to make school climate improvements, foster school safety, and maintain supportive, engaging, and healthy learning environments to empower the success of all students. To learn more about NCSSE and to access a range of resources that address school climate and conditions for learning, we encourage you to visit our website.

To give you a sense of what the website looks like and what it includes, here we share some of our most popular products on the left and an image of our homepage on the right. We also share the latest resources and events coming out from the field via our social media, so please, do follow us. As we move on, I want to note that all materials that you see today, including the slides, reference resources, and archive version of the recording will be available on the event webpage within this website. In fact, some items, including the slides and bios and resources from the panel have already been posted. You can access, again, as I mentioned before, previous lessons from the sessions as well by visiting our webinar series webpage, which is also listed here, and will be posted in the chat.

After we finish up this logistics and welcome, our first speaker will provide an overview of strategies districts and school leaders can implement, then we will move into two practitioner panels to hear how schools and districts are supporting student wellbeing and success. After the formal closing remarks, we will spend 15 minutes responding to questions posted by the audience live or through the registration, and we will close at 4:30 Eastern Standard Time. Please note, all bios for all speakers are included on the event webpage, which is also being posted in our chat. It is now my pleasure to introduce Hamed Negron-Perez, the group leader for Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Group within the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools. He is also the program manager for the School Emergency Response to Violence, SERV, in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, both within the U.S. Department of Education. To welcome you to today's webinar, with that, Hamed.

Hamed Negron-Perez: Thanks, Greta. I think I'm going to have to either update my photo or update my beard, but thank you so much. I'm so thrilled to welcome to our latest Lessons from the Field webinar. Today's webinar, Strategies for School and District Leaders to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Wellbeing and Success is actually the second in the miniseries focused on supporting students' social-emotional behavior and academic wellbeing and success. The webinars in these miniseries offer best practices and approaches to support and respond to students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs, including of course, practices designed to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline in school. Today's session is based on a fact sheet released by the department in May, focused on strategies for school and district leaders to create safe and supportive and equitable learning environments for all students. You will learn about the role school and district leaders play as well as the paradigm shifts that can support moving from a punitive to a supportive discipline approach.

You will then hear from a panel of Bard Early College New Orleans staff, or New Orleans staff, who will discuss how they have implemented a paradigm shift guided by youth voice. Next, a group of practitioners from two school districts from across the country with practical strategies and lessons learned to better support students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs. As Greta shared, our speakers will also respond to questions you submitted via

registration during the event. Following today's session and building off the companion fact sheets released by department in May, we'll be hosting three additional webinars tailored to specific audiences at the school or district level. That is families, educators, student support teams, et cetera. Each of these webinars will provide context setting information and practitioner panel. We are confident you will learn key strategies you can implement in your school... Excuse me. You can implement in your school for each of these webinars, and I strongly encourage you, or a member of your team, to attend each of these webinars and share what you learned broadly in your schools.

After all, only together we can shift the school climate to keep students in school and address their individual social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs. Thank you again so much for joining us today, I know there's a ton of information out there. You're going to enjoy it all and be so much richer for having gone through it. Thank you so much. Greta?

Greta Colombi: Excellent, Hamed. Thank you so much for your warm welcome. Without further ado, let's hear from Christina Pate, deputy director of the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd to help set the context for today's event. Christina.

Christina Pate: Thanks, Greta. Thanks, Hamed. Let's go ahead and dive in. We know that education leaders play a critical role in making educational environments safer, more supportive, and more equitable, and school and districts really just simply reflect back both the community and the society's wellbeing, as well as the individuals that comprise them, and especially the leaders who set the tone. You all, as school and district leaders, are uniquely positioned to influence both individuals and communities as well as systems. Leaders really need to consider whether their practices are designed to punish behaviors that are deemed inappropriate or undesirable by adults, or whether they're actively promoting responsive relationships and safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments for the entire community. If your goal is to change student behavior, a substantial body of research has actually found no evidence that punitive and exclusionary discipline accomplishes this. Some research has actually found that it may make future misbehavior more likely.

Now, if your goal is to improve student behavior, then the interventions have to be focused on teaching and supporting appropriate behaviors with evidence-based, non-punitive, and supportive interventions and supports. Now, how do we accomplish this, right? We can't just jump straight into the strategies, which is what we're always trying to do, it's what we're always looking for, right? The first thing we have to do is really consider the paradigms under which we operate. A punishment paradigm really works against our desired outcome of meeting school expectations and learning, because it activates students fight, flight, and freeze behaviors, it often leaves students with shame and guilt long after an interaction happens, and it tends to breed distrust and it dehumanizes all of those who participate regardless of their role, whether they're students or adults. Now, all of these impacts may actually become barriers to effective

learning, and we know that these negative impacts are even more prevalent for students of color.

Adults are known to perceive students of color, especially Black students, as older and need of more correction and as more threatening. These perceptions may actually contribute to more frequent and harsher punitive discipline responses than the ones that are applied to white students. Now, a responsive and supportive paradigm still underscores rules as critical to teaching and learning and safety, yet it keeps our students open to learning rather than pushing them away from it. A responsive and supportive discipline paradigm also helps students really develop those inner self-discipline skills, because students learn what to do and what not to do, and not simply how to avoid getting caught next time, right? Discipline implemented in this way can actually teach young people the skills necessary to manage their behavior, and it really helps them learn from their mistakes and it helps them to self-regulate. It's inclusionary, it's restorative, and it's proactive.

In this paradigm, adults and students are also holding themselves and one another accountable for maintaining and reinforcing codes of conduct and those community agreements. This kind of learning community really relies on building close trusting relationships among all of its members. Altogether, these policies and practices in this new paradigm are implemented with students rather than done to or for students, and it really facilitates student learning and growth within a community setting. Okay, so last, before we move on to our discussion, are those mindsets, strategies, and practices. How do we get there? Simply changing our school policies to be more inclusive or restorative or proactive, they're not going to be enough for us to result in permanent sustainable change, so to really affect long-lasting change, administrators really need to engage in self and staff reflection. We have to inquire with students and really learn about their experiences with discipline and where they feel safe or unsafe, or supported or unsupported at school.

Then we have to partner with the entire school community to really reflect on all of that information and to connect with each other and then to start to identify those leverage points for change. As we discussed, the school leaders, we have a responsibility to really understand the factors that are necessary to ensure that their team, our school, our district, offers a very caring, inclusive, and supportive environment for all of the members of the learning community, and to really implement those changes to discipline policies as we've intended, so leaders can support responsive discipline practices by reflecting on some of the questions that are found in the fact sheet that Hamed referred to earlier.

I'm not going to go through all of them here for the sake of time, but we will dig into a lot of those questions during our panel conversation. With that, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Krystal Wu. Krystal is a technical assistance liaison with the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd to get us started with our first panel with the fabulous folks from Bard Early College in New Orleans. Krystal?

Krystal Wu:

Thanks so much, Christina. Hi, everyone. I'm so honored to be here with all of you today and I'm just delighted to be able to be in conversation with three school leaders from Bard Early College in New Orleans, which is really a school that models what a responsive paradigm, that Christina just talked about, can look like in action. I'm going to introduce the three of them now. Head of school, Dr. tam lee. Dean of students, Candace Colbert, and humanities professor, Rachel Nelson. Together with their staff and students collaborate to create a responsive, supportive, and reflective school community that centers strength-based relationships and honors the dignity of students and teachers. Today, you'll have the chance to learn from them about the mindsets, strategies, practices, and structures that undergird their approach. In addition to their voices, we'll have the chance to meet several young adults who just graduated from Bard in the spring.

