Wall Township Public Schools	Board Approval Date:

Course Title: ERI Social Skills

Course Description:
This middle school social skills class helps students build the tools they need to navigate school, friendships, and life with confidence and kindness. Through interactive lessons, discussions, and real-world practice, students explore character building by developing self-awareness, responsibility, empathy, and integrity. The course strengthens relationship skills, teaching students how to form healthy friendships, work in teams, and respect differences.

Students also learn effective digital communication, focusing on appropriate online behavior, digital citizenship, and understanding how words and actions impact others both on and offline. In the conflict resolution unit, students practice problem-solving strategies, emotional regulation, and peaceful ways to handle disagreements. Social awareness lessons help students recognize social cues, understand perspectives, and respond thoughtfully in different situations. Finally, the conversation skills unit builds confidence in starting, maintaining, and ending conversations, active listening, and expressing thoughts clearly and respectfully.

Overall, the class empowers students with practical skills to communicate effectively, build positive relationships, and make thoughtful choices in an increasingly connected world.

New Jersey Student Learning Mission & Vision

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

Visual and Performing Art

ELA: Speaking and Listening

ELA: Language Domain

Computer Science & Design Thinking

NJ Social and Emotional Learning Competencies and Sub-Competencies

NJ Comprehensive Health and Physical Education

The following colors are used throughout this document to indicate areas in which the curriculum is aligned with the following NJSA requirements:

Holocaust and genocides (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28)
History and contributions of African-Americans (Amistad Law) (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.43)
Highlight and promote diversity and inclusion (Diversity & Inclusion Law) (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.36a)
Climate Change - Please click here for specific examples (by subject)

Course Sequence & Pacing	
Unit Title	**MP/Weeks**
Unit 1: Character Building	MP 1 Weeks 1-8
Unit 2: Conversations	MP 1 Weeks 9, 10 MP 2 Weeks 11-16
Unit 3: How to form and maintain relationships	MP 2 Weeks 17-20 MP 3 Weeks 21-22
Unit 4: Self Regulation/Conflict Resolution	MP 3 Weeks 23-30
Unit 5: Social Awareness	MP 4 Weeks 31-35
Unit 6: Digital Communication	MP Weeks 36-40

Unit 1

Desired Results

Unit 1 Title: Character Building

Unit Summary: This unit empowers students to develop a concept of identity and self-esteem by integrating social-emotional learning with practical life skills. Through self-reflection, students gain self-awareness, identifying their strengths and personal values to set both short-term and long-term goals. Central to the unit is the shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset, teaching students to value their work, learn from mistakes, and utilize positive self-talk to build resilience and perseverance. By learning to manage emotions, take responsibility for their actions, and adapt to challenges, students transform obstacles into opportunities. At the intermediate level, the curriculum emphasizes social and physical wellness, highlighting how organization, body language, and respecting personal space enhance communication. Finally, at the expert level, students explore how basic hygiene and its importance directly affect social relationships, ensuring they project a confident and respectful presence in their community.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

NJSLS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

- Self-Awareness: Identifying emotions, personal values, and strengths.
- Self-Management: Developing a growth mindset, setting short- and long-term goals, and managing personal organization.
- Relationship Skills: Utilizing effective communication to navigate social relationships and respect diverse perspectives.
- Responsible Decision-Making: Learning from mistakes and taking responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Social Awareness: Recognizing thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others, and demonstrating awareness of differences, the need for respect and awareness of social expectations.

NJSLS Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (Grades 6-8)
2.1.8.PGD.4: Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.
2.1.8.EH.1: Compare and contrast stress management strategies that are used to address various types of stress-induced situations (e.g., academics, family, personal relationships, finances, celebrations, violence).
2.1.8.EH.2: Analyze how personal attributes, resiliency, and protective factors support mental and emotional health
2.1.8.SSH.3: Demonstrate communication skills that will support healthy relationships

Interdisciplinary Connections

NJSLS Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills (CLKS):

- 9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option

NJSLS Computer Science & Design Thinking (CSDT):

- 8.2.8.ED.3: Develop a proposal for a solution to a real-world problem
- 8.2.8.ED.2: Identify the steps in the design process that could be used to solve a problem.
- 8.1.8.IC.1: Compare the trade-offs associated with computing technologies that affect an individual's everyday activities and career options.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Concept of Identity & Literature: Analyze character development in novels by identifying the protagonist's personal values and how they navigate social relationships.
- Narrative Writing: Write "Resilience Memoirs" where students describe a time they used perseverance to turn an obstacle into an opportunity.
- Argumentative Speaking: Debate the impact of body language and positive self-talk on public speaking and persuasive communication.

