



3/28/2024

Fundamental 3 – Level 2 Monitoring Report

Social-Emotional Awareness

Mercer Island School District #400
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Fundamental 3

Develop self-awareness, empathy, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship.

As part of the Board's annual planning calendar found in Policy 1008P, this monitoring report focuses on Board Policy 1800 Operational Expectation 01, Fundamental 3, which states: "Develop self-awareness, empathy, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship."

This report and the included data describe the work in our schools to meet Fundamental 3. The instructional team considered the superintendent's interpretation of Fundamental 3, which the Board initially approved on January 10, 2013. The Board recently revised and approved the interpretation on March 11, 2021. The most recent superintendent's interpretation is attached for reference.

This report presents a comprehensive overview of our progress toward Fundamental 3, incorporating quantitative data from the Developmental Asset Survey (DAS) and the Educational Effectiveness Survey (EES) and qualitative insights gathered from our schools, learning services, and other departments within the central office.

It's important to note that MISD has decided to discontinue the administration of the Asset Survey, as previously discussed with the Board. This decision was based on cost, redundancy with other survey data, and student survey fatigue. The Board may consider removing references to this survey in future reports during the language review of Fundamental 3.

The six schools, learning services, and other central office departments provided qualitative inputs highlighting the organization's unwavering commitment to students, particularly as we navigate the continued challenges stemming from the pandemic. These qualitative indicators shed light on the various initiatives and efforts undertaken to support student well-being and academic success during these unprecedented times.

Social-Emotional Indicators

The following qualitative and quantitative data provide evidence to support Fundamental 3. The Fundamental has been divided into four themes connected to the Superintendent's Interpretation.

1 Self-Awareness

The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. (CASEL, 2020)

2 Social Emotional Intelligence

The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts. (CASEL, 2020)

3 Responsible Decision-Making

The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. (CASEL, 2020)

4 Citizenship

It encompasses fulfilling civic duties, contributing to the community, respecting authority, and pursuing civic values. (Fundamental 3, Superintendent's Interpretation, 2021)

The collaboration between Mercer Island School District (MISD) and Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS) exemplifies a comprehensive approach to social-emotional learning, intertwining with all four of the superintendent's key themes, especially emphasizing Fundamental 3: fostering holistic student development. This partnership profoundly impacts students' learning environments, addressing their emotional, social, and academic needs.

Partnership Between Mercer Island School District and Mercer Island Youth and Family Services

Each MISD school benefits from the dedicated support of MIYFS mental health counselors. These professionals play a critical role in providing social-emotional support and education to students and offering consultation services to staff, parents, and administrators. This model has been notably expanded at Islander Middle School and is robustly implemented at Mercer Island High School with two full-time counselors, one of whom brings specialized expertise in drug and alcohol prevention and intervention.

The integration of MIYFS counselors within the schools is so seamless that their presence as external partners often go unnoticed by families. This reflects the depth of collaboration between school administrators, teachers, staff, and counselors, centering on delivering student-focused services that range from universal preventive support to targeted interventions for students facing specific challenges.

Addressing self-awareness (Theme 1), the counselors work directly in classrooms, small groups, and one-on-one therapeutic settings, fostering students' understanding and managing their emotions and behaviors. This direct engagement is pivotal in developing students' self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

In terms of emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2), the counselors provide vital training on topics like depression, suicide, grief, and more, enhancing the school community's capacity to support each other. Furthermore, their involvement in SBIRT Teams at IMS and MIHS aids in the assessment, intervention, and referral processes for students with mental health and/or substance use concerns, reinforcing the commitment to emotional and social intelligence.

The counselors' work also supports responsible decision-making (Theme 3) by equipping students with self-regulation and executive functioning skills. Addressing common student issues such as anxiety, stress, relationships, and depression, the counselors offer coaching and support, enabling students to make healthier choices.

Lastly, this partnership promotes citizenship (Theme 4) by fostering a supportive school environment where students learn to navigate their social world more effectively and contribute positively to their community.