Those individuals are Nicholas Williams, Le'Shyra Gillum, Joshua Hudson, and Kolby Daniels. They were all students and members of Rachel's leadership for social change class last year, and they shared their thoughts with us on school safety earlier this year in a recorded conversation. What we've done for you all today is included a few film clips from that discussion as part of our panel. We are going to dive in now and we are going to hear first from Candace. Candace, for the folks who are not from New Orleans and who aren't familiar with your school, can you share a little bit about your community and your school with us?

Candace Colbert:

Yes. Thank you, Krystal. Good afternoon, everyone. We are Bard Early College New Orleans, and we are part of an early college network founded by Bard College in New York about 20 years ago. We, here in New Orleans, started in 2008. We have eight different high school partners here in the city, and what we do is we offer high school juniors and seniors the ability to earn 60 college credits or an associate's degree alongside their high school diploma. This was all started with the vision that underserved communities deserve access to the opportunity to go to a four-year institution and also leave high school prepared to go there.

Krystal Wu:

Thank you so much, Candace. It's really helpful to have that context since I know, being from the northwest, we don't all have the early college context that we might need here. tam, I would love to hear from you as the head of school. If you can share with our listeners now a little bit about the story of how your school has shifted from operating from a more traditional school paradigm toward a more holistic and responsive one.

tam lee:

Absolutely. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Dr. tam lee, I'm the head of the early college here at Bard New Orleans. I wanted to take a moment just to acknowledge that Candace and I took over our roles last year as new administrators coming from classroom backgrounds to step into the role of leadership. We really asked ourselves, "What would we do differently? How would we like to see things change, and in what ways and how wide of a ripple will that create across our campus?" We've already pitched the idea. The campus had already been under the restorative campus culture, but we really wanted to lean more into, what does that actually mean and what does that

look like for our students? While also promoting other opportunities for students to learn and grow as students, as people, and as individuals in our community.

In working at an early college, it's our task to not only help them finish high school, but really prepare them for life after high school, whether that be their college career, actual career, or just skills to function in this world currently. It took a few minutes for us to come to a consensus as to what we wanted to do, but our main thing was we wanted to empower students beyond just academics. Have them be social leaders on campus, have them be programmatic leaders on campus, and have them feel and own a space that they could really see themselves growing into and that best reflected their growth as part of this program.

Krystal Wu: Thank you so much, tam. With that focus on considering students beyond just their academic selves, I would love to share a video clip with all of you from our conversation. This is Nicholas and Le'Shyra, and they're talking a little bit about what makes an emotionally safe learning environment for them.

Nicholas: Me, personally, it's more of the people I surround myself with. I'm in a group of people, I'm in a classroom environment where I can trust or I hear the ideas of other people around me like, "Yeah. Yeah, okay, I relate to that," or something of that nature. Just being able to relate to or just feel safe around the other students in my classroom makes me feel emotionally safe. I feel like though I could be more myself.

Le'Shyra: I think, also, with being surrounded around an environment where everyone is not ready to just jump the gun on you. I think that, when a situation happens, everyone is ready to mostly handle the situation and get it over with rather than going through and saying, "Okay, why did this happen?" I think that goes with more of an emotional approach about a situation, because I feel as though everyone has a story and everyone has a reason why they do things this certain way. I think, in order to get that trust between students and faculty and school systems, we have to do the work to understand students and get that emotional support within faculty and students, and not just being able to immediately jump to punishment, because I don't think every situation needs punishment. I think that some situations and, nine times out of 10, most situations need more emotional support and emotional security for the students moreover.

Krystal Wu: Le'Shyra dropping that wisdom, this clip gives me goosebumps every time. Le'Shyra is really inviting us as school leaders, I think, to be doing the work, as she said, so I would love for you each to talk a little bit about, from your different roles on campus, your different leadership positions, how do you work to promote a positive and inclusive school climate, like the one that Le'Shyra is talking about? tam, we'll start with you.

tam lee: Yeah. Last year, we really pushed in on the idea that this was a campus of student authorship and ownership. Not only are our students authors of their own work, their own intellectual property, and their own beings, but they

actually own a place on this campus that should be treated with respect, that should be dignified, and should be heard in the good moments and the bad moments, and the soft and squishy moments. We really worked towards helping them identify that this is as much of their campus as it is ours. My ask for admin and our teachers was to take a step back and make everything student-centered. If it's not directly focusing on students, how is it indirectly impacting their life? If it's not in support or providing resources to help them get to the next step, how is it going to benefit them in the long run?

Give tangible outcomes and objectives, so that students can relate to it, own it, and then go off and show out and show up in other ways. Another thing that we really tried to do is to say, "With this ownership, with this authorship, you also have the power to create what restorative looks like. What does it mean if the community has norms in beliefs, but someone outside of that community infringes on it, right? Who is in charge of responding to that and what does that response look like?"

The next thing we wanted to do is make sure that we are always accessible and available to our students outside of class times, so you always have an administrative presence in the hallway during passing periods for those moments, right? We wanted to make sure that students could see and know that we were available to them beyond their time here, so we have a lot of alumni support that we offer. All of our counseling and tutoring supports follows them with monthly check-ins, so we really want to make sure that they feel seen and heard, but they can also feel ownership in what they're achieving and what they're encountering here.

Krystal Wu:

Thank you, tam. What would you add as the dean of students, Candace?

Candace Colbert:

Yes. Thank you, Krystal. Here at Bard, I've had a couple different positions for the past couple of years working here. When I first entered, I entered as a part of the student services team, so that was obviously directly about meeting students' academic and socio-emotional needs and desires, and making sure that there were structures and supports in place to meet those needs. Really, my focus when I was on that team was asking the students what they need and what they desire. I come from a participatory action-based research background, so it's all about including the community in the processes and in the things that you're trying to meet and bring to them, so that was really important to me. Now, as dean of students, I'm still working directly with students in this way. My focus has been creating spaces for student voices and student leadership.

We really believe, to tam's point, that they're experts of their own experience, that they're authors and owners of their own experience, so creating structures where they could lead and have an elevation of student voice. We have a variety of student leadership opportunities here on campus. We have a student leadership council, we have what we call "BECNO ambassadors." Those are both paid positions, so not only are they leading in spaces, but they're getting the job skills, they're getting the benefits beyond just the soft and hard skills of having a

leadership role, but they're calling it a real job that they're earning from there. We also have peer tutors and informal forms of leadership on campus as well. Just making sure there are spaces where they could lead and really see what this community is, and lead and be a part of forming that community.

Krystal Wu: Rachel, what about from your perspective as a professor and department chair?

Rachel Nelson: Hi, everybody. My position at Bard is that I teach a variety of different classes and the students that you'll see in the clips today are all from a class I taught last year, called Leadership for Social Change. I think it's important to note that that class is a really great example of how some of the policy and leadership shifts that Tam and Candace are talking about landed really specifically in the classroom. That was a class that Tam and Candace, and I thought up together as a way to try to bring some really practical skill-building to this idea of building student voice. One of the things that we talk about a lot is that the students are... If we want to take really seriously the idea of honoring their voices and giving them lots of leadership opportunities, and that means that we also need to be in a skill building capacity with them to teach them how to hold those positions.

