



Mindfulness helps students focus

SEL Day brings awareness of activities taking place in schools

It only takes a minute. One minute a day to focus on breathing. One minute a day to relax. One minute a day to perform a random act of kindness.

On March 26, Davis School District celebrated International SEL Day. However, for many schools in the district, social and emotional learning (SEL) is about more than just a minute or even a day of celebration. It is now a part of their overall education.

What is SEL? Social and emotional learning is anything that helps children understand their emotions, manage their behavior and learn how to interact with others.

Kathleen Chronister, district director of Social Emotional Learning, said celebrating International SEL Day in the Davis School District had dual purposes. First, it celebrates social emotional learning that is occurring in schools. Second, it focuses on bringing an awareness in the community.

“SEL Day is actually a community celebration of social emotional learning,” Chronister said. “So we’re using it in our schools so that we can have better connections with our families and other community partners.

“It’s a day that we can come together where we can use common language around social emotional learning with our community partners as well as in our schools and with our families,” she added.

Schools were encouraged to find some way to celebrate

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Activities for community, family



• Go on a walk outside — breathe in the fresh air and use your senses to experience the environment;

• Read a book or listen to music — relax with a good book or your favorite song;

• Perform random acts of kindness — say

‘hi’ to someone, write a note to a friend or help someone having a rough day;

• Mindful breathing — pretend there is a hot slice of pizza in front of you by slowly breathing in to ‘smell’ the pizza and breathe out to cool it down;

• Play a game or sport — pull out your favorite board game or dust off the basketball for a fun way to improve self-esteem, promote sportsmanship and build relationships;

• Grateful challenge — write down five things you are grateful for each day;

• Mindful coloring — switch off any extraneous thoughts and focus on the moment;

• Practice yoga — spend 10 minutes meditating while performing simple yoga postures;

• Work on a craft — let the artist within you find a creative outlet.

Superintendency Message

District focuses on finishing strong as year end nears

As we welcome our 70,000 plus students back from Spring Break, we embark on the final few weeks of what has been the most challenging school year in



Carter

recent memory. As we enter the final quarter of the 2020–21 school year, let us finish strong.

Davis School District, due to the incredible work of our teachers, school administration, and support staff have served our students to ensure learning continues. All district employees have had the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. As I compare the

testing/vaccination process of our Davis County Health Department to other counties in Utah — and certainly other parts of the country — how grateful we are for its foresight and wisdom in its established processes.

After opening in a safe, hybrid schedule, we have had elementary students with in-person instruction

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Students display the results of a self-awareness exercise they participated in during SEL Day.

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social emotional learning. Some chose just one day to focus on various activities while others planned a variety of activities throughout the week. For many schools, the SEL also included faculty and staff projects to assist them in their self-care.

At Boulton Elementary, a counselor virtually visited classrooms and talked students through a mindful coloring activity. Each student was given a mandala to color. Calming music played as Counselor Shannon Struebing talked students through feelings of gratitude and happiness.

Ciara, a Hope Squad member at Central Davis Junior High, said her school chose two activities: origami paper folding and paper airplane folding. On the paper airplane, students wrote down a goal and then tossed it to express their feeling of gratitude for meeting that goal.

“I think it’s like a good thing to get them a little more happy and kind. It just has them express themselves,” she said.

Yoga or dance were other popular activities as students learned more physical techniques for relaxing their bodies and focusing their minds.

Alicia Bass, a counselor at Antelope Elementary, said she personally has used yoga to help herself both physically and emotionally. With that in mind, she decided to teach students basic yoga techniques.

“With social emotional (learning) we talk about how they need to be aware of their bodies and be aware of themselves,” Bass said. “Because when we are aware of ourselves, we are more in control of the situations around us and how we handle things.”

Some activities were simple mindfulness practices, while others focused on SEL curriculum lessons. Chronister said it was fun to see what each school focused on. They were all different as they focused on an area important to them.

She said each activity also has a defined purpose that helps students socially and emotionally.

