

WELL-BEING & JOY

Healthy and Nurturing School Climates

Students learn better in schools where they feel loved, safe, included and challenged. The School District of University City places a premium on creating an environment of well-being and joy in its schools. The District measures social emotional health in all its schools twice a year through a Panorama survey of students, staff and parents, and responds to data with targeted programs and training.

Relationships

All teachers are trained and expected to teach with the head and the heart with the understanding positive relationships are the foundation of exceptional learning. We call this leading with a Heart of a Lion. Building leaders participate in monthly Transformational Leadership Initiative, a human-centered approach to education.

Student Voice, Social Justice and Racial Equity

A healthy school encourages a healthy student voice. At University City Schools students are encouraged to speak through a productive social justice mindset to better their community both in school and outside of school. As part of this work, the District is partners with local and regional organizations and encourages project-based community service projects aligned with curriculum. Students and faculty are expected to participate in reflective circle dialogue so everyone is heard. Racial equity is addressed in classroom work and school policy.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is a social science that builds positive relationships and strengthens communities. All district schools utilize inclusive restorative circles that amplify student, teacher, staff and sometimes parent perspectives and mindsets. When students fail to meet behavioral expectations, restorative justice is used to repair harm from a wrong that has been done. In 2019, University City High School launched a Restorative Practices class for academic credit to further seed a restorative practice mindset in the school culture. It is the only class of its kind in Missouri public schools.

Trauma-Informed

Working in partnership with Alive and Well Communities, University City Schools consistently trains teachers and staff on trauma-informed practices with the understanding children face obstacles to learning if traumatic experiences and toxic stress are not recognized and properly addressed. University City Schools was named a national Acceleration Site by America's Promise Alliance. Within the past few years, University City Schools and Alive and Well Communities addressed the personal and community trauma of systemic racial inequity and racism. As part of this work, virtual community workshops were held as well as Ubuntu Circles to check in on community wellness and current events.



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WELL-BEING & JOY *continued*



Wellness

The District secures and targets funding to ensure social workers, counselors and well-being specialists serve students in every school building. Families and children identified with a need of support and financial difficulties have access to free therapy services. The District utilizes Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) teaching and training to recognize and remediate racial bias in classrooms. The District remains committed to training and support to be trauma informed, and was named a national Acceleration Site for trauma informed practices by America's Promise Alliance. All district schools sponsor self care activities such as yoga and mindfulness. Community gatherings often feature wellness activities.



Basic Necessities

School supplies, backpacks, clothing, laundry detergent, toiletries and other necessities are collected and distributed to families and students in need. A high school boutique enables students and families to obtain clothing, shoes and other supplies in a private, shop-like setting. As part of the pandemic response, close to one million meals were distributed to students and families via a drive-through Grab & Go program.

Coordination and Implementation

The District utilizes multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) so all students get the support they need to thrive. District well-being specialists are embedded in every school to coordinate services and programs among partners and staff and ensure all students and teachers get the support they need for academic and social-emotional success.



Learning Reimagined

The District operates under the vision of Learning Reimagined, a plan to Humanize, Personalize and Problematize student learning through modern, rigorous and relevant experiences and academics. The plan strives for well-being and joy in our students and staff, excellent staff, all hands in partnership with others, and strategic, equitable use of resources. Student voice is supported and a social justice mindset is encouraged.

Contacts

Superintendent of Schools

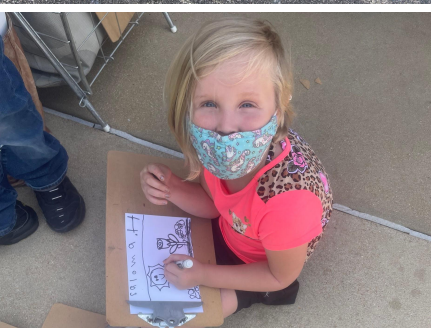
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