Obviously, this is different individual to individual, but many of our students are not coming from an educational background where they have been set up for success in leadership roles. Something that I think about a lot in my classroom is ways to make leadership opportunities not just performative and also ways to make equity in the classroom, as a teacher, not just performative. This class, very specifically, was built around this idea of how to give opportunities to the students where they're set up for success and also given really genuine growth opportunities. One of the things that meant often was being really real with them about the systems of bureaucracy and oppression that we all live inside of, because those things really, really impact a student's ability to be in a leadership role and also what it looks like once they are in those leadership roles.

I think one of the things that's maybe really valuable to say is that a lot of being in right relationship with our students around student authorship and ownership has been about bringing them almost into a space of collaboration peer to peer, which I think has been... That really kind of messes with a lot of stuff about a school structure, and being able to hold that very tender, thin line of doing that while also being an adult in a room with students that still need a lot of support and encouragement and do still need you to be an adult that is providing the container for them at the end of the day. I think a lot of it has been about trying to strike that balance in the classroom.

Krystal Wu: Thank you all so much for sharing your different approaches to creating the positive school climate that you all have worked done. Rachel, you set us up so well to hear from Joshua. Joshua, that we'll hear from now, was a member of Rachel's class like she said, and in this clip, he'll particularly speak to the importance of humanizing and empowering students at their particular developmental time in late adolescence. We'll hear from Joshua now.

Joshua:

... being treated like a person and not just like... Because in high school, we go from being young adults to some people being adults and they're like 18 towards time to graduate. Even though some people are adults that we're really close with, we are just becoming that. Still need to be treated just like we're still high school students and just like people in general, because I feel like, from a mental and emotional perspective, being in school and being expected to behave the same way and act the same way for four years and just listen to this figure of authority without really questioning it, eventually, you're going to feel combative in the sense of, one, you aren't a kid and you aren't 14 anymore and you don't need to listen to these things, but at the same time, it feels like you're being conditioned to act a certain way. When you're conditioned to act a certain way, you feel like how you actually act might be wrong in the school sense, and that can make people really...

Krystal Wu:

What he says at the end of that clip is that the way that we've been conditioned in schools can sometimes then make us be or set us up to be in combative relationships with adults, students with adults. His encouragement to school leaders and to teachers is to think about students as their own whole people and to empower them while also maintaining appropriate boundaries. He doesn't use this language, I'm using this language. To what Rachel was saying, it's the really fine balance. You can watch more of the clip and I think it's gone in the chat, that video, the longer discussion with him and several other students. Because Joshua spoke to this importance of respecting and honoring student voice, and you all are talking about student authorship and ownership, I would love for you all to share a little bit from your different perspectives about the impact of this focus in your work. Yeah. From your different perspectives, what is the impact of supporting student voice and ownership at your school from your perspective, that we can all learn from and consider? tam, we'll start with you again.

tam lee:

Yeah, I'm happy to talk about this, because we actually see the fruit from the tree that we planted. One of the ways that I'm most impressed with the student impact of owning and claiming space on campus is through our own campus programming. Being in early college, a lot of times, our students really struggle with transitioning from all of the fun activities built into the high school schedule. Report cards, homecoming, spring break, all those little soft landing spots that we planned for as young people, we don't typically see those in early college spaces, so we invited our students, "Hey, if you want to see collegiate-level activities and programming, this is your time. At college, you are in charge of building out those programs, you are in charge of starting out those clubs," so we gave them that opportunity. Part of giving the opportunity is, "Hey, that also means you have to fundraise."

We gave them the space and time and support to build out their on campus programming. They built out the BECNO Store, which is the store we have here that sells snacks and goodies and treats as our main fundraiser for all of their field trips, all of their transportation, their lunches. They pick the events and places that we go to, we look at the academic schedule and we have them plan when would the best fit that would not interrupt classes. That way, we invite

them to see what is typically reserved for us big bureaucrats. I don't want to plan an activity that you're not interested in, because that just means I wasted school money, so the best thing to do is to let you tell me what you're interested in and, if you can fundraise to do that, absolutely, we're going to support that. We had so much success with it last year, I'm really looking forward to how our new student leaderships take that opportunity this year.

Krystal Wu:

Candace, what about from your perspective? What are you seeing as the impact? maybe we can get some details about some of what the students are choosing to do.

Candace Colbert:

Yes, of course. To echo tam's point, we are in the unique space where students are still 15, 16, 17, and 18, but they're taking college courses. They're now in college and have these collegiate expectations, but the beautiful thing is we share with them, "With freedom comes with a lot of responsibility," and with that responsibility, they've been taking a lot of initiative. They've seen that this space is a space where their voice is heard and they could actually use that to create their own programming, to tam's point. Right now, we're actually in the middle of our student leadership council elections and in finalizing our BECNO ambassador training. Both sets of students have already prompted this new initiative of a big brother, big sister initiative on campus, or a smaller... They call it "Families on campus," so what that is is...

We have year ones and year twos, so the year twos tend to be seniors, year ones tend to be juniors, and they would like to partner up groups together, basically, of a certain amount of year twos and a certain amount of year ones, so that kids across campus and across these eight different high schools have a mixed group of students that they could reach out to if they have a need. If they have a need for tutoring on their paper, if they just want someone that they could eat lunch with and go off campus lunch together, or someone to start a club with that they would have a smaller group of students to do that, and that's an initiative that they've came up with all on their own.

They're proposing it right now and, after the elections, they'll go ahead to spearhead that and see it move. I think just the initiatives that we've seen them take when they realize that, "Okay, the adults in this space are not just saying they want to hear our voice, but it's actually happening." The action steps are taking place and they're involved in every level of the implementation as well.

Krystal Wu:

Really appreciate some of these specific, concrete examples of programming that students are creating on their own and with each other. Love that it's about supporting each other as they move through the school. Rachel, what are you seeing in terms of impacts of supporting student voice and ownership?

Rachel Nelson:

I think one of the main impacts that I really see in the classroom is that we painted ourselves into a corner in the best possible way, because now we are accountable to being accountable to the students around transparency about what we're doing. Once you give them a little peek behind the curtain, and we have invited them into a lot of planning sessions, they are thinking very

systemically now about how schools work. I think something really beautiful is that that hits on all levels. I think Candace and Tam did a really beautiful job of speaking to that on wider levels. In classrooms specifically, what that means is that our students feel deeply empowered to ask very specifically about rules. For example, in my classroom, I have a rule that there are no rules that I am not able to explain to them that either keep them safe or enhance their learning, and they are always up for debate.

If the students feel like something is arbitrary or it is punitive or it just straight up is not enhancing the classroom environment, then we talk about it, and I ship them often. I also think it's important to say... I don't think giving young people leadership opportunities means telling them that they are always right. That also means that... Actually, I think is a pretty harmful thing to do to teenagers and it does not set them up for success always, so I also am really clear about my knows and why I am saying no to certain things, but I hold myself accountable to say, "If I can't give you a real, almost like adult to adult reason for doing something, then I'm not going to do it, and that is my transparency to y'all." It does mean that you have to be much more accountable as an adult, "Because I said so," is no longer an option, which I think is really powerful for teenagers to sit with.