Social Studies & History

- Historical Resilience: Study historical figures through the lens of a growth mindset, analyzing how they adapted to challenges to change society.
- Civic Responsibility: Connect taking responsibility to the duties of a citizen, exploring how individual choices affect the local and global community.
- Cultural Identity: Examine how personal space and social norms vary across different cultures and time periods.

Mathematics

- Data & Goal Setting: Use short-term and long-term goals to track academic progress. Students can graph their own growth (e.g., multiplication fluency or test scores) to see the physical data of a growth mindset.
- Organization & Logic: Apply organization skills to complex multi-step problem solving, requiring students to plan their "work flow" before starting a calculation.

Science

- The Biology of Emotions: Explore the nervous system and the "fight or flight" response to understand why managing emotions is a biological challenge, not just a mental one.
- Microbiology & Hygiene: Link basic hygiene to the study of bacteria and viruses, using the CDC's Handwashing Science to explain how personal habits prevent the spread of disease.

Physical Education & Fine Arts

- PE (Teamwork): Practice body language and social relationships during team sports, focusing on how perseverance through a losing game builds resilience.
- Art (Visual Identity): Create "Identity Masks" or "Value Collages" that visually represent a student's strengths and personal values.

Learning Targets	
Unit Essential Questions: **Year 1**	**Unit Enduring Understandings:** **Year 1**

• What makes me "me," and how do my personal values shape the way I act? • How does identifying my own strengths and challenges help me make better decisions? • Why is it important to recognize my emotions, and how can I control my behavior even when my feelings are strong? **Year 2** • How does believing I can grow (instead of having a fixed mindset) change the way I handle mistakes? • How can I use resilience and perseverance to turn a difficult challenge into a chance to learn? • Positive Self-Talk: How does the way I talk to myself affect my self-esteem and my ability to succeed? • What does it mean to be accountable for my actions, and how do my choices impact my community? • How do short-term and long-term goals give my daily work more value and purpose? • How does being organized help me manage my time and reduce stress?	• An individual's identity is a dynamic product of their personal values, strengths, and experiences; understanding oneself is the essential foundation for effective self-management. • Intelligence and ability are not fixed; by embracing a growth mindset, individuals can transform mistakes and obstacles into opportunities for learning and perseverance. • While we cannot always control our emotions, we can control our behaviors by practicing self-reflection and utilizing positive self-talk to guide our actions. **Year 2** • Taking responsibility for one's choices—including goal setting and organization—empowers a person to shape their own future and positively impact their community. • Building character is a lifelong journey; resilience is developed by consistently choosing to engage with challenges rather than avoiding them. **Year 3**

Year 3 • In what ways do my body language and respect for personal space communicate who I am to others? • Why does basic hygiene matter for my self-respect and my relationships with those around me?	• Respecting personal space, mastering body language, and maintaining basic hygiene are essential forms of self-respect that directly influence the health and quality of social relationships.
Vocabulary: Concept of identity, personal values, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-reflection, fixed mindset, growth mindset, positive self talk, resilience, perseverance, responsibility, long and short term goal setting, adapting, body language, personal space, personal relationships	
Students will be able to: • Distinguish between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset and apply growth strategies to academic or personal challenges. • Demonstrate resilience by reformatting mistakes and obstacles into opportunities for growth. • Practice positive self-talk to improve self-esteem and navigate difficult emotions. • Apply self-reflection techniques to identify personal values, strengths, and areas for improvement. • Construct specific short-term and long-term goals and outline the steps necessary to achieve them. • Develop organizational systems to manage schoolwork, time, and personal responsibilities effectively. • Take responsibility for personal choices by acknowledging consequences and creating a plan to "make it right" when mistakes occur.	

- Value their work by consistently putting in effort and understanding the connection between perseverance and success.
- Interpret body language and respect personal space to communicate effectively and respectfully with peers and adults.
- Identify how basic hygiene practices impact their physical health and their social relationships.
- Adapt their behavior and communication style when faced with different social environments or challenges.
- Articulate their concept of identity and explain how their values influence their daily interactions.

