

Full Value Communities – The Foundation of Safe and Civil Schools

Implementation – Three Years and Counting

Well before legislation was passed in New Jersey to address Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying the Kinnelon Public Schools initiated a district wide character education program called **Full Value**. Over the last three years many staff experienced four days of immersive summer training in the theory and application of this model. Where the program is being implemented with fidelity, teachers are reporting a significant reduction in disciplinary issues within the classroom and a significant increase in student self regulation. The building principals are uniformly supportive of implementing Full Value in their schools.

Issues such as bullying and harassment can be seen as symptoms of a school climate that does not *systematically* teach and reinforce pro-social behavior. Students need to learn how to identify a set of behavioral norms or core values that are applied to every aspect of their school day, from the classroom to the lunchroom. Further, students need to be provided with implementation tools that provide safe and supportive opportunities for confronting behaviors that are devaluing and demeaning. In order to be truly effective any intervention strategy must be applied across all schools in order to insure a common language and process.

The Full Value community provides guided opportunities for students to co-create behavioral norms, develop a common language to discuss social and emotional concerns, and define a group processing structure to confront and resolve negative behaviors and applaud pro-social ones.

In each classroom, students work with their teachers to create a behavioral contract called “The Being”. The Being can take whatever form the class decides on together. Inside the Being are placed values that the class agrees to practice. Practice comes from behavioral interactions of a typical classroom day, as well as via special activities designed to teach core values and to process the outcomes of the group experience. The core values that students select are universal in nature and tend to reflect such concepts as trust, listening, honesty, love, compassion, cooperation, friendship, etc. Outside of the Being are placed distracters that get in the way of implementing pro-social behaviors. The umbrella for the creation of the Being resides in the following six **Full Values**:

- Be Here
- Be Safe
- Be Honest
- Set Goals
- Let Go and Move On
- Caring for Self and Others

Students are taught the skill of calling group in order provide a structured communication forum for discussing all manner of issues with their peers. Teachers also use the calling group process for classroom management. The various groups are:

- Check in
- Information
- Feelings
- Feedback
- Celebration

Initially teachers control the calling group process, but as students become more empowered and secure, they take increasing responsibility for calling them.

The district is committed to training all staff in this model including administration, certified staff, cafeteria aides, bus drivers, and maintenance staff. Primary prevention activities take time and significant effort to implement and sustain, but pay enormous dividends over time. In order to make this a truly systemic intervention, we hope to provide opportunities for parents to learn more about this approach.



Mrs. Tinney's Second Grade Class Being



A Bulletin Board at Stonybrook honoring students who practice "Be Here"