I also think something very specific is that we... Almost all of our professors do class norms in some way, shape, or form, which all of us are familiar with. Something that we've started instituting in my classrooms is that we start with some really basic ones at the very beginning of the year just to keep everyone safe, and in some version of early stages of right relationship with each other, around classroom discussion and safety. Then, about two to three weeks into the semester, so actually this next week coming up, we are going to, in all of my classes, actually sit down and write class norms. The reason that we do that three weeks or two weeks into the semester, rather than the first or second day of classes, is that each of these communities inside each of these classrooms is a separate ecosystem that is going to hit different with the students.

It's going to land different, the culture is going to feel different, the dynamics are going to feel different, the content at the subject is going to bring up different things for the students, so giving them an opportunity to think thoughtfully about what they need in a specific context and then speak to that, and for me to be accountable to doing what I can do to deliver that for them and also invite them into doing that, allows them to think really specifically about their needs in changing moments and what they're able to bring in changing moments, rather than thinking of themselves as static individuals that are supposed to have their needs met in the same way at all times.

Krystal Wu:

Thank you so much. I just want to make a quick plug. Rachel was the main author of this guide that came out through the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety. The reason I want to plug it is it's a really great compendium of all of Rachel's approaches to creating a responsive classroom environment in the context of the larger environment at Bard. I just want to make sure, to learn more from Rachel's wisdom, you should check out

that guide. All right, we're going to hear from one final student and then we have a couple thumb wrap-up questions for the panel. This last student speaker is Kolby, and in this one, he's actually particularly sharing advice for school leaders, like you all on this panel and in our webinar, who hope to create a more responsive school environment. Let's listen to Kolby's advice for us.

Kolby:

I would like to agree with Lisa here, because I feel like a lot of emotional support for students is swept under the rug or there's the bare minimum done to support it. I feel like it only... The resources that students are offered are resources to just get them by, get them through the school day. I feel like there's enough taking into account how much students may carry on their shoulders outside of school or in their household. When they come to school, they don't really have the attention span to want to be taught, to be educated as fast as other kids. I feel like students might go through a lot and teachers push them aside. It only makes them more embarrassed. I feel like there should be more done to build connections with students and understand who they are, how they like to be taught, what works for them, how can curriculum be centered around students, or they're more used to. There's an effort put into supporting the students' needs.

Krystal Wu:

Thank you to Kolby for sharing that advice for all of us. I would like to turn it to our panel. What advice do you all have for school leaders about shifting the paradigm to a more responsive, inclusive, and not punitive one. tam, kick us off.

tam lee:

Yeah, I think it's important to... When you look into reframe and shift away from punitive, I always think of, "How are we best addressing problems that students encounter in their everyday life and how are we empowering them or providing them the tools to deal with it if it comes up again?" I talk a lot about giving students the opportunity to have a choice, good, bad, or indifferent, but also being able to... Not to say a student is misbehaving or being disruptive, we actually call those "Misplaced behaviors," because they have functions, right? They're things that they've learned throughout their life as ways to cope or deal with problems and situations that don't necessarily fit as comfortable and easily in the educational setting, but outside of school, they work just as well to get those needs met. Our job's to, as we're shifting away from punitive, we have to be able to give them alternative behaviors, supportive behaviors, or even responsive behaviors that fit with the climate that we're building, but also still meet those needs that they're looking for.

That not only applies to students, that applies to us as well, right? Faculty, students, administrators, we all have to be of the same accord, we all have to realize that we are modeling the behaviors we would like our students to learn and absorb and possibly emulate. In that way, we can't fly off the handle when we're upset about students not reading or being late or constantly having to get up for the bathroom, right? It's our jobs to find out why. "Why were you not being successful during that transition time when everyone else went to the bathroom?" Once we get to that why, how can we best get you to the answer and get you to a solution to make sure that this doesn't happen again?

If we are seeing that students just don't have time to do homework at home, we built out the literal study halls on campus to support their own academic learning, so that they didn't feel that pressure to, "I didn't do my homework, I'm going to sleep in class." No, we have a dedicated hour on campus for you to get that homework done and come to class fresh and ready to participate. It takes all of us, it takes admin, it takes staff, it takes faculty, and it takes students to really understand what it means when we're shifting away from being so punitive and we're shifting towards being more restorative, being more inclusive, and being more communal in how we go about changing and addressing a lot of the problems that we face.

Krystal Wu:

I'm glad this is recorded, because I'm going to revisit that answer. I felt like there was so much in there. Mindsets, the structures, root cause analysis. Yeah, thank you so much, tam. Candace, what do you want to add from your role and position?

Candace Colbert:

Yes. I think the key is to not be just performative. There's a lot of people, I'm sure, here in this panel and also on the webinar who share an enthusiasm for having a safe space for their students, to empower students and promote student voice, but it's really going beyond just having those conversations in faculty meetings and putting the structures to see that happen on campus. I think, with our campus and why it's been successful, there was a clear just shift in the atmosphere, from whether they're coming up to the third floor from their high school or whether they're driving in from their high schools, about the way that student voice is valued in this space. I think the structures that need to fall into place are then ones that come from student input and come from all community members as well, so faculty, staff, and students, and creating those structures and sticking to them, right?

Seeing them out, trying them for a semester. At the end of the semester, we revisit and the students are like, "We actually didn't like that," or the faculty or staff are like, "This is why it didn't work." Being willing and flexible to bend and shift those structures to really meet the needs and desires, not holding onto things as sacred or traditional, but really being able to shift with the needs that students have. With that, the beauty of it is that we see just students run head first with those. We've seen students who...

We have community meetings and restorative conversations as a part of our restorative practices whenever harm has been done, and one of the most beautiful things I saw last year is students having mediation sessions among themselves. I just walked past the room and someone's been like, "Dean Candace, come in here real quick," and they're like, "We're having a mediation." I just sat there, did nothing, and got to see students have a mediation. That's from a structure that they saw a tab at the campus and that they bought in and they implemented themselves. I just think really creating the structures that accompany the goals and visions you have and allowing students to run with it.

Krystal Wu:

Wow. What an amazing moment of knowing that something that you all are working on from the adult perspective is really landing for students, when

students are taking it on themselves. Rachel, what do you want to add? What advice do you have for school leaders?

Rachel Nelson: Honestly, that's a tough act to follow. I love working for y'all and with you all. I guess the only thing that I really want to offer is just... I feel like we're all of us, as educators, in some version of coming through PD season right now and, every year, I think that there is this... Working in education is an almost impossible task in all the different climates that we are in right now and I do feel like, every year, there is something new that we're supposed to be implementing and something that can have a fatiguing, overwhelming effect. I really do feel like, for me, the through line between everything that is ever authentic with working... Ever effective, excuse me, with working with young people is just that it has to be built in authentic relationships. There is no perfect strategy if there is not an authentic relationship behind it that is going to inspire trust and allow that student to engage with a full humanity with you.

I do think that what that asks of us is it is not fair or reasonable or realistic to ask a young person to bring a holistically, authentic full version of themselves to the table if you're not going to do that too. That's going to look different for everybody and it's going to look different in every single situation, but I think that young people can be our true north as a society right now about whether or not we are engaging authentically, because they will tell you when you are not. That is a blessing and a curse, and I think that just reminding ourselves that, to be an authentic relationship, will always orient us in the right direction with each other.