Learning Activities & Differentiation: *(Amistad & Holocaust, Asian American & Pacific Islanders, Climate Change, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI])*

Identity & Self-Awareness

1. "Me" Map (Visual/Spatial): Students create a mind map or digital collage representing their concept of identity, including personal values and strengths.

Differentiation: Provide a word bank of values or pre-made graphic organizers for students who struggle with brainstorming.

2. The Emotion Thermometer (Kinesthetic): Students move along a physical line in the classroom to "rate" the intensity of different emotions in given scenarios.

Differentiation: Allow students to use color-coded cards at their desks if they have mobility needs or social anxiety.

Mindset & Resilience

1. The "Yet" Flip-Book (Linguistic): Students write "Fixed Mindset" statements (e.g., "I'm not good at math") and flip the page to reveal a Growth Mindset "Yet" statement ("I'm not good at math yet").

Differentiation: Use sentence starters or "fill-in-the-blank" templates for English Language Learners (ELLs).

2. Obstacle Course Analysis (Collaborative): Small groups are given a hypothetical school-based obstacle and must brainstorm three ways to turn it into an opportunity.

Differentiation: Assign specific roles (Scribe, Speaker, Facilitator) to ensure every student contributes based on their comfort level.

Social Presence & Wellness

1. Space Invaders Role-Play (Social): Students practice identifying the "boundary line" for personal space and identifying body language cues through guided role-play.

Differentiation: Use visual aids (like floor tape or hula hoops) to provide a physical representation of boundaries for students with neurodivergent needs (e.g., ADHD or Autism).

2. The Hygiene Influence Web (Logical): Students create a web showing how basic hygiene affects different social relationships (friends, teachers, teammates).

Differentiation: Provide an audio-visual version (like a short video clip) for students with reading disabilities to analyze the social cues.

Goal Setting & Responsibility

1. Vision Boards (Creative): Students design a digital or physical board for their long-term and short-term goals.

Differentiation: Offer checklists or "Goal Menus" to help students who struggle with executive functioning stay organized.

2. Mistake Reconstruction (Analytical): Students write about a recent mistake, then "reconstruct" it by outlining what they would do differently next time to take responsibility.

Differentiation: Allow for speech-to-text or recorded video reflections for students with dysgraphia.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Exit Tickets: Students answer a quick prompt before leaving, such as "List one way you used positive self-talk today" or "Identify a strength you used during this lesson".
- Four Corners: Designate corners of the room as "Strongly Agree," "Agree," etc., and have students move to a corner based on statements like "Mistakes are the best way to learn" to gauge their growth mindset.
- Think-Pair-Share: Students discuss a specific obstacle they faced and how they could turn it into an opportunity before sharing with the class.
- Emoji Ratings: Use a quick visual scale for students to rate their current emotional state or confidence level in a new skill like goal setting.

Summative Assessments:

- Personal Growth Portfolio: A collection of student work, including their short-term and long-term goals, self-reflection journals, and evidence of organization.
- Character Blueprint Project: Students create a "blueprint" of their identity, detailing their values, strengths, and a plan for maintaining basic hygiene and healthy social relationships.
- Unit Exam: A traditional assessment containing scenario-based questions where students must choose the best way to handle a conflict using body language or growth mindset strategies.

Common Benchmark Assessments:

Quarterly Goal Review: A standardized check-in where all students review their short-term goals and provide data on their progress to ensure they are on track with the NJSLS-CHPE standards for self-management.

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Mindset journals, scenario cards, growth vs fixed anchor charts, body language / personal space visuals, hygiene kits, biographies of famous people, fidgets, chromebooks for digital journals or slide show presentations, crafting supplies for collages

Accommodations and Modifications:

Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts - Personal Glossary - Extended Time - Simplified/Verbal Instructions - Frequent Breaks - Visual learning, including graphic organizers - Use of cognates to increase comprehension - Teacher modeling - Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills - Scaffolding - Word walls - Think-pair-share - Cooperative learning groups

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection - Alternative Assessments - Learning Contracts - Homogenous Grouping - Supplemental Instruction - Think-Pair-Share by Readiness - Homework Options - Differentiated Online Practice - Leveled Rubrics - Tiered Level of Supports - Tiered Activities - Small Group Instruction - Work Alone Choice - Group Work Choice