“We learn better when we feel safe and secure in our environment,” Chronister said. “So we know that. There’s research that shows performances increase when students are successfully managing their emotions and are able to settle down and focus on academic instruction.”

Reflections winners named

These Utah PTA Reflections winners from Davis School District were recently honored at the state level. The Award of Excellence entries will advance to the national level.

Dance — Evie Embley – Award of Merit, Eagle Bay Elementary; Shydra Williams – Award of Merit, Syracuse High; Ellie Blundell – Honorable Mention, Stewart Elementary

Film — Jason Hayes – Award of Excellence, Centennial Junior; Trevin Kroeger – Award of Excellence, Cook Elementary; Jenna Mollinet – Award of Merit, Layton High; Inanc Yagiz Senay – Honorable Mention, Mountain View Elementary

Literature — Brooke Lemon – Award of Excellence, Foxboro Elementary; Eliza Taylor – Award of Merit, Davis High; Kiah Jaques – Honorable Mention, Layton High

Music — Ethan Rodabough – Award of Excellence, Millcreek Junior; Finn Cowdin – Award of Merit, Heritage Elementary; Blithe Bigelow – Honorable Mention, Centennial Junior

Photography — Grant Wessel – Award of Merit, Bluff Ridge Elementary; Kate Nash – Award of Merit, Oak Hills Elementary

2D Visual Arts — Weston Gunnerson – Award of Merit, Sunburst Elementary; Rhett Jerman – Honorable Mention, South Davis Junior

3D Visual Arts — Josh Plaizier – Award of Excellence, Centennial Junior; Emily Long – Honorable Mention, Valley View Elementary; Naomi Gadd – Honorable Mention, Windridge Elementary; Autumn Ware – Honorable Mention, Endeavour Elementary

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four days a week since September and since November for secondary students. Due to our students’ willingness to abide by the Big Five (social distancing, mask wearing, handwashing, staying home when sick, and detailed cleaning processes) we have had a successful school year to this point.

The Legislature passed HB 294 to return to “normal” life post-pandemic. While we all share that desire, we need to remember that the virus will still be with us after the April 10 date set by the legislation. HB 294 provides that schools will continue wearing masks. We will still abide by the Big Five to keep learning happening in our schools until June 4.

Let us finish this unprecedented school year with a strong push to the end. Let us be kind to each other. Let us protect each other for a few more weeks in our schools.

— Craig Carter, Business Administrator

Honoring students, staff for outstanding achievements

- **Canyon Creek Elementary** was recognized as a Microsoft Innovative Expert School for the third year in a row — the only school in Utah to do so.

- Davis School District received a 2021 Healthy Worksite Award by the Utah Worksite Wellness Council, recognizing **Healthy Lifestyles Director Tim Best**, **Wellness Coordinator Kim Johnson** and **Administrative Assistant Jayne Barkdull** for their exemplary work in worksite wellness throughout the district.

- Wasatch Front Region Sterling Scholar Finalists included several winners from our district: **Josh Dennis, Farmington High** - Skilled and Technical Sciences Education; **Aryanna Holmes, Woods Cross High** - Mathematics; **Keri Vance, Bountiful High** - Skilled and Technical Sciences Education.



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- **Endeavour Elementary Principal Vanessa Mori** was selected as the 2021 Davis Elementary Principal of the Year from the Utah Association of Elementary School Principals.

- Board of Education of the Davis School District recognized **Endeavour Elementary Teacher Tara Hadley, Samantha Marino at Wasatch Elementary** and **Laura Alley at Foxboro Elementary**

for their exemplary work helping students.

- **Central Davis Junior High's National Academic League** team took first place in the district competition. The **Centennial Junior High NAL** team came in second place overall for the district.

- **Northridge High students Bryce Walker and Will Bleacher** were selected to display pieces in the National K12 Ceramic Exhibition.

- The Segó Lily Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution recently awarded **Farmington High senior Elizabeth Issertell** with the DAR Good Citizens Award. The honor recognizes a student who shows qualities of good citizenship and comes with a cash award.