SBIRT Grant

For the third consecutive year, the Mercer Island School District is proud to reinforce its commitment to student well-being through its ongoing collaboration with King County, Seattle Children's Hospital Research Institute, and Tickit Health implement the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) protocol, specifically targeting middle and high school students. Central to this initiative is the early identification of mental health issues, substance use, and feelings of isolation among adolescents (Theme 1). Through the SBIRT program, students receive critical support to address these challenges head-on (Theme 3). The dedicated SBIRT team, consisting of a coordinator, counselors, and an administrator, has already screened the 10th-grade students.

Digital Citizenship

The K-12 Digital Citizenship curriculum is meticulously crafted to instill a deep respect for safety, responsibility, and respectful behavior in technology use from the earliest grades (K-5). Through engaging lessons and the integration of various digital media tools, students are taught the importance of applying these fundamental principles across all aspects of their digital lives, including the importance of not sharing passwords and online privacy, conducting safe internet searches and understanding copyright protections. Additionally, platforms such as Seesaw and Google Classroom serve as practical arenas for students to hone their positive online communication skills (Theme 4).

As students transition into middle school, the digital citizenship curriculum broadens to tackle more complex issues such as harassment, cyberbullying, verifying if content posted online is accurate. This expansion is vital for preparing students to navigate the increasingly complex digital world responsibly. Furthermore, Gator Time classes offer essential reviews of acceptable practices for iPad and online tool usage. Complementing this educational approach, new families to IMS are welcomed with comprehensive guidance on responsible technology use, delivered through informative parent night videos and presentations, ensuring that the ethos of digital citizenship extends beyond the classroom into the community (Theme 4).

Educational Effectiveness Survey

Previous Boards considered numerous quantitative factors from the Asset Survey and the Educational Effectiveness Survey, and the following items were selected to highlight the implementation of Fundamental 3. To the extent available, the prior year's data are included. All of the *Educational Effectiveness Survey (EES)* results come from the additional *Student Skills and Beliefs Survey* (a survey of student engagement, motivation, and 21st-century thinking and learning skills) first offered in 2013 and significantly revised in 2014. The *Developmental Asset Survey (DAS)* was given to high school students alternating years before the COVID-19 Pandemic. As noted above, this is no longer a tool in use.

As a reminder, the HYS is a collaborative effort of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Service's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, and the Liquor and Cannabis Board. The survey provides information on trends in youth behavior patterns over time. It is administered in alternate years across Washington State to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. The fall 2020 administration of the HYS was postponed until fall 2021. This is not currently part of the monitoring report but could be reexamined in the future.

In accordance with the Board's direction, the District administered the Educational Effectiveness Survey (EES) in March. The survey is given every other year and asks for perceptual feedback from parents, students (grades 4-12), and staff. Fundamental 3 highlights several of the student perceptions of self-awareness, empathy, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship.

Table 1: Educational Effectiveness Survey

Survey	Indicator	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24
Educational Effectiveness Survey Results – given to students in grades 4 through 12 each spring	“I am hopeful about my future”	85%	87%	N/A	82%	83%	81%
	“I am a responsible student”	84%	88%	N/A	**	**	**
	“I take responsibility for working on my goals”	87%	90%	N/A	**	**	**
	“I pay attention to how I feel”	79%	79%	N/A	73%	74%	76%
	“I can resist doing something when I know I shouldn’t do it”	83%	86%	N/A	77%	80%	78%
	“I can calm myself down when I am excited or upset”	73%	77%	N/A	66%	68%	72%
	“I am a hard worker”	85%	89%	N/A	80%	83%	83%
	“Setbacks don’t discourage me”	67%	68%	N/A	58%	59%	59%
	“I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt”	90%	92%	N/A	85%	86%	87% %
	“I am comfortable interacting with people from a different racial or ethnic background	94%	95%	N/A	94%	95%	92
	“When my solution to a problem is not working, I try to figure out what went wrong”	83%	86%	N/A	76%	76%	76%
	“Most students are respectful of others at this school.”	61%	68%	N/A	52%	48%	47%
	“In my school, I feel that I belong to a group of friends.”	79%	80%	N/A	74%	75%	77%
	“I am treated with as much respect as other students.”	78%	83%	N/A	**	**	**

Note. ** Question no longer included in the EES Survey.