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.
-Homogenous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

Unit 2

Desired Results

Unit 2 Title: Conversations

Unit Summary: This unit of study focuses on helping students develop the skills needed to have effective, respectful, and meaningful conversations. Students learn how to listen actively, speak clearly, ask thoughtful questions, and respond appropriately to others' ideas. The unit emphasizes turn-taking, building on others' thoughts, expressing agreement or disagreement respectfully, and using evidence to support opinions. Through structured discussions, role-play, and collaborative activities, students practice communication strategies that promote understanding, empathy, and productive dialogue in both academic and real-world settings.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

NJSLS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

- Self-Awareness: Identifying emotions, personal values, and strengths.
- Self-Management: Developing a growth mindset, setting short- and long-term goals, and managing personal organization.

- Relationship Skills: Utilizing effective communication to navigate social relationships and respect diverse perspectives.
- Responsible Decision-Making: Learning from mistakes and taking responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Social Awareness: Recognizing thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others, and demonstrating awareness of differences, the need for respect and awareness of social expectations.

L.SS.6.1. Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.

L.KL.6.2. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

L.VI.6.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings

SL.PE.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.II.6.2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.ES.6.3. Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

SL.PI.6.4. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).

SL.UM.6.5. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

SL.AS.6.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Standard 9.4 highlights key literacies and technical skills that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option

Computer Science & Design Thinking ***(****CS & DT****)*:

- 8.2.8.ED.3: Develop a proposal for a solution to a real-world problem
- 8.2.8.ED.2: Identify the steps in the design process that could be used to solve a problem.
- 8.1.8.IC.1: Compare the trade-offs associated with computing technologies that affect an individual's everyday activities and career options.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Concept of Identity & Literature: Analyze character development in novels by identifying the protagonist's personal values and how they navigate social relationships.
- Argumentative Speaking: Debate the impact of body language and positive self-talk on public speaking and persuasive communication.

Social Studies & History

- Historical Resilience: Study historical figures through the lens of a growth mindset, analyzing how they adapted to challenges to change society.
- Civic Responsibility: Connect taking responsibility to the duties of a citizen, exploring how individual choices affect the local and global community.
- Cultural Identity: Examine how personal space and social norms vary across different cultures and time periods.

Mathematics

- Data & Goal Setting: Use short-term and long-term goals to track academic progress. Students can graph their own growth (e.g., multiplication fluency or test scores) to see the physical data of a growth mindset.

- Organization & Logic: Apply organization skills to complex multi-step problem solving, requiring students to plan their "work flow" before starting a calculation.

Science

- The Biology of Emotions: Explore the nervous system and the "fight or flight" response to understand why managing emotions is a biological challenge, not just a mental one.

Physical Education & Fine Arts

- PE (Teamwork): Practice body language and social relationships during team sports, focusing on how perseverance through a losing game builds resilience.
- Art (Visual Identity): Create "Identity Masks" or "Value Collages" that visually represent a student's strengths and personal values.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:	**Unit Enduring Understandings:**
Year 1 • How do tone, body language, and word choice affect meaning? • What does it truly mean to listen? • When is it better to ask questions instead of making statements? **Year 2** • What is the difference between reacting and responding?	**Year 1** • Tone, body language, and word choice affect how messages are received. • Listening carefully is just as important as expressing ideas clearly. • People use conversations to learn, solve problems, and make decisions together. **Year 2**

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- How do assumptions interfere with understanding?
- How can we express strong feelings without escalating conflict?
- Why is listening sometimes more powerful than speaking?

Year 3

- What makes a conversation meaningful rather than just an exchange of words?
- How do conversations shape relationships?
- How does intention influence the outcome of a conversation?
- How can we tell when someone feels heard?

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- Effective conversations require both speaking and listening.
- Different situations call for different types of conversations.
- How we speak with friends, teachers, or in formal discussions may vary.
- People may interpret the same message differently based on their experiences and perspectives.

Year 3

- Conversations help people understand each other's ideas, feelings, and perspectives.
- Through discussion, people share experiences and build empathy.
- Respectful conversations build stronger relationships and communities.
- Asking thoughtful questions helps conversations grow and deepen understanding.
- Productive conversations require openness to new ideas and the willingness to revise thinking.

