

Intercom

Mission: "Empower every learner to thrive."

Vision: "Together, our strong relationships build inclusive, collaborative, and innovative environments that create agency and inspire a passion for learning, excellence, and discovery."



Student Support Services—Why SEL?

By Mike Yantes, BPS District Social Worker

I was recently watching a Ted talk from Rita Pierson – [Every Kid needs a Champion](#). It is a very popular video often shared at educational conferences and trainings. There are many great lessons in this short speech. My take-away is the importance of relationships in learning. Relationship building, like all social skills, is learned through modeling and explicit instruction. Not so different than the way that core academic subjects are taught every day in our schools.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has become a very popular topic in schools today. But just what is it? Well, it is defined as the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. This definition is provided by the Collaborative of Academic, Social and Emotional Learning or CASEL. CASEL was founded in 1994 with the goal of establishing high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning as an essential part of preschool through high school education. There are five basic competencies to measure SEL:

1. Self-Awareness – The ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
2. Self-Management – The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
3. Social Awareness – The ability to understand the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.
4. Relationship Skills – The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
5. Responsible Decision Making – The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interaction across diverse situations.

Bismarck Public Schools incorporates Social and Emotional Learning into Core instruction for all students through the use of evidence-based curriculums.

[Second Step](#) is provided to students in grades K-8. [Resilience for Youth](#) is provided to students in grades 9-12. The benefits of Social Emotional Learning are well documented. It advances educational equity, increases pro-social behavior, increases academic performance, improves school climate, increases resilience, and teaches the coping skills students need to manage the challenges they face. Future employers of our students often list social and emotional skills or "soft skills" as the most important factor to a successful employee. In

CALENDAR

4/2	Good Friday, no school
4/5	Parent-Teacher Conference Day Off, no school
4/12	School Board Meeting, 5:15 pm

NEWS TO KNOW

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

When you are searching for a Vaccine Clinic, go to <https://www.ndvax.org> and select "COVID-19 Vaccination" in criteria, not "Vaccination." For a screenshot, [click here](#).

BPS employee Sam's Club sign-up

In order for BPS employees to get the special Sam's Club discount, schools and/or the district must have an on-site membership drive for new or renewing members. Not all of our schools will be doing this, so there will be a general sign up at Hughes, Board Room 1-2, on Tuesday, March 30, 3:30-5:30 pm. No RSVP necessary, just stop by. Deals include:

- [New Savings Membership](#): \$45 gift card. Come to the event or sign up at [http://samsclub.com/\\$45offer](http://samsclub.com/$45offer).
- [New Plus Membership](#): \$50 off an in-club purchase of \$100 or more
- [Members Upgrading to Plus](#): \$10 gift card
- [Plus Membership Renewal \(with membership expiring within 60 days of the event\)](#): free rotisserie chicken

*You have 60 days after the sign-up event to redeem these offers.

New Health Program

There's a big difference between knowing how to get healthy and actually doing it. Omada provides the support and accountability you need to connect those dots. You'll get a personalized program that's based on science, backed by a professional health coach, supportive peer group, and easy-to-use technology.

addition, promoting SEL helps our students develop skills needed to express our values as a district: Excellence, Inclusion, Leadership, and Innovation.

Teaching Social and Emotional Skills to our students isn't "another thing" added to our plate. It is the plate. Social skills are foundational to everything we ask of our students. We are always engaged in teaching social and emotional skills every day. We teach them by setting classroom expectations, helping students solve problems, modeling good behavior and countless other ways through each interaction.

Sometimes, learning takes practice. For some of us, especially me, it takes quite a bit of practice. Social Skills are learned over time with lots of re-teaching. Dr. Stuart Ablon proposes a model of [Collaborative Problem Solving](#) based on the premise that "kids do well if they can" rather than "kids do well if they want to." If we shift our paradigm to view problem behaviors as a lack of skill rather than a lack of will, what would that mean for how we choose to intervene? How would teaching SEL help kids do well?

SEL will help empower students with the skills they need to thrive at Bismarck Public Schools. I would encourage you to explore ways you can incorporate SEL into your classroom. You can do that by going to [CASEL.org](#) or asking a member of Student Support Services for more ideas.

SUB OF THE MONTH AWARD



Congratulations to Lacey Schlafmann our March Substitute Teacher of the Month! Each month, one of our guest teachers is chosen as the Sub of the Month and featured in the *Intercom*. Each winner receives a gift bag of prizes donated by Capital Credit Union, Eide Chrysler Ford, Which Wich, and the BPS Foundation.

Let's get to know Lacey a little better!