The percentage of students who reported being hopeful about their future has shown a slight decrease over the last six years, from 85% in SY 18-19 to 81% in SY 23-24. This decline suggests a need for interventions aimed at boosting student optimism and future-oriented thinking. The percentage of students who pay attention to how they feel has remained relatively stable, with a slight increase from 73% in SY 21-22 to 76% in SY 23-24. The ability to calm oneself when excited or upset has seen improvement, increasing from 66% in SY 21-22 to 72% in SY 23-24, indicating progress in emotional regulation among students. The ability to resist doing something wrong has fluctuated, with a decrease from 86% in SY 19-20 to 78% in SY 23-24. The consistent response to trying to figure out what went wrong when a solution fails (76% in SY 21-22 and SY 23-24) shows stable problem-solving skills among students. Students' empathy, as indicated by feeling bad when someone gets their feelings hurt, remains high but has slightly declined from 92% in SY 19-20 to 87% in SY 23-24. Comfort in interacting with people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds has shown a minor decrease from 95% in SY 19-20 to 92% in SY 23-24, highlighting an area for cultural competence development. The sense of belonging to a group of friends has shown recovery from a dip in SY 21-22 (74%) to 77% in SY 23-24. Respect among students has seen a continuous decline from 68% in SY 19-20 to 47% in SY 23-24, which is concerning and calls for immediate attention to foster a more respectful school environment.

The decline in students' hopefulness about their future and their resilience to setbacks (steady at 59% since SY 21-22) is worrisome. Programs to enhance student resilience and optimism should be prioritized. The declining perception of respect among students and the relatively low sense of belonging are critical issues. Initiatives to improve the school climate and promote inclusivity and respect are essential. Notable improvements in students' ability to calm themselves when excited or upset show progress in emotional regulation. Consistency in problem-solving abilities indicates stability in students' cognitive skills in addressing challenges.

Some potential areas of focus based on this data include:

- Increase counseling and support services to address declines in hopefulness and resilience.
- Programs focusing on mental health, future planning, and goal-setting can be beneficial.
- Implement comprehensive programs that promote respect, inclusivity, and cultural competence. Peer mentoring and diversity training can help improve these areas.
- Continue and expand SEL programs to build on the progress in emotional regulation and self-awareness.
- Conduct regular follow-ups and interim surveys to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and adjust strategies as needed.

The analysis of the EES results highlights both strengths and areas for growth within our student body. By addressing the identified concerns and building on the areas of improvement, we can foster a more supportive, inclusive, and effective educational environment.

HIGH SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Empowering Wellness: The Island Space Initiative at MIHS

Mercer Island High School has unveiled the Island Space campaign in collaboration with the MI Healthy Youth Initiative (HYI) and Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS). This forward-thinking program addresses critical challenges such as student mental health, substance use, and the intense pressure to excel, integrating the principles of self-awareness, emotional and social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship.



Rooted in comprehensive research, including data analysis and community feedback, Island Space responds to the identified need for better mental health support and substance use education among MIHS students. The campaign is dedicated to:

- Educating students about the effects of alcohol and drugs, fostering self-awareness (Theme 1);
- Encouraging healthy coping skills to manage stress and societal pressures, enhancing emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2);
- Facilitating peer discussions & interventions to promote responsible decision-making (Theme 3);
- Redefining success to include personal well-being and community involvement, embodying citizenship (Theme 4).

The initiative's launch was celebrated with an event featuring music, giveaways, and vital information. The aim was to encourage the whole school community to engage in open dialogue about these significant topics. The Island Space website and a series of informative posters provide ongoing resources supported by the dedicated MIHS counseling team and MIYFS counselors.

Highlighting the commitment to student-driven solutions, MIHS Safe Club and MIYFS staff member Chris Harnish along with MIHS students Julies Perez, Ren Evans, and Victoria Hu spearheaded a lunchtime stress-management campaign. Utilizing a "stress-o-meter," they actively measured students' stress levels and provided practical tips for managing it, showcasing an innovative approach to emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2).

As the semester brings new challenges and opportunities, the Island Space campaign and Safe Club offers essential support, guiding students toward resilience and healthier coping mechanisms. This initiative prioritizes mental and emotional well-being and encourages a collective effort toward fostering a supportive, inclusive, and engaged school community, aligning with the overarching goals of social-emotional learning at MIHS.