- The **Davis High boys basketball team** won the state 6A boys basketball championship. The Farmington High girls and boys basketball teams each placed second in their 5A divisions.

- The **Layton High boys wrestling team** earned second place in the state 6A division championship.

- **West Point Junior High students Adam Brubaker, Alexa Garfield and Kyrie Wayment** qualified for the National CyberStart America Challenge. As a result, West Point Junior High was named a Cyber Opportunity School.

- **Syracuse Elementary student Nora Hansen** won first place in a Chinese video blog competition.

- The **Fairfield Junior High Science Olympiad varsity team** took the state championship (a 26-year winning



Fairfield Junior High Science Olympiad team takes the state championship.

streak) and the school's junior varsity team placed third.

- **Davis School District Foundation Director Jodi Lunt** was presented with the 2021 Ruby Award by the Soroptimists of Bountiful. The award recognizes a woman who has worked to improve the lives of women, girls and children through their professional work. The **Davis Education Foundation** was also honored with the Modern Woodmen of America Hometown Hero Award for the recent construction of the Clearfield Cares Teen Center.

- **Sue Ryerse, office assistant at Tolman Elementary**, was honored by the state PTA with the Utah State Outstanding Support Staff award.

- These **Canyon Heights Adult Education ESOL** students received accolades during the HOSA – Future Health Professionals Competitive Events Program and will compete virtually in the national competition: **Grecia Anderson**, second place for CNA skills and third place for CNA Career Presentation; **Carmen Calderon**, second place for home healthcare skills and third place for CNA Career Presentation; **Marisa Pino**, first place for home healthcare skills and second place Dietician Career Presentation; **Angela Ramirez**, first place for biomedical lab skills and first place for CNA skills; **Darli Tocto**, third place for CNA skills and second place for Dietician Career Presentation.

- **Lincoln Elementary teacher Barbara Nelson** and **Legacy Junior High Custodian Nicholas Pearson** received the “K-12” \$2,500 scholarship from Western Governor's University .

- Davis School District received **Best of State** awards in these categories — Public Preschool Program – **Davis School District Head Start and Title I Preschool**; Music Education K-12 – **Christine Wolf, Central Davis Junior High**; K-12 Online Education – **Davis Connect K-12 Online School**; Student K-12 – **Sarah Frei, Clearfield High**.

- **Elementary Teacher Adrienne Scott-Ellis** received the Robert “Archie” Archuleta UEA Human & Civil Rights Award for 2021 for her outstanding service to education in the area of human and civil rights activities that have had a community-wide impact. She receives a \$1,500 monetary award.

Feeling the beat

In a corner of the Mountain View Elementary playground, the sound of steel drums echoes among the ball walls and portables.

“Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” “Baby Shark,” and “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” are just a few of the familiar tunes coming from the portable drums. Music instructor Christy Jacobs taps a beat to keep a group together as they practice the sequence of notes.

Jacobs said the steel drum kits came at a time when she was looking for a way to add a fun, new instrument to musical learning for the students in fifth and sixth grade. Steel drums were at the top of her list, not just because of their unique sound, but also because they have a rich cultural history.

“Because steel drums are pitched instruments, students can strengthen their knowledge of melody and harmony while still enjoying the fun of playing percussion instruments,” Jacobs said.

The experience has been invigorating for students as they learned the new instrument together. Not only do they learn to play the instrument, but they also learn about the culture and history of the people of Trinidad who took empty shipping drums and turned them into musical instruments. Those who learn the basics early on are given opportunities to work independently.

Jacobs purchased eight steel drums for the class to use. Through research she found a set that was portable, easy to store and most of all, affordable.



Top: Two students practice a song on the steel drums.
Above: Music Instructor Christy Jacobs taps a beat to keep a group of students together as they play Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.
Top left: A student helps another student figure out what order the notes should be played.
Bottom left: Students can practice on an app when the steel drums are not available.