Krystal Wu: Oh, my gosh, y'all. I have goosebumps. Snaps all around. This is the final question and it will be brief, but we would just love to know, what are you all looking forward to as you continue this work? What's something that's keeping you inspired, excited, especially at the beginning of a school year? What are you looking forward to, tam?

tam lee: Yeah. I'm looking to take our ownership and authorship, and really start claiming some space in the city. We are working with a few community partners in the city, but also through our Bard network, we've applied for a few grants to do actual community active research. One addressing the unhoused and climate change, the other one is to address food insecurity in our area, so we're looking to build out a greenhouse and start growing plants and having students really own that space of providing nutritious food for this neighborhood, and also building out weather reprieve for those that are unhoused in this area, so they can have a safe place to go wash up, get clean, load the laundry if possible. That way, the students can see their impact beyond our four walls and really understand what power they have in changing the landscape of the city looks like.

Krystal Wu: Amazing, thank you. Candace, what are you looking forward to?

Candace Colbert: Yes. We have grown in student population, in the amount of students we have, and also, we've grown in high school partners, the amount of school partners

we have. I'm just really looking forward to this new group of students and, so far, they've been jumping right in and it's been great to see. I'm looking forward to them building relationship and just understanding what it means to be a part of the Bard community. I'm also looking forward to these new initiatives that our student leadership are already thinking about and planning and texting me and emailing me and stopping me everywhere I go about. Accountability, like Rachel said. Definitely looking forward to these new initiatives and just the new community that we have this school year.

Krystal Wu: Sounds like you've really hit the ground running. You're only, what? Week three right now? Not even? Yeah, wow. Rachel, go ahead and close this off. What are you looking forward to?

Rachel Nelson: Just to second this idea of community partnerships, I think New Orleans is such an incredible place to be and it is such a good trading ground for reminding us that the power really does come from each other and the power comes from the people always. One of the things that I'm doing this year that I'm really excited about is we have a partnership with a local theater company called "No Dream Deferred" that does really amazing work. I just had a meeting with them and they're going to come in and help us fully produce a student-written play about the ways that they are thinking about how identity functions for the students on campus. I'm just really excited to see that happen.

Krystal Wu: Wow. So much inspiring work, inspiring people. Thank you so much to Rachel, tam, and Candace for sharing about your school with us and your way of being. Just thanks for being here, we learned so much from you all. I'm going to now pass it back to Christina, who will moderate our second panel. Thanks, everyone.

Christina Pate: Wow, what a thought-provoking, rich discussion with the team at Bard Early College in New Orleans. So many great examples of how making a shift from a traditional paradigm to a responsive, inclusive, supportive one, really centering students, but also supporting adults as allies. I am really appreciating the attention to co-ownership in this conversation and how decisions are really negotiated and actions are reciprocated between adults and students and everyone really holding each other accountable for the entire community's wellbeing. Just phenomenal work, you all. Thank you so much for joining us here today. Let's get into our second panel, focused on administrator systems as it pertains to these preventive, responsive, inclusive paradigms, but really thinking about those systems and structures that have to be in place to support this, and how administrators play a key role here. With us today, we have Janina Kusielewicz, who is the assistant superintendent at Clifton Public Schools in New Jersey.

We have Paula Raigoza, the PBIS district coordinator, also at Clifton Public Schools in New Jersey. We have Dan Bridges, who's the superintendent at Naperville Community School District in Illinois, and Lisa Xagas, who is the assistant superintendent at Naperville Community School District in Illinois. Welcome, everyone. We're delighted to have you all join us today, so let's go

ahead and get started. Maybe let's just get started thinking about your approach. As we're thinking about your role and your position, how do you work to promote this positive, responsive, and inclusive school climate? And how might that differ from some of the more traditional school paradigms that we're used to operating within? Given your roles as administrators, what are the systems that you're putting in place to really support this shift? Maybe we can start with Paula from Clifton.

Paula Raigoza:

Hi. Thanks, Christina. In Clifton Public Schools, we're promoting unauthentic, integrated system framework that engages stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue that fosters positive and inclusive school climate, right? For the purpose of our conversation today, we'll focus more on the positive behavior interventions and support side of it, and the prevention-focused tier logic really has helped us organize and support our behavioral needs. What we'll get into the next couple of minutes is our cascade of services that make all this happen, and that includes, to start off, our PBSIS district collaborative team. This group of folks includes our NJPBSIS liaisons, they're part of our state network and they come on and they've helped train and support our practices. It includes our central office executives, our principals, supervisors, educators. We have some parent representation and student representation, and this team primarily focuses on the advancement of overall district-wide PBSIS implementation. By the way, we in New Jersey say "PBSIS," but it's synonymous with PBIS. Just for the record.

Next up, we have our district coaches network. Now, all of our instructional buildings have a PBIS team. Six to 10 folks usually make up the team. Within it, we have co-coach and these co-coaches form the network, and through this network, they meet monthly to share and discuss implementation. What's working? What's not? What community resources are really effective at different times of the years, or what we can look forward to?

Following that, we are lucky enough to have a PBIS district team. We are awardees of the School Climate Transformation Grant from 2019. Through those funds, we were able to allocate specific roles within our district, and that includes the district coordinator role, the PBIS district coach role, and the PBIS district social worker role. This team champions comprehensive training, technical support, and job-embedded coaching to district personnel on all on matters pertaining to behavior. In collaboration, of course, with our counseling department. Through this collective teaming process that I've just described... Those are some parts of it, right? We have a lot more, but we only have a certain number of minutes to talk with you all today. Through this collective teaming process, we're able to provide ongoing professional development to our staff and to our students as well. Some of those staple ongoing activities include our upcoming administrative retreat in August, where we review our updated district PBIS practices and procedures, so that everyone is on the same page.

We also make it a point to present to our new staff. During new staff orientation, PBSIS is equipping folks with teacher TRI for strategies and positive,

proactive presence and engaging strategies, which in New Jersey we call the P three and D. Those really help folks that are coming new into our district really learn the ways of how we're looking to promote our culture and climate in Clifton Public Schools. Lastly for today, that we want to mention, is our PBIS job-embedded coaching. This is really one of the biggest pieces we've been working on, and it's amazing, because through a confidential avenue, accessible to all staff, our coaching initiative extends a helping hand in classroom management and overall PBSIS implementation, so staff members can either be recommended by an administrator or supervisor who feel like they could use some support or any staff can proactively seek the support. All of our outcomes are driven by evidence-based systems and practices, which we've shared some of the resources and they're on the website from the webinar today. That's just a glimpse into what we're doing here in Clifton Public Schools.

Christina Pate: Great. It sounds like this process is pretty teacher-driven, perhaps even building-driven, and I'm wondering if you all could expand a little bit on that and tell us a little bit more. I know Janina was having some connectivity issues, but Janina, if you're there, would love to... Great.

Janina Kusielewicz: I am back.

Christina Pate: Great.

