

Counselor Chat: Return to School Discussion Notes August 11, 2020

Small Group Activity

Creation of a new emotion word - name two or three feelings you are having about starting school and combine them to create a new feeling word - Lynn (Emotionary idea from <https://www.instituteforsel.net/> training provided to ISKL New Faculty July 2020)



There are so many feelings surrounding the return to school this year. It's important for our students, and for us, to know that we can be holding more than one feeling at the same time. Think of two or three feelings you are experiencing around the opening of school. Put those words together to create an entirely new feeling word. Example = Excited + Worried + Concerned = Exorrcerned

- **What is something your school has done, is doing or planning on doing that you feel is strong/positive?**
 - Communication with the community
 - Created a landing page for all families to get all information in one place
 - Getting parents on Google Classrooms so they can help their child be organized
 - Survey families and teachers using Panorama
 - Counselors using Google Classrooms for curriculum, SEL work
- **How are you addressing staff and faculty transitions and wellbeing?**
 - Administrators are calling their teachers for 1-1 talks
 - Lots of check in activities with teachers like Lynn's and processing of emotions and feelings for the year



- Weekly after school meeting with teachers as a support group
- **How are you addressing SEL and student transitions?**
 - Focusing on supporting the transition for 6th graders
 - Online student orientations
 - JAM board - Students are sharing what are they enjoying the most, what are the challenges - The counselor is providing students with tips and orienting students on how to be successful in middle school or at school in general (new students)
 - Wellness checks with students - Counselor sends a 7 question survey every tuesday and friday - Included in this is a question: Do you want to meet with a counsellor or teacher?
 - [Sample survey to MS students](#)
 - What tools do you have for SELF and PARENT referrals?? How can you best open up channels of communication to connect with students.
 - Mindfulness lessons 3x/week
 - Advisory changed to be with 5 students/group to create more supportive relationships
 - Weekly Themes each day (Wellness Wednesday, Organization Thursday, etc.)
 - Creating lessons for teachers to deliver that are 15 minutes in length and are presented every day to students
 - Student buddies
- **How are you addressing your community of parents?**
 - Parent presentations to help parents prepare for the year and manage anxieties at home. The approach now is proactive and the approach will in change based on the model (online, in person, hybrid)
 - Grade level “meet and greets” and book studies/clubs with parents. Book ideas:
 - [Freeing your child from anxiety](#)
 - [Whole Brain Child](#)
 - Open Friday talks for the parents with counselors
 - Weekly on-line parent drop-ins (they can see what is happening in the class and ask questions of the teachers)
 - Connect with parent buddies



- **How much are you using Trauma Informed practices in the classroom? What are you using..?**
 - <https://child.tcu.edu/free-tbri-tic/#sthash.lhtelY3H.Lwk29e9v.dpbs>
 - Highly recommend the course above for counselors and teachers for tools to support classroom management, transitions and reminders about how students think and caring for their basic needs