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<td colspan="2">Vocabulary: Conversation, Dialogue, Discussion, Speaker, Listener, Turn-taking, Active listening, Attention, Clarify Summarize, Respond, Express, Explain, Elaborate, Respect, Perspective, Disagree, Agree, Compromise, Question, Open-ended question, Closed question, Probe, Body language, Eye contact, Facial expression, Tone</td>
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<td colspan="2">Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate active listening by maintaining attention and responding appropriately.

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- Summarize key ideas shared by a conversation partner.
- Ask clarifying questions to better understand another person's ideas.
- Express ideas clearly during a conversation.
- Elaborate on thoughts by adding details or examples.
- Use appropriate tone and word choice for different conversation settings.
- Practice turn-taking during discussions.
- Respond respectfully to different opinions.
- Build on others' ideas during group conversations.
- Ask thoughtful questions to deepen a conversation.
- Recognize different perspectives during discussions.

Learning Activities & Differentiation: *(Amistad & Holocaust, Asian American & Pacific Islanders, Climate Change, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI])*

1. Partner Conversations: Students discuss a prompt with a partner (e.g., favorite hobby, weekend plans, or a class topic).
Skills practiced: Turn-taking, Listening, Responding to a partner
Differentiation: Provide sentence starters such as "I agree with you because..." or "Can you explain more about...?", use visual conversation rules charts, allow extra thought time, pair with a supportive peer.

2. Think–Pair–Share: Students think about a question. Next, discuss their idea with a partner. Students will then share ideas with the whole class.
Skills practiced: Organizing thoughts, explaining ideas, listening to multiple perspectives
Differentiation: Pre-teach key vocabulary, provide visuals and examples, allow students to practice in pairs first, use structured conversation prompts

3. Conversation Role-Play: Students will act out different scenarios such as: Meeting a new student, asking for help, solving a disagreement
Skills practiced: Tone and body language, respectful responses, problem-solving
Differentiation: Pre-teach key vocabulary, provide visuals and examples, use structured conversation prompts, lead

small group discussions, facilitate class conversations, ask deeper follow-up questions, analyze how conversations change in different situations.

4. Question Building Activity: Students will practice creating open-ended questions as well as follow-up questions. After developing questions, they will interview a partner and ask at least 3 follow-up questions.

Differentiation: Pre-teach key vocabulary, provide visuals and examples, use structured conversation prompts, facilitate class conversations

5. Small Group Discussions: Students will discuss a topic in groups of 3–4 using conversation rules that include taking turns, listening without interrupting, and building on someone else's idea.

Differentiation: Pre-teach key vocabulary, provide visuals and examples, use structured conversation prompts, facilitate class conversations

6. Conversation Reflection: After discussions, students reflect: What went well? Did I listen carefully? Did I ask questions?

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Conversation Checklists: Have students practice conversations in pairs while you observe with a checklist
- Think–Pair–Share: Ask a question, let students think individually, discuss with a partner, and then share with the class.
- Conversation Role-Play

Summative Assessments:

- Conversation Portfolio: Students submit a collection of work from the unit.
- Conversation Script + Performance: Students write and perform a conversation.

Common Benchmark Assessments: Quarterly Goal Review: A standardized check-in where all students review their short-term goals and provide data on their progress to ensure they are on track with the NJSLS-CHPE standards for self-management.

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Conversation journals and packets, scenario cards, body language / personal space visuals, fidgets, chromebooks for digital journals or slide show presentations, crafting supplies for collages, white boards

Accommodations and Modifications: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

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Unit 3

Desired Results

Unit 3 Title: How to form and maintain relationships

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will explore the skills needed to build and maintain healthy relationships with peers, family members, and others in their community. Students will learn how effective communication, active listening, empathy, respect, and cooperation help develop positive connections with others. Through discussions, role-playing activities, and collaborative tasks, students will practice starting conversations, showing interest in others, resolving conflicts, and maintaining friendships over time. The unit will also focus on understanding different perspectives, managing emotions, and demonstrating kindness and responsibility in relationships. By the end of the unit, students will be able to apply these social and communication skills to build stronger and more positive relationships in everyday life.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

NJSLS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

- Self-Awareness: Identifying emotions, personal values, and strengths.

