

The Cambridge School District prioritizes the development of inclusive learning environments. Inclusive learning environments exist when all students have a sense of belonging and feel safe in school. In every school, there are students who have mental health concerns, have experienced trauma, or have not acquired the skills they need to respond to the social and behavioral challenges they face each day. As a District, we must respond to the needs of students and staff through a process whereby students and teachers build strong, respectful relationships founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences, learn to critically examine root causes of inequity, and develop collaborative solutions to community and societal problems.

Social and emotional development is critical to academic and lifelong success. For every student to be successful, a coordinated system of culturally responsive behavior instruction and supports throughout the Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 12 experience is necessary.

The District will utilize a framework that includes universal exposure to practices that promote high levels of wellness and teaches students to confront injustice and inequity:

Tier I - Universal Practices: Relationship skills, resiliency, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, and conflict resolution.

Tier II - Targeted Services: Early identification, screening, progress monitoring, effective individual and group interventions, and co-planning strategies with students, families, and community providers.

Tier III - Intensive Services: Individualized plans/strategies for students including School-Based Mental Health services and a coordinated system of care. The role of the school and school student services staff is not to treat students, but to assist and refer.

With this philosophy and framework on social-emotional learning and well-being in mind, the District will:

1. Maintain a sustainable social/emotional/behavioral framework across the district to aid in consistency in identifying, implementing, and streamlining efforts to respond to a wide range of student needs.
2. Prioritize and implement instructional strategies and social-emotional learning practices that interrupt systemic injustices and ensure all students' and families' cultures and identities are valued in order to eliminate predictable patterns in discipline data by gender, race, disability status, or any other factor.
3. Cultivate a positive school climate for students and staff.
4. Deliver instruction on social, emotional, and behavioral skills to students. This starts with teaching and developing clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and continues with ongoing instruction on the skills our students need in school and life.

5. Implement positive practices that promote learning from challenges and conflicts. This does not mean there are no consequences for behaviors. Rather, the responses will always include opportunities to learn from the event or situation.
6. Prioritize and focus staff development on SEL and well-being integration into all curricular and extracurricular instruction; thereby enhancing teacher/student interactions with positive practices and approaches proven to increase positive behaviors, build a more inclusive school climate, and improve social, emotional and academic learning outcomes.
7. Elicit input from families and the community on the social/emotional/behavioral framework or supports and provide ongoing training and support for District families and community members.

LEGAL REFERENCE:

CROSS REFERENCE:

APPROVED: 5/17/2021

REVISED:

POLICY #365