- How long have you been subbing for BPS? I started subbing in the fall of 2018 after moving to Bismarck.
- What did you do prior to becoming a substitute teacher? I worked on labor and delivery as a RN and then was a stay-at-home mom after I had kids.
- Do you have a favorite grade/subject in which you sub? I enjoy teaching all grade levels.
- If you could live anywhere, where would it be? If I could live anywhere, I think I would enjoy either Colorado or Arizona.
- What's the best vacation you ever took and why? Best vacation was going on a cruise with family and getting to swim with the dolphins.
- What do you like to do on a day off? Well it's not something I like to do on my day off but I usually clean the house. I do enjoy walking my dogs or just chilling with them.
- If you could have an exotic animal as a pet, which would it be? We have a temperamental cat that out of nowhere will attack you, so I think I'm good on exotic pets.
- How do you take your coffee? I drink my coffee black.

All at no cost to you. Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) services provided by Omada are a benefit covered at 100% to you or your adult family members who are enrolled in a Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota group health plan and at risk for type two diabetes. DPP services offered by your local health care provider may also be covered at 100%. Please check with your provider if you are interested in their DPP services to determine if they are participating in offering this benefit.

For more information on the plan and instructions on how to apply, go to: <https://www.bismarckschools.org/Page/4019>
For questions, contact HR at 323-4072.

YMCA Strong Kids Week!

BPS is once again participating in the YMCA Strong Kids Week Campaign April 12-16. For that week, BPS staff can pay \$10 or more to wear jeans & sneakers and support the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign. Give donations to your building secretary. Make checks payable to the YMCA. Secretaries, please place all cash and checks in an envelope marked YMCA and hand deliver it to Accounting or send it in the zippered pouch. Hughes staff can give their donations to Shonna in Accounting. Thanks for supporting kids!

Live Your Legacy 5K/10K

The public is invited to register to participate in the Live Your Legacy 5K/10K event to support Brave the Shave. It will take place Sunday, April 25, at Sertoma Park Community Center, with registration at 1:30 and race at 3 pm. The event is being sponsored by the LHS Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). Registration is \$25 and includes a shirt on race day if you register by April 8. Register at <https://donate.bravetheshave.net/Campaign/LiveYourLegacy>. For more information, go to the Facebook event page <https://fb.me/e/16P7BooGY>.

COMMUNITY CORNER

Read: The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) March newsletter can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3rqjOxk>.

UTTC FREE Virtual Workshop Series: United Tribes Land Grant Department and the Intertribal Research and Resource Center invite you to participate in an upcoming all virtual workshop

- What was your first job? For my first job I worked at the BSC bookstore, the Blast program, and the YMCA daycare.
- What's your definition of success? Setting goals and meeting those goals. It could be something really little or something really big.
- Who is your hero? My heroes are my parents. I grew up on a dairy farm. We had to milk cows before and after school. We worked out in the field. I think this all helped with giving me a strong work ethic.
- If you could have a super power, what would it be? I think it would be awesome to be able to fly.
- What's your favorite thing about substitute teaching? I love the flexibility of subbing and being able to meet so many great students, teachers, and I can't forget those secretaries.

series: **Culturally Important Plants and the North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings** starting March 31. Visit the [workshop webpage](#) to learn more about the series, registration details, and welcome materials. **Participants have the option to earn continuing education units.**

Attention 4th-8th grade teachers: The Bismarck Mayor's Human Relations Committee will host a Human Rights Essay and Poetry contest for students in 4th and 5th grades, calling upon them to write an essay or a poem that fosters respect for Human Rights. Students in grades 6 thru 8, are invited to write an essay or a poem about their concept of leadership for Human Rights. Entries must be postmarked or emailed by 5 pm April 16. Limit entries to one page. For more information, visit www.bismarcknd.gov/humanrelationscommittee. One outstanding essay and poem from each age grouping will be selected. Submit entries to: City of Bismarck, Administration, Human Relations Committee Essay Contest, 221 N 5th St., Bismarck, ND 58506-5503 or email entries to: bismarckadmin@bismarcknd.gov.

NDPERS LIVE Events: NDPERS benefit experts will host their annual employee events virtually. More communications will be shared in the upcoming months.

- April 22: Lunch & Learn - *Understanding Disability Benefits*
- May 18: Pre-Retirement Education Day 1 - *focused on retirement benefit options*
- May 19: Pre-Retirement Education Day 2 - *focused on insurance and legal planning*

For all upcoming events, visit their [website](#).

To view member education videos, go to <https://ndpers.nd.gov/i-want-to/attend-training-events/actives-retirees-training-opportunities/>.

Send submissions for the intercom to community_relations@bismarckschools.org, 323-4092.