



*A Community of Learners*

## **Informational Memo - Summer Institute SEL**

TO: School Board  
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Barry Rodgers, *Director of Innovation, Teaching, and Learning*  
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August 26, 2019

### **Overview & Background**

On June 12 and 13, The Winnetka Public Schools, with funding support from the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, hosted a two day Summer Institute, *Being Well and Well Being: Pursuing Meaning, Purpose, and Coherence*. The event was planned by the District Social Emotional Learning (SEL) committee with the support of Tammy Kerouac, Julie Pfeffer, Barry Rodgers, Beth Martin, and Betty Weir.

Approximately 80 teachers and administrators participated in a two-day Institute with presenters that included Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Classroom Teachers. Each day of the Institute began with an optional wellness session followed by a Keynote Speaker. Multiple breakout sessions were offered each day with a reflection at the end of the day to generate ideas for next steps. The first day of the institute was focused on adult well-being, the second day was centered on building the mindset and strategies to best support our students. Feedback from the Institute was overwhelmingly positive and indicated a desire for additional support and leadership around SEL.

*"I am extremely grateful that our District understands the importance of addressing the social and emotional well being of our students (and our teachers.) And that this must be in place before learning can happen. That our Summer Institute was focused on this was truly amazing. The keynote speakers and the sessions were all inspirational, informative and helpful in terms of understandings and strategies to employ in our classrooms with our students. A big thank you to our Administration*

*and all of the people involved in organizing this Summer Institute!”*

*“I’d like to thank those that spent countless hours organizing this fine summer institute. I also would like to share that I feel fortunate to have been able to listen to the outstanding speakers and presenters that the district was able to find. This is an institute that will stay with me AND there are about 5 books that I want to read as well!!!”*

*“I loved every minute of it! Thanks for bringing in such awesome speakers! It was unique because it’s something that applies to all of us, both in school and in our personal lives. Namaste!”*

## Session Descriptions

Compassion Fatigue: What is it and how do we counter it?	Mary Jo Barrett is the Executive Director and co-founder of The Center for Contextual Change, Ltd. Mary Jo will introduce participants to the concept of Compassion Fatigue, will discuss what the symptoms are and what teachers can do to prevent, counter and heal it.
Fostering Resilient Learners	Finding ways to promote the awesome in our youth and to build on their potential is essential for educators. In this engaging, relevant, and practical keynote session, learn from educator Wendy Turner about the importance of incorporating trauma-invested practices in the school setting. This session is designed to engage education professionals, community support and parents around the importance of how they can empower their youth to be at their best.
Investigating Our Capacity to Connect with Ourselves and Our Student: Self-Awareness + Co-Regulation = Attuned Classroom	In this workshop we will help teachers develop strategies to identify emotional states by attending to physical sensations that serve as early indicators of arousal. With the use of sensory modalities and mindfulness tools we will explore ways to regulate ourselves and the youth we serve. The objective is to build attention and focus to our internal state, to develop the ability to respond versus react to stressful situations, to make choices regarding our response to interpersonal stressors that resonate with our core values, to be kinder to and more accepting of ourselves and to build gratitude for what we accomplish to enhance our relationships with our students.
Regulation: The Essential Ingredient to Achievement and Learning	Regulation is absolutely essential to promote both learning and pro-social behaviors. Gain a deeper understanding about what drives regulation across environments and relationships. Learn

	more about how to harness your student's regulation through a variety of strategies and interaction patterns. Help your students better understand their own regulation needs and how to better communicate their needs across settings and relationships.
Self-awareness: We Matter and How We Conduct Ourselves Matters	Participants will reflect on their personal missions as they analyze WHY they do what they do. They will explore ways they can stay grounded and true to who they are and will learn effective communication strategies for engaging with others in trauma invested ways.
Social Emotional Learning and Social Cognition	This session includes an introduction to the Social Thinking© Methodology and the connection between social cognition and social emotional learning. Examples of how Social Thinking© is directly taught and embedded in the curriculum in D36 classrooms and other settings will be shared.
Teaching and the Art of Narrative Identity	In this reflective and engaging 90-minute breakout session, participants will have the opportunity to mindfully practice the art of narrative identity by unpacking and examining facets of their own life story. From the chapters of one's past to the reliability of oneself as a narrator in the present, participants will explore the formative experiences that structure their sense of self, value, meaning, happiness and truth. The workshop will conclude with a discussion of how narrative identity work might transform how we envision schools, classrooms, and what it means to teach.

During the week following the Institute Days, the District SEL Committee and members of the Institute Day Planning Team met to debrief the Summer Institute and discuss next steps. This discussion validated the findings of the teacher survey and resulted in a recommendation to integrate SEL into our District and school goals and a request for ongoing professional development in this area.

### **Next Steps**

After two days together, participants left for the summer with a greater understanding of the importance of social emotional learning and wellness for their students and for themselves. Teachers are looking forward to collaboratively generating plans for leading positive change. The feedback from the Summer Institute affirmed the decision to make SEL a Strategic Planning goal for the 2019-2020 School year.

On June 19, the School Board and District administrators held a workshop to create common understandings of SEL and will continue the work throughout the school year. To steward this important work, the Winnetka Public Schools will be

partnering with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to ensure that Social Emotional Learning is actively taught and modeled throughout the school district.