

A CLOSER LOOK

AT THE BAINBRIDGE ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT | WINTER 2018 | ISSUE 1



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 303

STRONG MINDS, STRONG HEARTS, STRONG COMMUNITY

Getting to the heart of things: How Social and Emotional Health became a movement at BISD

When Superintendent Peter Bang-Knudsen took over the helm of the Bainbridge Island School District last year, he set out on a Listening Tour to discover what is working well in the district and what areas need improvement. After meeting with more than 500 people, themes emerged.

“Across the board, people sang the praises of the district’s high-quality staff and its robust educational programs. But time and time again, I heard there was a real need to address the social and emotional health and well-being of our students,” said Bang-Knudsen.



BISD staff share a laugh during the Social and Emotional Health training.



BISD’s focus on Social and Emotional Health has brought smiles to students and staff.

Bang-Knudsen scheduled a meeting with district officials and posed this question: **How can BISD help improve students’ Social and Emotional Health?**

“I knew the answer was a big one,” said Sheryl Belt, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. “It was going to take more than just purchasing new curriculum. We needed to implement a cultural shift.”

And with that, Belt spearheaded a task force to discover how to best implement Social and Emotional Health (SEH) in the schools. Community partners such as Bainbridge Schools Foundation, Bainbridge Youth Services, Healthy Youth Alliance and Raising Resilience quickly rose to help, as they too, were concerned about the well-being of students. With the input of BISD staff, student and community partners, a researched-based SEH program was developed and put in place this school year.

To launch this movement, BISD sought to build a solid foundation and trained

staff on ways to develop positive cultures. Staff from across the district and across departments received training from Clay Roberts, a nationally recognized educator known for his work in creating healthy school environments. At the training, Roberts demonstrated how to build and celebrate students’ key assets, how to model positive interpersonal skills and how to nurture relationships to create an inclusive and welcoming environment.

“For years, I’ve witnessed staff instinctively support students’ well-being. This is nothing new for educators,” said Bang-Knudsen. “However, this district-wide initiative provides us with a common language and a set of skills to move us from being good at it, to excelling at it.”

SEH is woven throughout the school day, and its impact is already being felt. Primary-grade students are learning how to name their emotions which leads to better self-awareness and self-regulation. Older students are learning about the power of words and how they affect emotions and behaviors.

(continued on reverse)

Wrote one parent:

My son, a new 7th grader, told me a story his teacher told him relating to the power of mean words. He was very touched and inspired, and I was, too. He also stopped me from continuing with some self-deprecating remarks I was making and told me that the power of mean words applies to how we talk to ourselves, too. It's pretty exciting to hear him applying lessons like these in novel ways... (we are) grateful for the school's emphasis on social and emotional health.



BHS seniors talk with students during Sakai's COHO Time, a time devoted to ensuring a positive school culture.

Bang-Knudsen is pleased with how the movement is taking off. "When I visit schools, I sense a widespread change. Signs in the hallways speak to a welcoming environment and social and emotional health is now

embedded into classroom lessons," he said. "Most of all, I'm hearing from teachers that this has been a much-welcomed addition to the schools."

Social and Emotional Health Research:

- Research shows that social and emotional health education — such as those that teach self- and social- awareness, self-management, and responsible decision making — are associated with students' long-term academic and career success.*
- Studies have identified benefits ranging from improved classroom behavior, increased reading and math achievement, higher graduation rates and increased ability to handle stress.**

*Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D. & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1): 405–432.

**Osher, David; Kidron, Yael; Brackett, Marc; Dymnicki, Allison; Jones, Stephanie & Weissberg, Roger, P. (2016). *Advancing the Science*



Orday elementary teacher Lois Walter shows off her BISSD STRONG Award to her kindergarten class. Lois was nominated for her warm heart and her engaging teaching style.

Nominations are being accepted for the award's Winter Quarter and community members are encouraged to nominate BISSD students and staff. Visit www.bisd303.org to complete the nomination form — it only takes a few minutes! All BISSD STRONG Award nominees receive a certificate and a letter that shares highlights from their nomination(s). Those selected as a BISSD STRONG Award winner also receive a plaque and additional recognition by the district.



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Thank you for being a well-informed member of our community!

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