Janina Kusielewicz: We've been really intentional with ensuring that we address all of our stakeholders, whether it's when we're gathering, analyzing data, modeling, improving the systems, we've really been trying to incorporate evidence-based practices that align with our district-wide cultural and linguistic diversity. We are a district of over 63 languages, so that cultural and linguistic needs have to be met. Now, interestingly, we leveraged universal interventions much more during COVID, and we used the PBIS structure to engage our students. Since then, we've been able to interlace our integrated system framework of positive behavioral supports together with our academic response to intervention, and then we're leveraging not just our counseling team, but our PBIS district building-based teams to really address student social-emotional learning. We're trying to do that universally in the classroom, not just in the tier two and tier three interventions.

Christina Pate: Great. It sounds like a lot of clear, intentional alignment of systems and content areas and really cohering around your common vision. That's great. Dan from Naperville, what about you? Considering your role and position, how do you work to promote a positive, responsive, and inclusive school climate, and how might this differ from a traditional school paradigm?

Dan Bridges: Sure, Christina. Happy to talk about that. First, I want to say how grateful Lisa and I are for having the opportunity to talk a little bit about the work that we're doing in Naperville. I'm still scribbling notes from the first panel, amazing work that you're doing down there, but thank you again. Just a little bit about Naperville. Our school district is located in Naperville, Illinois, a suburb about 30 miles west of Chicago. We're the ninth-largest school district out of 850 plus in

Illinois. When we think a little bit about our approach and the work that we're doing to really promote positive, inclusive school climates and school communities, it's really come through our commitment around an inclusive school community focused around responding to students' academic, behavioral, and other needs for our multi-tiered system of support, our comprehensive equity plan, as well as our social-emotional learning work and social-emotional learning plan, which are all integrated and aligned around that concept of an inclusive school community.

For us, our work started really, I'd say, 2012 to 2014, in that area right there, through a community engagement process where we're working on strategic planning. We are fortunate to be a very high-performing, high-achieving school district, but as we talk to our community about success and how do we define success as a school district, a lot of what we heard back was, "We can't just focus on academic outcomes. We have to pay attention, deliberate and intentional attention to the whole child, as well as social-emotional health, as well as the mental health of our students." Based on that feedback and part of our strategic planning, we developed a commitment to the community to develop a comprehensive social-emotional learning plan aligned to all of the work that we're doing. Lisa, who will also talk here on this panel, was one of the key leaders for us in our district in the work that we did in response to the community, but we really focused on a process that was going to really build an understanding and build a why.

I know today, especially as we've come through COVID and somehow SEL became attached to critical race theory, and I'm not sure what the relationship is particularly there, but in our community, we can talk about SEL, because it came from our community. We've focused on building the why and the rationale around how intentional and deliberate social-emotional learning plans and work support academic outcomes. They support lifetime outcomes, they create safer and more inclusive school cultures and communities as well as the financial return on investment that goes into what you do around social-emotional learning. Our first step, really, was being intentional about the why, building the understanding of what social-emotional support can do for students in our schools, and I think the success that we have had in the work that we have been doing has been...

Our plan has been through iterations and, based on conditions, based on situations, based on what we're seeing, we have iterated multiple times to try to continue to let our work evolve. A couple of things then about how we've done this. We talk often about the fact that SEL is not one more thing being put on a teacher's plate, it's actually a part of the plate. It is an important part of what we do.

We have focused on school culture and climate as the foundation, the basis. Worked on building up teacher competencies and understanding through really intense and well-developed professional learning. Curriculum alignment, we don't see SEL as something separate on its own or different, or on Tuesdays between 9:30 and 9:45. It's integrated throughout everything that we do and

then through community and family partnerships. As we've evolved over time, and obviously, we've emerged out of the trauma of the pandemic, we've begun to focus more specifically on mental health as well as behaviors and supporting teachers and strategies to address the gaps that we're seeing in student behavior. For us then, it is just a part of who we are and what we do. Just the fact that we iterate and continue to evolve, based on what we're seeing out of the needs of our students has been really positive for us.

Christina Pate: Great. Lisa, if you don't mind sharing, what did the process look like as this shifting paradigms happened? Less of a focus on just academics and really rethinking and redesigning for school climate and SEL.

Lisa Xagas: Yeah. For our community, the paradigm shift was critically important, because they thought maybe behavior was not related to anything that was happening at school, so we really needed to get understanding from our stakeholders that behavior is really evidence of one of two things. It's either a lagging social-emotional skill that we're responsible for teaching, and not every kindergartner comes to school knowing how to read or knowing their letters, they all don't come knowing how to regulate their emotions either, and we need to teach them that. The other reason we sometimes see behavior is because of the environment we've put students in and the relationships that we have with them. Really focusing on that and getting our educators to also focus on that helped us to shift the paradigm.

Christina Pate: Great. It sounds like the approaches from both Clifton and Naperville are both really rooted in a very human-centered data collection process. I'm hearing it involved multiple interest holders and perhaps even co-designed with those interest holders, and also really appreciating Dan's point about ensuring people understand the reasons why it's not just the what that we're doing, but the impact that it has on everyone. Let's dig into a little bit about that impact a little bit more here. Lisa, I'm wondering if you can tell us a little bit about, how have the systems that you've been building and improving really affected and impacted your students?

Lisa Xagas: Yeah, of course. I want to start by saying we know we have much more work to be done, we're not there yet. However, our initial data is very promising for the systems that we've put in place. I'll cover just a little bit of it. The initial implementation of SEL showed that we had over a 5% reduction in our chronic absenteeism, the first year of implementation, we had a 7% reduction in the percentage of students who required mental health hospitalization. Second year of implementation, we had a 23% reduction in the percentage of students who required mental health hospitalization. We've had decreases in the percentages of our disproportionality and special education identification, and we are happy to report that, this year and last year, we're seeing decreases in our exclusionary discipline practices as well. We feel confident that we're headed in the right direction, although we completely acknowledge we still have room to grow.

Christina Pate: Great. What about you, Paula with Clifton? How have these systems been impacting your students?

Paula Raigoza:

Implementing the robust system of PBIS over the last nine plus years and 17 instructional buildings that educate over 11,000 students, we've realized that we've been moving slowly, but surely and steadily. The systems that we've built continue to promote ongoing instruction and recognition of the expected behaviors not only in class, but school-wide. Even at our Board of Ed meetings. The use of data to expand and prioritize the social-emotional behavior competencies being taught to our students and staff depict a really cool picture, and it looks like the following. Our school climate results last year. Now, we're talking post-pandemic, where everything, of course, went a little off to the side. It all indicates that there's an overall increase of positivity or how all stakeholders, students, staff, and parents, caregivers feel around academic culture and classroom practices, a sense of physical safety, and an overwhelmingly increase of positively thinking that... Folks' perception around student voice and involvement.

Our students report feeling heard and seen, and that's clear across all of our platforms. Moving on, our multiple evidence-based fidelity tools have provided us with data results that clearly indicate that our district is measuring well above the national 70% average of implementation with fidelity. Those include the benchmark of qualities, the tiered fidelity inventory, the district systems, and all of those resources are also provided. Each step of the way, when we ask folks, not only our staff and our parents, but more importantly our students, what they're looking for in order to feel welcomed and seen and loved in our district, we have a process of data gathering and analysis to pair that up with. Lastly, but surely, our redefined district-wide office conduct referral systems have greatly helped us identify trends of overrepresented student groups, and this facilitates our PBSIS teams with the information they need to develop targeted booster behaviors.