Building Bridges: Student-Led Initiatives Champion Equity and Empathy

At Mercer Island High School (MIHS), student-led groups and organizations are pivotal in advancing social-emotional learning, encompassing self-awareness, emotional and social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship. These groups, guided by values such as empathy, curiosity, and accountability, actively work towards creating a more inclusive and understanding school environment.

Student Voices for Change exemplifies the commitment to self-awareness (Theme 1) by aiming to create a culture of open dialogue, safety, equal opportunities, and belonging for all students at MIHS. This student-led initiative encourages individuals to reflect on their experiences and perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

In celebration of Black History Month, the Black Student Union (BSU) and Student Voices for Change collaborated to enrich the school's cultural landscape, showcasing the importance of citizenship (Theme 4). Activities such as "Black Music Matters," the All Island BSU Dinner, presentations on BSU and Black History Month, and "Courageous Conversations" workshops exemplify efforts to engage the entire school community in recognizing and appreciating the depth of Black history and culture. These initiatives celebrate diversity and encourage active participation in building a more inclusive society.

MIHS student clubs and organizations like the Education Coalition for Asian American Representation (ECAAR), The International Club, and No Place for Hate are dedicated to promoting equity and anti-racism, embodying the essence of social-emotional intelligence (Theme 2). These groups enhance student empathy and understanding by leading seminars, cultural events, workshops, and collaborative projects. ECAAR's initiatives, such as the "Perpetual Foreigner" seminar series, anti-racist workshops, and cultural celebrations, along with The International Club's efforts to foster global citizenship through cultural exchanges, exemplify how MIHS students actively learn from and about each other.

These student-led efforts promote responsible decision-making (Theme 3) by encouraging students to act toward equity and anti-racism. By participating in these activities, students learn the importance of making informed, ethical choices that contribute positively to their community and beyond.

Through these diverse initiatives, MIHS student groups and organizations demonstrate a comprehensive approach to social-emotional learning, engaging the school community in meaningful activities that foster self-awareness, empathy, responsible citizenship, and a commitment to social justice. These efforts not only enhance the educational experience at MIHS but also prepare students to navigate the complexities of the world with compassion and understanding.

Empowering Leaders On and Off the Field

The spirit of leadership and community engagement flourishes not only through the Associated Student Body (ASB) but also within the athletic leadership team. These platforms collectively underscore the school's dedication to fostering a comprehensive educational environment that emphasizes self-awareness, emotional and social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship.

The ASB, known for its dynamic approach to student governance, spearheads initiatives that foster a sense of responsibility and active participation within the school and the wider community. From organizing impactful presentations by guest speakers to collaborating with external businesses and organizations on community projects, ASB members demonstrate stewardship and civic responsibility, embodying the essence of citizenship (Theme 4).

In parallel, the MIHS Athletic Leadership team plays a pivotal role in extending these values into the sports arena. This group of student-athletes focuses on promoting sportsmanship, teamwork, and leadership among their peers. By guiding younger athletes, organizing community service projects, and leading by example, these athletic leaders contribute significantly to creating a supportive and inclusive sports culture. Their efforts underscore the importance of self-awareness (Theme 1) and emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2) in navigating both victories and challenges, reinforcing the value of empathy, respect, and collaboration.

Moreover, the Athletic Leadership team's emphasis on responsible decision-making (Theme 3) mirrors the ASB's commitment to thoughtful governance. By making decisions that affect the broader athletic community, these student-athletes learn the intricacies of leadership and the impact of their choices, preparing them for future roles as community leaders.

Academics and Beyond

At Mercer Island High School (MIHS), a tapestry of programs and initiatives weaves together the core values of inclusion, expression, and leadership, fostering an environment where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. From the collaborative learning spaces of Islander Hour and the MIHS Library to the creative outlets of Radio, Crest, and the Performing Arts, each program is meticulously designed to enhance the educational experience. Coupled with the insightful curricula of English and Social Studies and the inclusive spirit of Unified Sports, MIHS stands as a beacon of holistic development, preparing students to navigate the complexities of the modern world with empathy, creativity, and a strong sense of community. Through these diverse avenues, MIHS cultivates the skills and values necessary for students to become insightful learners, expressive creators, and responsible leaders, embodying the true essence of the Islander spirit.

