



NEWSLETTER

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MAY 2026

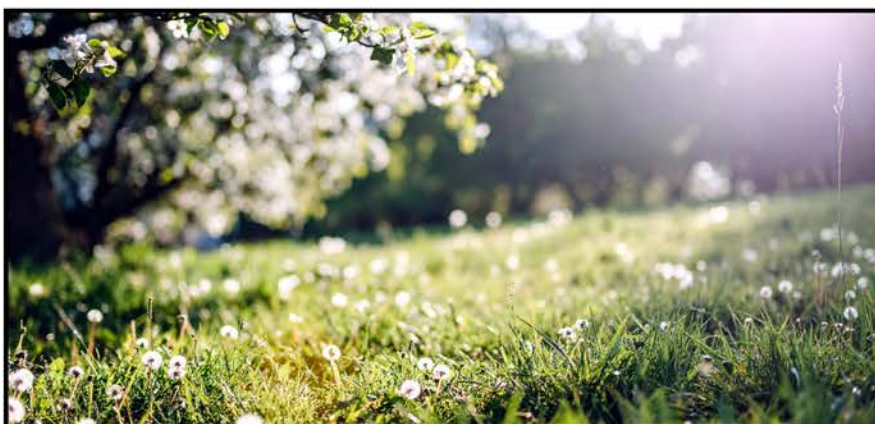
WHAT ARE WE CARRYING INTO SUMMER?

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: WHAT CLIMATE ARE YOU SPREADING?

Let's face it – there are many factors both in and outside of our control that impact school climate. However, intention, commitment, and persistence can lead to meaningful and lasting transformation. If you are working toward a school or classroom that feels good to be in – one where addressing behavior doesn't feel like a daily exhaustion – restorative practices offer a powerful path forward. At its core, restorative practices are not simply alternatives to punishment. They are a proactive approach to building a culture centered on relationships, mutual respect, and accountability.

They shift the focus from:

- "What rule was broken?" to
- "What happened and what led to the behavior, who was impacted, and how do we repair the harm?"



May is a month of transition. The end of the school year is in sight, routines begin to shift, and there is a mix of excitement, fatigue, and reflection in both classrooms and homes. This time of year can bring out both the best and the most challenging behaviors because energy, expectations, and emotions are all running high.

As we move closer to summer, it creates a natural opportunity to pause and reflect – not just on what has been accomplished, but on what will carry forward. The tone we've set, the relationships we've built, and the environments we've created don't end with the school year – they continue to shape how students see themselves, others, and the world around them.

So as the year comes to a close, it's worth asking: What are we carrying into summer?

PUTTING IT INTO PERSPECTIVE

Whether you are:

- A teacher wanting to create a classroom where students feel safe to share and engage
 - A school social worker or counselor looking for ways to build empathy and guide meaningful dialogue
 - A principal or administrator concerned about attendance, behavior, or student disconnection
- ... the common thread is relationships.

What if there was one area of focus that could positively impact all of these outcomes? Restorative practices center on a single, powerful idea: The quality of relationships is the foundation of everything else.

When relationships are strong:

- Students feel a greater sense of belonging
- Accountability becomes meaningful rather than forced
- Conflict becomes an opportunity for growth
- School becomes a place students want to be

This is not about adding one more thing – it is about shifting how we approach the work already being done. Let the quality of relationships be the seed that carries through your entire school ecosystem.



NEWSLETTER

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MAY 2026 - PAGE 2

BRINGING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TO YOUR SCHOOL

Project FRONTIER offers active, experiential training in restorative practices and circles designed to help educators and school teams move from understanding to implementation.

In partnership with Colby Community College, Project FRONTIER is excited to offer this professional learning opportunity for educators and school staff. Participants will receive three (3) college credit hours through CCC, and for a limited time, this training is available at no cost to participants. Whether you attend as an individual, with a colleague, or as a team, participants engage in hands-on learning that brings these concepts to life in real school settings.



WHAT TO EXPECT: HYBRID TRAINING FORMAT

This training is offered through a hybrid model designed to provide both flexibility and meaningful, hands-on learning. Participants will complete self-paced online modules that open a few weeks prior to the training date. These modules provide the foundational understanding needed to fully engage in the in-person experience and should be completed before attending.

- The in-person training, held at NKESC in Oakley, runs from 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM and focuses on application, practice, and real-world implementation. Lunch will be provided. This format allows participants to come prepared, engage more deeply, and leave with practical strategies they can begin using immediately in their classrooms and schools.

Upcoming Hybrid Training Opportunities:

- June 3, 2026 @ NKESC
 - Online modules open May 4
- July 8, 2026 @ NKESC
 - Online modules open June 1
- September 23, 2026 @ NKESC
 - Online modules open September 2

To register or learn more: projectfrontier@nkesc.org

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MAY 2026 - PAGE 3

SUPPORTING HEALTHY TECHNOLOGY HABITS: FAMILY CONNECTION & CELL PHONE AWARENESS

As we move into summer, many families begin navigating increased screen time and device use. Recent guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes the importance of creating healthy boundaries around technology — especially during times when structure naturally decreases. Rather than focusing only on restriction, the goal is balance, communication, and modeling.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Unstructured or excessive screen time can impact:

- Sleep patterns
- Mood and emotional regulation
- Attention and focus

IN-PERSON SOCIAL CONNECTION TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Create clear, consistent expectations
- Prioritize device-free times (meals, car rides, before bed)
- Encourage in-person connection and activity
- Model healthy habits as adults
- Keep communication open and ongoing

To explore this more, visit HealthyChildren.org at <https://tinyurl.com/yvzzzz5v>.



When technology is approached as a shared responsibility rather than a constant conflict, it creates more opportunities for trust and connection.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER

As summer approaches, routines shift and schedules become more flexible. While this can be refreshing, it can also create challenges for consistency, structure, and connection. This transition is an opportunity to be intentional.

Small, consistent efforts can make a big impact:

- Maintaining simple routines
- Prioritizing connection time
- Creating space for conversation
- Encouraging balance between activity and rest

Summer doesn't need to be busy to be meaningful. Often, the most impactful moments are the simplest ones.





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MAY 2026 - PAGE 4

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental Health Awareness Month is a reminder that mental health is just as important as physical health – for both youth and adults. One of the biggest challenges to getting support is the stigma that still surrounds mental health. When individuals feel judged, embarrassed, or unsure where to turn, they are less likely to seek help.

Reducing stigma matters because it creates space for:

- Honest conversations
- Early support
- Stronger relationships
- Healthier communities

Simple ways to support mental health:

- Check in and truly listen
- Use supportive, non-judgmental language
- Share resources openly
- Model that asking for help is okay



Creating a culture where people feel safe to talk about mental health is one of the most powerful forms of prevention.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs support, help is available:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - Available 24/7 for immediate support. Call or text 988 or chat via 988lifeline.org.
- High Plains Mental Health Center - Serving Northwest Kansas communities
 - Call the crisis hotline 24/7 at (800) 432-0333 | <https://hpmhc.com/contact-us/>

FINAL THOUGHT

As the school year comes to a close, it's easy to focus on finishing tasks and pushing to the end. But this time also offers an opportunity to reflect on what truly lasts. The relationships we build, the tone we set, and the environments we create extend far beyond the classroom. The climate we create is the climate we carry forward.

– Project FRONTIER