- Self-Management: Developing a growth mindset, setting short- and long-term goals, and managing personal organization.
- Relationship Skills: Utilizing effective communication to navigate social relationships and respect diverse perspectives.
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Standard 9.4 highlights key literacies and technical skills that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy.

Interdisciplinary Connections

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Social Studies & History

- Historical Resilience: Study historical figures through the lens of a growth mindset, analyzing how they adapted to challenges to change society.

- Civic Responsibility: Connect taking responsibility to the duties of a citizen, exploring how individual choices affect the local and global community.
- Cultural Identity: Examine how personal space and social norms vary across different cultures and time periods.

Mathematics

- Data & Goal Setting: Use short-term and long-term goals to track academic progress. Students can graph their own growth (e.g., multiplication fluency or test scores) to see the physical data of a growth mindset.
- Organization & Logic: Apply organization skills to complex multi-step problem solving, requiring students to plan their "work flow" before starting a calculation.

Science

- The Biology of Emotions: Explore the nervous system and the "fight or flight" response to understand why managing emotions is a biological challenge, not just a mental one.

Physical Education & Fine Arts

- PE (Teamwork): Practice body language and social relationships during team sports, focusing on how perseverance through a losing game builds resilience.
- Art (Visual Identity): Create "Identity Masks" or "Value Collages" that visually represent a student's strengths and personal values.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:	**Unit Enduring Understandings:**
Year 1 • How do our words and actions impact others? • How can we show kindness and support in our relationships?	**Year 1** • Our words, actions, and attitudes affect the quality of our relationships with others.

• What skills help people start and maintain friendships? **Year 2** • Why are respect and empathy important when interacting with others? • How do communication and listening affect relationships? • How can we build trust with friends, family, and peers? **Year 3** • What makes a healthy relationship? • What can we do when disagreements or conflicts happen in relationships?	• Positive relationships require effort, cooperation, and kindness from everyone involved. **Year 2** • Effective communication and active listening help people understand one another and strengthen relationships. • Everyone has different feelings, perspectives, and experiences that should be respected. • Building and maintaining relationships is an important life skill that helps people succeed socially, emotionally, and academically. **Year 3** • Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect, communication, and empathy. • Conflicts and disagreements are normal, but they can be resolved through respectful communication and problem-solving.
Vocabulary: Relationship, Communication, Active Listening, Empathy, Respect, Trust, Cooperation, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Compromise, Body Language, Perspective, Friendship, Kindness, Responsibility, Boundaries	
Students will be able to:	

- Identify key characteristics of healthy relationships such as trust, respect, and communication.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills, including speaking clearly and actively listening to others.
- Explain the importance of empathy and understanding different perspectives in relationships.
- Practice appropriate ways to start and maintain conversations with peers and adults.
- Use cooperation and teamwork skills when working with others.
- Recognize common causes of conflicts in relationships.
- Apply strategies for resolving disagreements respectfully and peacefully.
- Demonstrate kindness, respect, and responsibility when interacting with others.
- Reflect on their own communication and relationship-building skills and identify ways to improve.

Learning Activities & Differentiation: *(Amistad & Holocaust, Asian American & Pacific Islanders, Climate Change, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI])*

1. Relationship Brainstorm: Students brainstorm qualities of good relationships (friendship, family, teamwork). Create a class chart with ideas such as trust, respect, honesty, and communication.

Differentiation: Provide sentence starters (e.g., "I agree with you because..." or "I feel..."), Use visual supports such as charts or cue cards for conversation skills, allow smaller group discussions instead of whole-class speaking, model examples of conversations before activities.

2. Conversation Role-Play: Students work in pairs and practice short scenarios such as: Introducing themselves to someone new, asking someone to join a group activity, giving a compliment, resolving a disagreement. After each role-play, students discuss what worked well.
Differentiation: Have students create their own role-play scenarios about relationships, ask students to lead a small group discussion on communication or conflict resolution, encourage deeper reflection through extended writing or presentations.

3. Active Listening Practice: Students pair up. One student talks about a topic for one minute while the other practices active listening (eye contact, nodding, asking questions). Then they switch roles.
Differentiation: Provide sentence starters (e.g., "I agree with you because..." or "I feel..."), Use visual supports such as charts or cue cards for conversation skills, allow smaller group discussions instead of whole-class speaking, model examples of conversations before activities.