Islander Hour: Central to the Islander Hour is the cultivation of self-awareness (Theme 1), where we prioritize personalized support for each student. This is achieved by fostering relationships where teachers and staff recognize and nurture each student's unique strengths and needs. Through targeted discussions led by MIHS and Mercer Island Family and Youth Services (MIFYS) counselors, students delve into topics like growth mindset and school-life balance (Theme 2). These conversations encourage students to embrace learning and personal development, highlighting the importance of understanding and managing emotions, setting positive goals, showing empathy for others, and establishing positive relationships.

By focusing on the GAS (Grades, Attendance, Social) model, Islander Hour promotes discussions around academic performance, attendance, and social involvement, including extracurricular activities and

college preparation leading to responsible decision-making (Theme 3). This holistic approach encourages students to make informed, ethical, and constructive choices.

Through active participation in community events and discussions, the Islander Hour fosters a sense of citizenship (Theme 4). It prepares students to contribute positively to their community and the broader society by instilling values of respect, fairness, and community involvement. Associated Student Body (ASB) and class elections, which play a crucial role in fostering student involvement and civic responsibility. Through citizenship lessons and initiatives like early voter registration, the program ensures students are prepared academically and ready to actively participate in their communities. These activities underscore the importance of being informed, engaged citizens, ready to contribute positively to society.

Library: The library serves as a vibrant center for self-awareness (Theme 1), inviting students to engage in cultural exploration and intellectual growth. Through its thoughtfully arranged book displays and student art showcases, alongside flexible seating options, the MIHS Library fosters an environment where students can immerse themselves in diverse cultures and perspectives. This setting encourages students not only to pursue academic interests but also to embark on a personal journey of understanding and creative expression.

The library champions the Freedom to Read, a cornerstone of American citizenship (Theme 4), as advocated by the American Library Association (ALA). Through initiatives like Banned Book Month, students are educated about the value of this freedom, the principles underpinning it, and the challenges it encounters. This initiative underscores the importance of open inquiry and intellectual freedom, preparing students to engage thoughtfully with diverse ideas and opinions.

Monthly thematic reminders, along with a curated selection of books, promote an understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences, cultivating empathy through both fiction and non-fiction (Theme 2). The presence of comfort dogs during periods of stress and a secure, welcoming space for study and relaxation further reinforce the library's commitment to fostering a supportive community environment.

Radio: Central to the radio class's efforts is the production of "Take 5" in collaboration with Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS), targeting self-awareness (Theme 1). This series of public service announcements provides a platform for discussing the pressures and stress students face, its impact on their mental health, and strategies for coping. This initiative reflects a deep commitment to addressing students' emotional and psychological well-being, providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate their challenges.

Further extending its impact, MIHS Radio actively partners with various organizations and initiatives to foster a sense of citizenship (Theme 4) within the student body and the broader community. Notably, the program commemorated Juneteenth through live broadcasts and public service announcements in partnership with the MIHS Black Student Union and the City of Mercer Island. This collaboration highlights important historical moments and fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for the significance of such events among the student body and community members.

MIHS Radio has also proactively promoted civic engagement, particularly through voter engagement PSAs and pre-registration initiatives. By encouraging students to participate in the electoral process, the program plays a vital role in cultivating informed, responsible citizens prepared to contribute to their society actively.

Crest: A cornerstone of the Crest program is its commitment to fostering self-awareness (Theme 1). The initiative encourages students to take ownership of their learning journey by involving them in the lead role during parent-teacher conferences. This practice is complemented by incorporating student reflections into all aspects of curriculum and assessment, allowing for a deeper personal engagement with the material. Furthermore, using technology, such as Google Forms for self-evaluations and the proactive communication of missing assignments, empowers students to manage their responsibilities effectively and develop plans to address shortcomings.

