

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE

Comprehensive Social Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program

It is the mission of the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) to ensure that every student develops the skills and knowledge to pursue a productive and fulfilling life. To truly live this mission, it is essential that our schools are safe, welcoming, respectful and nurturing. Such a culture is created when everyone in the school is aligned to requisite beliefs, values, and behaviors. Children need to learn these beliefs, values and behaviors, and adults need to model, guide, and explicitly teach them to children using intentional strategies in order to establish a culture conducive to learning. This is essential because learning is inextricably linked to school culture.

Culture is a complex element of a school. We have created a comprehensive social emotional learning and bullying prevention and intervention program to nurture school culture and provide the knowledge, skills, procedures and processes required to foster positive student behavior in support of learning. With the effective implementation of the comprehensive program, we envision all Brookline schools reflecting a safe, welcoming, respectful and nurturing school culture that supports the development of all children through their preK-12 experiences.

Criteria for selection and development of the comprehensive program were established in order to support the best implementation throughout the school system at this time.

The program must ...

- Show strong evidence as research-based
- Align with the Public Schools of Brookline Strategic Plan (vision, mission, core values and goals)
- Be developmentally appropriate for all students across all grades, preK-12
- Correlate to objectives, align to current curricula, and have an impact on the classroom that is manageable
- Meet quality standards – real-life connections, current and accurate, contain opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving
- Be possible to implement effectively for success, taking the following into consideration:
 - ✓ Professional development required
 - ✓ Impact on classroom curriculum and integration of curriculum
 - ✓ Budget
 - ✓ Supporting resources required (technology, materials and supplies)
 - ✓ Teacher readiness and support

The PSB Comprehensive Social Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program is characterized by the following program elements in the specified grade(s). The descriptions and summaries of these programs are taken directly from the program websites.

Social Emotional Learning

- [*Responsive Classroom*](#) (K-5) [PDF](#)
- [*Developmental Designs*](#) (6-8) [PDF](#)
- [*Facing History and Ourselves*](#) (8) [PDF](#)
- [*Social Thinking*](#) (K-12, as appropriate) [PDF](#)

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- [*Olweus*](#) (K-12) [PDF](#)
- [*Second Step*](#) (7-8)
- Understanding Disabilities Program (4) [PDF](#)

Program Elements

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students acquire the skills necessary to be respectful and responsible members of their school community and the ever-evolving global society. Effective SEL programs emphasize the development of five core social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Within the comprehensive PSB plan there are two SEL programs that will serve as the foundation for this learning: *Responsive Classroom* and *Developmental Design*. In addition and where appropriate, the program *Social Thinking* will be advanced across the schools for students who exhibit pragmatic language or social communication difficulty and/or are on the autism spectrum.

Responsive Classroom, Grades K-5

Responsive Classroom is a widely used, research-based approach to elementary education that shows evidence of increasing academic achievement, decreasing problem behaviors, improving social skills, and leads to more high-quality instruction. It is an approach that emphasizes the development of social and emotional competencies in an effort to increase student engagement across the social and academic realm and decrease disciplinary problems.

Responsive Classroom began in Brookline in 2001 through the support of a Brookline Education Foundation (BEF) Teacher Grant. Since then, the BEF has supported 137 PSB educators who have received *Responsive Classroom* training. The Brookline Education Foundation helped seed this initiative and continues to offer generous support as the PSB moves towards its goal of training every K-5 educator in the philosophy and practices of *Responsive Classroom*. In addition, we are currently in the process of supporting the training of a Brookline teacher as a national facilitator so that we will be able to better serve our internal needs.