4. Perspective-Taking Activity: Present a scenario where two friends disagree. Students discuss: How each person might feel, What each person might be thinking, What they could say to solve the problem
Differentiation: Provide sentence starters (e.g., "I agree with you because..." or "I feel..."), Use visual supports such as charts or cue cards for conversation skills, allow smaller group discussions instead of whole-class speaking, model examples of conversations before activities.

5. Conflict Resolution Scenarios: Provide students with short conflict situations (e.g., two friends want the same item, someone feels left out). In small groups, students decide how the problem could be solved respectfully.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Reflective Journals
- Role-Play Scenarios
- Think-Pair-Share Discussions

- Exit Tickets
- Self-Assessment Checklists
- Case Study Analysis
- Quick Writes / Scenario Responses

Summative Assessments:

- Personal Relationship Portfolio
- Role-Play Performance Task
- Group Presentation or Workshop
- Real-Life Application Reflection

Common Benchmark Assessments: Quarterly Goal Review: A standardized check-in where all students review their short-term goals and provide data on their progress to ensure they are on track with the NJSLS-CHPE standards for self-management.

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Conversation journals and packets, scenario cards, body language / personal space visuals, fidgets, chromebooks for digital journals or slide show presentations, crafting supplies for collages, white boards

Accommodations and Modifications: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:
Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts - Personal Glossary - Extended Time - Simplified/Verbal Instructions - Frequent Breaks - Visual learning, including graphic organizers - Use of cognates to increase comprehension - Teacher modeling - Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills - Scaffolding - Word walls - Think-pair-share - Cooperative learning groups

Students at Risk of Failure

- Home/School Connection - Alternative Assessments - Learning Contracts - Homogenous Grouping - Supplemental Instruction - Think-Pair-Share by Readiness - Homework Options - Differentiated Online Practice - Leveled Rubrics - Tiered Level of Supports - Tiered Activities - Small Group Instruction - Work Alone Choice - Group Work Choice

Students with 504 Plans

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

-Homogenous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

Unit 4

Desired Results

Unit 4 Title: Self Regulation/Conflict Resolution

Unit Summary: The unit begins with internal management. Students learn to identify the physiological and psychological triggers of anxiety and anger. At the intermediate level, once students can regulate their own emotions, the focus shifts to bilateral interactions. This phase emphasizes the "social friction" common in middle school environments. The expert level moves beyond immediate reactions toward long-term emotional intelligence. Students analyze the root causes of destructive social patterns.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

NJSLS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

- Self-Awareness: Identifying emotions, personal values, and strengths.
- Self-Management: Developing a growth mindset, setting short- and long-term goals, and managing personal organization.
- Relationship Skills: Utilizing effective communication to navigate social relationships and respect diverse perspectives.
- Responsible Decision-Making: Learning from mistakes and taking responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Social Awareness: Recognizing thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others, and demonstrating awareness of differences, the need for respect and awareness of social expectations.

NJSLS Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (Grades 6-8)

2.1.8.EH.2: Analyze how personal attributes, resiliency, and protective factors support mental and emotional health.

2.1.8.SSH.3: Demonstrate communication skills that will support healthy relationships

NJSLS-ELA: Grade 8

SL.ES.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
SL.PI.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect

Computer Science & Design Thinking ***(****CS & DT****)*:

8.2.8.ED.4: Investigate a malfunctioning system, identify its impact, and explain the step-by-step process used to troubleshoot, evaluate, and test options to repair the product in a collaborative team.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Collaborative Conversations : Students must "acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views." This directly connects to the unit's Intermediate focus on accountability and Expert focus on reducing defensiveness.
- Character Analysis : By learning to identify their own "triggers" and "values," students gain a deeper technical vocabulary to analyze how a protagonist's internal values influence their navigation of social relationships in a novel.

Science

- Systems Thinking: Self-regulation can be taught as a "system" where inputs (stressors) lead to outputs (actions). Understanding how one part of a system—like a defensive reaction—affects the whole team reflects the concepts of "Cause and Effect"

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:

Year 1

- How does distinguishing between what I can control and what I cannot change my response to stress?
- In what ways do my physical "warning signs" (anger/anxiety) serve as useful data for my brain?
- How does a strong support system function like a "safety net" for my personal growth?

Year 2

- How does taking radical accountability for a mistake actually increase my influence and the trust others have in me?
- Why is "empathy" a necessary technical tool for effective conflict resolution and collaborative design?
- How can I transform a moment of embarrassment into a "learning iteration" rather than a social failure?