Simultaneously, Crest highly emphasizes emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2), with staff and teachers dedicating efforts to fostering healthy relationships within the school community. Bi-weekly staff meetings focused on individual student needs and regular check-ins promote empathy and encourage meaningful student interactions. The program's inclusive approach, especially notable in integrating Special Education students within regular classrooms, reflects a commitment to diversity and developing a supportive, empathetic community.

Crest Student Advisory and Community Action/Civics projects offer students a platform to engage in decision-making, community input, and the planning of events (Theme 4). These activities enhance students' understanding of public policy and civic responsibility and encourage them to contribute actively to community improvement. Collaborations with local organizations, such as the Mercer Island Forest Stewards, and events like the spring plant sale, further highlight the program's dedication to fostering community unity and environmental stewardship.

English and Social Studies: Mercer Island High School (MIHS) places a strong emphasis on social-emotional learning (SEL) within its English and Social Studies curricula, aiming to foster a comprehensive educational environment that nurtures personal growth, critical reflection, and active citizenship. These departments tackle vital themes of self-awareness, emotional and social intelligence, and responsible decision-making, preparing students to contribute positively to a diverse and evolving society.

MIHS introduces 9th and 10th graders to literature that prompts exploration of acceptance, identity, culture, race, and racism, directly supporting the development of self-awareness (Theme 1) and emotional intelligence (Theme 2). This exploration continues into the 11th and 12th grades with a focus on enhancing writing skills and engaging with American literature and rhetoric to cultivate civic engagement (Theme 4). The 12th-grade Race in Literature course delves into identity, memory, and personal growth, encouraging students to analyze contemporary issues of race, gender, sexuality, religion, class, ability, and culture. This course not only broadens students' perspectives but also empowers them to advocate for social justice, fostering a deep sense of empathy and understanding (Theme 2).

Similarly, the Social Studies department enriches students' educational experiences by engaging them in discussions on current events and civic issues, thereby promoting social intelligence (Theme 2) and responsible decision-making (Theme 3). Through critical evaluations of information sources, students develop essential thinking skills, exploring themes of fairness and justice across historical contexts. Topics such as the history of antisemitism, the Holocaust, and the civil rights movement provide valuable lessons on empathy, historical awareness, and the importance of inclusivity (Theme 2).

Performing Arts: Within Drama 1, students embark on self-discovery, utilizing acting techniques such as monologues and vocal development to forge emotional connections and enhance self-awareness (Theme 1). This foundational stage sets the scene for further exploration in Drama 2, where students engage in more complex exercises, participate in productions, and even craft original plays. These activities challenge students to reflect deeply on their own identities and the world around them, promoting a heightened sense of self-awareness.

The Theatre Tech courses complement this journey by focusing on the technical aspects of production. In Theatre Tech 1, students learn the essentials of stagecraft and design, applying their skills to bring artistic visions to life while developing a keen sense of self-awareness in executing their roles effectively. Theatre Tech 2 advances these concepts further by cultivating leadership skills essential for mentoring teams and leading projects, requiring a nuanced understanding of self and others.

The Performing Arts program is a conduit for emotional and social growth (Theme 2). Drama courses encourage students to delve into the realms of human emotion and relationships, fostering empathy and an appreciation for the complexities of life through acting exercises, ensemble work, and character portrayal. As students progress to Drama 2, they are given opportunities to assume leadership roles in collaborative playwriting projects, performing works that offer diverse perspectives and deepen their understanding of interpersonal dynamics.

Unified Sports: Through Unified Sports, MIHS encourages students with and without intellectual disabilities to join forces, creating competing teams. This integration not only bolsters self-awareness (Theme 1) by allowing students to recognize their own strengths and challenges but also enhances emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2) as participants develop empathy and forge deep connections with teammates from diverse backgrounds.



On the other hand, Sparkle Cheer offers a platform for students with disabilities to shine, fostering an environment where all students feel valued and supported. This initiative not only reflects responsible decision-making (Theme 3) in creating inclusive opportunities but also promotes citizenship (Theme 4) by building a school culture that values diversity and inclusion.

By weaving the four social-emotional themes into our program, IMS acknowledges and actively promotes the positive characteristics and behaviors that reflect the Islander Way, ensuring every student feels seen and motivated to make a meaningful impact.