Developmental Designs, Grades 6-8

Just as *Responsive Classroom* provides a highly effective social curriculum that emphasizes social, emotional and academic growth in a safe school environment at the K-5 level, *Developmental Designs (DD)* targets grades 6-8. The two programs together provide a consistent framework through the K – 8 schools. The *Developmental Designs* approach aims to support the development of a school community where members are invested in the goal of supporting each other, students and adults alike. Furthermore, it strives to build a safe and respectful environment where students build trust, gain perspective and ultimately become empowered members of their community. Once again, the Brookline Education Foundation has been a partner in advancing our SEL agenda by supporting the initial implementation of *Developmental Designs* within the school system. With BEF support, we have been able to sponsor week-long institutes for Brookline educators. Only recently begun, we now have fifty-eight teachers and five administrators in five of the K-8 schools trained in *Developmental Designs*.

Social Thinking

Before people can successfully interact on a social level, *Social Thinking* must occur. *Social Thinking* refers to the consideration of emotions, points of view, responses and beliefs of others before social exchange occurs. While this is the way of relating to the people in every aspect of life, there are many who find themselves challenged by this process and need specific intervention in order to acquire the skills necessary to positively interact with others. The *Social Thinking* program teaches students how their behaviors have emotional affects on others and how behaviors affect their own emotions, responses to and relationships with others across different social contexts.

A *Social Thinking* Study Group introduced this program to Brookline schools in 2010. Special educators continue to learn more about this program and are implementing these practices with students across the school system.

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Facing History and Ourselves

In the Public Schools of Brookline, *Facing History and Ourselves* (FHAO) offers students the language and strategies to address adolescent challenges such as peer pressure, stereotyping and ostracism. The curricula also provide students with the opportunity to explore the moral choices made by individuals who had to decide whether to be bystanders or upstanders when confronted with unjust treatment of others. As a consequence of this learning, students develop enhanced interpersonal understandings and negotiating skills that contribute to increased intergroup tolerance and greater civic engagement in later life. All grade 8 students undertake a unit on the Holocaust and Human Behavior in Social Studies. At several schools, English/Language Arts and Social Studies teachers collaborate to create interdisciplinary learning experiences for 8th grade students. In addition, *The Good Citizen in the Good Society* course that is available at BHS was developed in collaboration with FHAO.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The Public Schools of Brookline has chosen the highly effective and research-based *Olweus* Bullying Prevention Program to implement in our schools. The goals of the program are to: reduce existing bullying problems among students; prevent new bullying problems; and achieve better peer relations at school. This whole-school, comprehensive program is used at the school, classroom and individual level and is designed to improve peer relations and make the school a safer and more positive place for students to learn and develop. The program features the establishment of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee, training for committee members and staff, regular class meetings and parent involvement.

Second Step

The *Second Step* program (a program of the Committee for Children) is effective at improving students' social and emotional knowledge and skills, prosocial attitudes, and behavior. The *Second Step* program reduces problem and aggressive behaviors by building the social and emotional competence that is crucial for academic success. *Second Step* has been piloted through Health classes across the PSB in grades 7 and 8.

Understanding Disabilities Program

Understanding Disabilities is a district-wide elementary level program that utilizes a nationally recognized, award-winning curriculum, *Understanding Our Differences*, to teach children to "see the person and not the disability." The program is designed to foster respect, tolerance, and compassion in elementary schools and communities at large and, in Brookline, is implemented at the 4th and 5th grade level. The approach is grounded in the belief that children are naturally curious about differences and that accurate information can be the difference between acceptance and discrimination. The program and curriculum help elementary school children to develop understanding and respect for fellow students and others with physical, sensory or developmental disabilities. This program is especially important as a strategy to support a group of students that may be targets of bullying more often. *Understanding Disabilities* has a long tradition in the PSB.

Program Websites:

Responsive Classroom:

www.responsiveclassroom.org

Developmental Designs:

http://www.originsonline.org/dd_index.php

Social Thinking:

<http://www.socialthinking.com/what-is-social-thinking/introduction>

Facing History and Ourselves:

<http://www.facing.org/>

Olweus:

http://www.Olweus.org/public/bullying_prevention_program.page

Second Step:

<http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/ssp/ms/>

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