It's amazing what we've seen, but as Lisa just expressed before, I'm so excited about how much more we're going to grow, because now that we have the data systems in place, the next step is to really get in there and further evolve and fine-tune the processes that we want to help this be the happening place that we all see it to be.

Christina Pate:

That's great, Paula. I can really see how some of these longer-term efforts, both with Clifton and Naperville, building not just the systems and structures, but I'm hearing how we're really starting to shift mindsets and beliefs in this process, and it's starting to show some impact. I imagine things haven't always been smooth sailing, as change takes time and effort and I heard Dan say "A lot of iterations." I imagine, looking back, there are a lot of lessons that you've learned along the way that could be helpful for the field, so let's talk a little bit about those now. Janina, let's start with you. What have been some of your lessons learned as you have built and improved your systems to support these paradigm shifts towards a more inclusive and supportive environment, and what might you do differently next time, based on what you know now?

Janina Kusielewicz:

Our lessons are not just lessons that were learned, they're lessons that are continuing to be learned. The one big one, and I think that that was already

echoed in previous statements, change takes way longer than anticipated. You really need to balance not just the time to bring people along, but also keeping enough momentum, so you don't lose people. We've been at this for a long time and we've had to retool periodically, because there were these times where some schools are so far ahead and other schools in our district are like, "Wait, we're never going to get there." That balancing of momentum and time to learn and buy in is really hard, and we've had to keep going back and forth to it. Then there was the pandemic. The pandemic could have really disrupted that for us, but thank goodness, in our case, yes, it did slow tier two and tier three intervention rollout, but the pandemic helped embed the universal interventions into our culture.

This really helped people see value in PBIS beyond just a token system and it has helped set that level playing field for the district to start embracing and adopting tier two and tier three interventions from a place of understanding. In that case, the time piece has been helpful. Our second major lesson area, not fully learned yet, but what we've seen is that full integration of a multi-tiered system of support is not just time, but also patience and support from the building level, from the district level, and from the BOB level. At the ground level, we've been slowly training tier one and now tier two school by school, meeting by meeting, event by event, and we've been doing that together with building admin, but we've also had to provide that top-down support. From a district-wide perspective, one of the big things that we did is that we integrated all of the appropriate behavioral interventions.

In our case, those are the PBIS teacher-diverse strategies, and we put them into all 187 curriculum guides that drive instruction Pre-K through 12, so they're explicitly in each guide. The point of this was to demonstrate how students' behavior and emotional state both affect and promote instruction, and also to have those explicit responsive tools for the teachers right there. If your social studies or your home EC, if your third-grade classroom or 11th-grade PE, you have access to the same tools. That was huge. By setting that district expectation simultaneously with building the buy-in school by school, meeting by meeting, event by event, in all of the measures that Paula mentioned earlier, we are seeing those improvements in students' social and emotional and academic wellbeing, especially as we're trying to close that developmental communication and behavioral gap that was caused by the pandemic.

Christina Pate: Absolutely.

Janina Kusielewicz: My final quick one is, even when you move forward, you have to keep on looping back. We need to keep looping back, reflecting, refining, adjusting. The people change, attitudes change, some little factor shifts, how the district is going, and you've got to keep reflecting on it to stay sharp and effective.

Christina Pate: Absolutely, Janina. Change is non-linear, for sure. Dan, what about you? What are some of the lessons that you've learned?

Dan Bridges:

Yeah, I think there are lessons being learned every day about this. A couple of things really quick is that context matters. I talked about from community to community, but we have 23 sites, 23 schools within our school district. Each one of them in their own little unique community, so understanding that the things that we do to support our schools, there has to be some opportunity to adapt, modify, and go to different pace at each of our sites, because the second part is the adults. Adults are in different places and I think one of the things that we often look back and talk about, if we had to do it differently, we should have realized that all of our adults are not in a space themselves, social and emotionally as well as mental health, to be the person leading this for a bunch of young people in front of them, so we should have paid a little bit more attention to them and support for their wellbeing.

I think some of us got it early, I don't know if we communicated it well enough early, just the integration, really, as not just one more thing, but just really understanding and integrating that across everything that we do that is not that standalone thing. Finally, before I let Lisa have a second here to add a couple of other things, that student voice part is so important to us and we've gotten much better about that with a focus now, even in our school improvement plans, on academic goals, on social-emotional goals, but also on student belonging, student voice goals as well for our school, so I think we would've done a little bit more of that upfront. Lisa, what else is there? I know there's so many things that we talk about.

Lisa Xagas:

Yeah, I could go on and on about what we would do differently, or lessons learned. We focused a lot on the SEL skill acquisition, and our teachers have SEL curriculum maps that indicate what are the skills they're teaching, what are the resources they're using to teaching, and where are they integrating it into their content? All of our teachers have learning targets for both their academic content and social-emotional content for every lesson, but what we probably didn't focus on enough is that, sometimes as an educational system, we grow our own problem behavior. We've gone back to redo a little bit of our humanistic approach to behavior response and taking that more, actually, as humanistic core values, and we're talking to our educators about looking at behavior or skill deficits or even environmental issues through the lens of the core values. That we value safety over compliance, that we value student dignity and autonomy, we value televisability. We're proud of the interactions we have with students. Some of those things, if we got a redo, we would've put in the first time, but lessons learned, for sure.

Christina Pate:

Wonderful, Lisa. I love the values-centered approach to responsive paradigm here. Super fast, I know we're running out of time. Lisa, as you continue this important work, what are you most excited about moving forward?

Lisa Xagas:

I'm thrilled that Mr. Bridges allows us to keep reiterating, so we're about to embark on SEL 3.0, which we're excited about. That focus is a little bit on staff morale and staff morale, because as Dan said, dysregulated adults cannot regulate students and the pandemic took a hit and public education is taking a hit. We really need to do some things to push that forward in a more positive

way. The other thing is the idea that we are going to be revising our SEL curriculum, really, to focus more on executive functioning, because of the new brain research about the impact of technology and to also aligning with workforce readiness skills of the future, so really thinking about what is different there.

The third thing is we have a program called "Rise," which is wraparound supports and community schools wrapped all into one. We have some grants that we have been using, so that we can support students throughout their entire day and beyond when they're just with us at school. We know students only spend 17% of their time in a year with us and when they have needs that is housing insecurity, food insecurity, physical health, or behavioral health needs that exceed what we can offer them, we can use this program to fund those supports for students who need it, which we're excited about that.

Christina Pate: Very exciting. Paula, you want to wrap us up? What are you excited about?

Paula Raigoza: Sure. Overall, just maintaining that common language is what we're most excited about, because everything is going to continue to change. We've got new cohort of students, staff, administration, there's ongoing change, but as long as we have that common language and those channels that are set up for those communication pieces to happen, we're golden. Lastly, a wise woman was said to me, "The interconnected feedback loop between social-emotional wellbeing and learning is both the process and the goal."

Christina Pate: What a great way to wrap us up, Paula. Appreciating this panel on administrator systems. It's a piece that we often forget, the underlying infrastructure and the leadership that's required to make all of this great work happen, so thank you all so much for joining us today. I think we're going to shift into some Q and A, so I'm going to pass it back over to Greta.