Islander Middle School HIGHLIGHTS

Empowering Student Excellence: The Islander Way Recognition Program

Responding to student input for greater acknowledgment of their contributions, IMS has rolled out a new recognition initiative. This scheme appreciates students for their positive impact within our school culture by distributing recognition tickets for noteworthy behaviors, aligning with the Islander Way's core values. These tickets enable students to enter weekly draws for various prizes.

This program is intricately linked to the foundational elements of social-emotional learning: It highlights self-awareness by rewarding students who deeply engage with their education (Theme), champions emotional and social intelligence by recognizing those who advocate for themselves and others (Theme 2) and supports responsible decision-making by applauding students who take positive steps towards improvement (Theme 3). Lastly, it enhances a sense of belonging and community spirit, honoring students who contribute to making our school a more inclusive space (Theme 4).

Counselor Classroom Initiatives: Fostering Comprehensive Development through SEL

In alignment with the four central themes of social-emotional learning, IMS counselors are deeply involved in classroom activities designed to nurture a well-rounded student experience. These initiatives are geared towards fostering self-awareness (Theme 1), enhancing emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2), promoting responsible decision-making (Theme 3), and cultivating a sense of citizenship (Theme 4) among students.

Focusing on self-awareness, counselors facilitate sessions where 8th graders delve into Healthy Relationships. In these discussions, students are guided to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics, empowering them with the knowledge to support themselves and their peers effectively. This is complemented by career inventory assessments, enabling students to explore career options that resonate with their interests and personalities. This exploration aids in making informed choices about their educational paths and future careers, reflecting responsible decision-making.

Seventh graders engage in crucial lessons on mental health and suicide prevention, led by Sources of Strength Peer Leaders alongside counselors. These lessons are instrumental in building emotional and social intelligence by providing students with a thorough understanding of mental well-being. They cover essential self-care practices and equip students with strategies to support peers facing challenges, fostering a supportive community that values citizenship.

7th Grade Health: Integrating SEL for Holistic Student Wellness

In our 7th-grade Health curriculum, we are deeply committed to integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) across all aspects of student wellness, emphasizing the development of self-awareness, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship. Utilizing the comprehensive Second Step curriculum and collaborating closely with our exceptional IMS counseling team, we focus on achieving key SEL outcomes that embody these four themes.

By emphasizing responsible decision-making (Theme 3), we ensure students know about various mental and behavioral health services available. This knowledge empowers students to make informed choices about seeking support when needed.

We enhance students' emotional and social intelligence (Theme 2) by equipping them with the skills to offer supportive, empathetic, and constructive advice to peers facing interpersonal conflicts. This approach fosters a nurturing environment where empathy and understanding are paramount.

We teach students to actively support peers experiencing harassment through the ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell a trusted adult) strategy. This method encourages students to take civic responsibility seriously, promoting a safe and inclusive community (Theme 4).

By addressing these outcomes, our curriculum also supports the development of self-awareness (Theme 1), as students reflect on their roles within their social networks and the broader community. Through these integrated SEL themes, we aim to educate and diminish the stigma around seeking help for emotional, mental, and behavioral challenges, creating a more understanding and supportive school environment.

Integrating Social-Emotional Learning into IMS Culture: A Story of Connection, Recognition, and Leadership

We are dedicated to weaving the principles of social-emotional learning (SEL) into the fabric of our educational environment, touching upon the four themes of self-awareness, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship. This commitment is vividly displayed through our lunch groups, special recognitions, and leadership electives, which together paint a cohesive story of our efforts to foster a connected, inclusive, and empathetic student community.

Cultivating Emotional and Social Intelligence Through Lunch Groups

Three times a week, our counselors host small group opportunities during lunch, stepping away from the bustling atmosphere of the larger lunchroom. These groups, open to all students on a drop-in basis, are designed to create a nurturing space where students can connect on a more personal level (Theme 2: Emotional/Social Intelligence, including Empathy). Here, students have the chance to practice social skills, build meaningful relationships with peers, and enhance their sense of belonging within the school community.

Promoting Citizenship with Important Recognitions

Once each month on Wednesdays, IMS adopts an altered schedule to make room for dedicated lessons that reinforce character and citizenship (Theme 4). During these sessions, we honor significant cultural and historical observances, including the Lunar New Year, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Black History Month. These lessons are not just about remembering; they're about connecting these important concepts to our daily actions and inspiring students to contribute to a better world, showcasing the profound impact of informed and thoughtful citizenship.

Fostering Leadership and Community Connection

Our Leadership elective for 7th and 8th graders is a testament to our belief in the transformative power of student-led initiatives (Theme 4: Citizenship). In this project-based class, students engage directly with the school community, identifying unrecognized groups and designing events to foster connection and inclusivity. From conceptualization to execution, these projects are student-driven, reflecting a deep understanding of the school's diverse needs and an earnest desire to create a more connected IMS. Based on student demand, the introduction of Leadership 2 further emphasizes our commitment to deepening leadership skills and exploring the nuances of effective community engagement.

These initiatives illustrate IMS's comprehensive approach to SEL, where students are encouraged to grow, connect, and contribute. Through lunch groups, we nurture emotional and social intelligence; with special recognitions, we celebrate citizenship; and through our leadership electives, we empower students to become proactive community members. This holistic approach enriches the IMS educational experience and prepares our students for a future characterized by empathy, understanding, and active engagement in the world around them.

Comprehensive Approach

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is at the forefront of education within our four elementary schools: Lakeridge, West Mercer, Island Park, and Northwood. Recognizing the importance of SEL in fostering well-rounded, empathetic, and responsible individuals, our schools have embraced a holistic approach encompassing four key themes: Developing Self-awareness, Enhancing Emotional/Social Intelligence, Encouraging Responsible Decision-making, and Promoting Citizenship.

Elementary Schools Showcase

Developing Self-Awareness through Universal Design and Regulation Frameworks (Theme 1)

At Lakeridge Elementary, the commitment to universal design in learning environments ensures all students can access and benefit from education, underpinning the first theme of developing self-awareness. The Zones of Regulation framework aids students in identifying and managing their emotions, teaching them valuable perspective-taking, self-regulation, and advocacy skills. Additionally, every classroom features a calm-down spot, ranging from Zen Zones to Relaxation Stations, providing students with a space to manage emotions and select appropriate calming strategies. This initiative aligns with the Second Step and Kelso's Choices programs, which further support conflict resolution and character development, emphasizing the crucial role of self-awareness in personal growth.

Emotional/Social Intelligence Cultivated through Empathy and Community Circles (Theme 2)

Across schools, empathy is a central pillar of emotional and social intelligence. Lakeridge's community circles, West Mercer's Restorative Circles, and Island Park's involvement in the International Great Kindness Challenge illustrate the schools' dedication to fostering empathy among



students. These programs and practices encourage students to express their ideas, build a sense of belonging, and develop the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, thereby enhancing their emotional and social intelligence.

Responsible Decision-Making through PBIS and Mindfulness Practices (Theme 3)

The Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) implemented across the schools serve as a foundation for responsible decision-making. By teaching, modeling, and reinforcing desired behaviors, students learn to internalize and exhibit responsible actions. Mindfulness practices complement this by enhancing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy, which are crucial for making responsible decisions. Programs like "Be the Three" at Northwood and the "Wolf Way" at West Mercer emphasize the core expectations of safety, respect, and responsibility, guiding students toward positive decision-making.

Citizenship Fostered through Leadership and Community Engagement (Theme 4)

Promoting citizenship involves fostering a sense of community and responsibility towards others. The Elementary Student Council, Peer Mediators at West Mercer, and schoolwide "Belonging Assemblies" provide students with leadership opportunities and the chance to contribute positively to their school and broader community. These initiatives encourage students to engage in humanitarian campaigns, school spirit activities, and efforts to enhance school culture, embodying the essence of good citizenship.



In conclusion, our four elementary schools are at the forefront of integrating social-emotional learning into their curricula, ensuring students develop into emotionally intelligent, responsible, and civic-minded individuals. Through initiatives that promote self-awareness, emotional and social intelligence, responsible decision-making, and citizenship, we are preparing our students not just for academic success, but for life-long personal growth and contribution to society. As we continue to evolve and expand our SEL programs, we remain committed to nurturing environments where every student can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.