Greta Colombi: Excellent. Thank you so, so very much. Now we are going to close the formal content delivery section of the webinar and then move into the live Q and A, as Christina just mentioned. We are going to be pulling questions, as we mentioned at the start, from those that were submitted via the registration as well as those you have submitted during the event itself. Feel free to add any additional questions now. With that, I just want to thank each of our presenters and panels for the excellent information and strategies you've shared today. This is such an important topic to keep in mind as we continue to make our school safe and supportive learning environments for all students. We also want to thank all of our wonderful participants for your active engagement questions and comments during the webinar and, please, remember that you can find additional resources and assistance via NCSSE and the Best Practices Clearinghouse.

In addition to the three upcoming miniseries events on ed mentioned at the start, we also have a few more via our general Lessons from the Field Webinar Series as well as our Human Trafficking Webinar Series. You can see we are speaking about a range of topics. From supporting newcomer students to

supporting students who identify as male and boys who have experienced human trafficking, or at risk of experiencing human trafficking. Please, keep an eye out in your email for an announcement with links to register. You can also visit NCSSE's webinar webpage to get more details on our events and others. Again, we are ready to transition over to our Q and A. I'm just going to pull that screen up. We have a question for our panel one folks from Bard Early College, and that question is, "What strategies are there to share these strategies with parents and caregivers to get their feedback and buy-in?"

Candace Colbert: Yes, thank you for that. The strategies, there are a couple that we will be trying this year, as last year, as we shared, was tam and I's, as a part of the admin team's, first full year in leadership. This year, we're part of a conglomerate here in the city that represents, basically, different nonprofits that serve youth here. There's a lot of different trainings and outreach to the community. One of those is a survey that they built and helped us build for our stakeholders in our community. At the end of the semester, we'll be submitting that to our families and students to see how they would like to be further involved.

One of the biggest challenges we face with our parent guardians is that, again, we work with eight different high schools in the city, and this is the first time that they are dealing with higher education and definitely with their students still being in the household. Really helping them buy into the systems that we have in terms of like, "Hey, if your student has concern, prompt them to send us an email, instead of you calling the school." Some of those just first hand-in-hand things that they're learning with this new experience. We have a family night at the beginning of next month and we'll be pitching this survey and hearing what types of support the community, especially parents and guardians, would like for the upcoming school year.

Greta Colombi: Excellent. Thank you so much, Candace. We have another question for panel two and this is, "Just wondering for our Clifton and Naperville folks, how do you recommend to get started where there is no program happening?"

Janina Kusielewicz: If I can jump in, we started this a long time ago and SEL was, really, an afterthought in education at the time. We're at this for nine plus years. We just started in our one school, where we not only had the greatest needs, the school was, at the time, a targeted school in need of improvement, and we started with a small team. Our tech department likes to call it "Feeding the rabbits." We went to the one school that needed and wanted the most support, were able to show success, and after a year of showing success, or two years, we're seeing the biggest thing was disciplinary data. We went from literally several thousand to several hundred disciplinary interventions in less than two years, and that now became something that we could show our other schools. Then we added three more schools and then so on and so on until we expanded to our entire district of 17 schools in 21 buildings.

Dan Bridges: I'm going to add to that for Naperville, if I can, simply because I think... When we talk about our process and how we got to where we are, Lisa had this video, you may have seen it, you find it on YouTube, the dancing man. Leadership

Lessons Learned from the Dancing Guy, or something like that, which you start with defining the goal, building the why and understanding why it's so important, and making it really easy to follow. That's what you need to do, really set your purpose and your why, and then as you start to go down that road, make it easy to follow and then nurture those first followers and those people that are really ready to get going, because it will build some momentum to where you get more and more buy-in, you finally reach that tipping point. I'm going to add to that then, and I can't understate this at all, is get connected.

Whether it be through people that you've just met through this webinar, the organization supporting this webinar. I'm the co-lead for AASA's SEL cohort, Lisa's on the advisory board, so finding resources and districts out there that are doing the work. I know, within the chat, there was a link put to our website and all of the resources that we've created. Go there, take it, and then follow up and call us and ask us what you want. We believe in the commitment to sharing the work that we've done, but remember, context matters. It's worked here, but you can take what we've used, modify it, and use it to support you.

Greta Colombi:

I love that, Dan. We really are a community and being able to lean on each other and learn from each other. Thank you. Okay, we have another... A bit more general question. "What are some evidence-based strategies that are grounded in restorative justice and student-led that you have experience with?" We heard a little bit from panel one about some of your strategies, I'm just wondering if they might have... Especially the restorative justice, restorative practices focus.

Rachel Nelson:

Okay. I am just yelled from the other room, "This one's you," so I guess I'll be taking this one. Yeah. I think one of the things that's really nice about restorative practices specifically is that there actually is a lot of really lovely evidence-based research now, because it has been so popular for the last handful of years. I don't know the name of the document or exactly how to find it off the top of my head, but I do know that WestEd actually has a really great evidence-based research summary of this. I don't know, Krystal or Christina, if that's an easy thing for us to link, but that's something that I've used before when I was putting my class together, I know. It's very nice, because it just cuts through a lot of the... It does the research for you, one of those nice summary documents.

If we're able to share that, that seems like it could be a really nice thing for the person asking that question. I will say I like to think of... Restorative practices is on a spectrum of things that need formalized training versus things that are just incredibly easy to pick up right off the bat. Again, it is one of those things that, if you have teachers that are doing a really good job, having strong relationships with other faculty members, with their administrators, and with the students, they're probably already doing a lot of those things, so often, it's just putting vocabulary to things that are already happening.

I know one of the things that can be extremely helpful and very easy to implement is just doing community circles and classes. This is basically building

some of the proactive muscles for students to get really comfortable expressing themselves and taking up space and naming their needs in front of each other and in front of whoever the stakeholders are. I would really recommend doing some community circles, that's a very easy google, and it also doesn't require very much training to get going. It's a good way for the students to learn the joy of listening to each other also and how to build off of each other's thoughts, especially around social-emotional issues. That's a really, really easy one, but that document, I know, also can point you in a direction of a lot of really valuable resources as well.

Greta Colombi: Thank you so much, Rachel. Lisa.

Lisa Xagas: Yeah. First of all, Rachel, I'd love to come observe your classroom. I am so impressed with you, so I'm sure it's an amazing space. What I'll just build off of what Rachel said is the restorative continuum. Those restorative questions, we actually give to staff on a note card, they can put them on their name tag, which is helpful to them, doesn't require a lot of training. The other strategy that we always recommend is a strategy called "Two by 10," which means that you spend two minutes talking to a student, nothing about school, just about their personal life or about your personal life, for 10 consecutive days. If you miss a day, you have to start over, so it even involves calling them on a weekend. That strategy is research-based to build relationships and it is one of the first ones we share with teachers, because they have the power and control to do it.

Greta Colombi: Excellent. I think we could go on for a very long time. Unfortunately, we need to close up today's event. Please, thank... I just want to, again, thank our speakers for just your authentic, thoughtful, engaging responses and discussion on this very important topic, and special thanks to our audience as well. I just want to say thank you again and we greatly appreciate your time today, and we hope that we'll see you again on a future Lessons from the Field webinar. We encourage you to stay with us for our next... Join us for our next events and to please complete the feedback form. Thank you so very much again, and we hope that you all have a wonderful rest of the day. Thank you so very much.