Year 3

Unit Enduring Understandings:

Year 1

- Emotional regulation begins with the ability to distinguish between external stressors (out of our control) and internal responses (within our control).
- Recognizing when and how to access support systems is a sign of strength and a primary strategy for maintaining mental health.

Year 2

- Accountability is not a weakness, but a tool for building trust and restoring social balance.
- Conflict is an inevitable part of human systems; success is defined not by the absence of friction, but by the ability to navigate it without escalating harm.
- Developing "social armor" against teasing and embarrassment allows an individual to remain focused on their goals rather than others' perceptions.

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- How does defensiveness impede a collaborative system, and how do I change my own reactions to stay open to feedback?
- In what ways does overcoming a negative mindset allow for more creative and technical innovation in a team environment?
- How does being less defensive foster long-term resilience rather than temporary compliance?

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Year 3

- Defensiveness creates a "closed system" that blocks growth, while a growth mindset creates an "open system" capable of continuous iteration and innovation.
- Long-term emotional intelligence requires deconstructing negative patterns and replacing defensiveness with learning.

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<tr>
<td colspan="2">Vocabulary: Physiological, triggers, self regulation strategies, proactive vs reactive strategies, de-escalation, social friction, resiliency, defensiveness, cognitive reframing, growth mindset</td>
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<td colspan="2">Students will be able to:

- Differentiate between internal factors they can control and external stressors they cannot, using the Circle of Control model.
- Identify personal physiological "early warning signs" of stress or anger and deploy at least two grounding strategies to maintain composure.
- Map a personal support network of trusted adults and peers to contact during emotional crises.
- Demonstrate "Radical Accountability" by verbally owning a mistake and proposing a solution without shifting blame.
- Apply de-escalation techniques to resolve interpersonal social friction or disagreements.
- Utilize "social armor" strategies to process teasing or embarrassment without sacrificing their personal values or escalating the conflict.
- Deconstruct their own defensive reactions during feedback sessions, replacing defensiveness with curiosity and active listening.</td>
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- Analyze how a "Growth Mindset" transforms a technical or social failure into a learning opportunity
- Synthesize their understanding of personal values to navigate complex relationships, mirroring the character analysis skills

Learning Activities & Differentiation: *(Amistad & Holocaust, Asian American & Pacific Islanders, Climate Change, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI])*

1. Students map their "Circle of Control" relative to Climate Change. They discuss "Climate Anxiety"—distinguishing between global environmental shifts (outside control) and personal/local sustainability actions (inside control).

Differentiation: (People with Disabilities): Provide sensory-based grounding tools (fidgets, weighted lap pads) or digital "calm-down" apps with screen-reader compatibility for students with sensory processing needs.

2. Use case studies or literature excerpts to discuss "handling teasing." Students analyze the difference between harmless joking and microaggressions or "othering."

Differentiation: (LGBTQ+): Ensure role-play scenarios include diverse family structures and gender identities, focusing on "social armor" strategies that affirm a student's right to identity while maintaining safety.

3. Analyze the Growth Mindset of historical figures who overcame systemic negativity.
    - Holocaust: Study "Upstander" behavior—how individuals overcame the fear of social embarrassment or danger to protect others.

Differentiation: (Multi-Language Learners): Use "Sentence Frames" for analyzing complex historical themes

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- The "Control Sort" (Digital or Physical): Give students a list of scenarios (e.g., *a rainy day*, *a mean comment*, *a failing grade*, *a friend's bad mood*). Students must categorize them into "Within My Control" or "Outside My Control."
- The "Grounding Minute": At the start of class, students lead a 60-second grounding exercise. Assessment is based on their ability to explain *why* they chose that specific technique for a specific stressor (e.g., "I used 5-4-3-2-1 because I felt sensory overload").
- Climate Anxiety Check-in: A quick poll (using tools like Mentimeter or a paper slip) asking: "What is one local action you can control regarding climate change to reduce feeling overwhelmed?"
- The "Accountability Script": After a hypothetical conflict scenario, students must write a three-sentence response using an accountability template: "I did [Action]. It caused [Consequence]. Next time I will [Solution]."
- Micro-Role Plays): In pairs, students practice a "soft-start" response to a microaggression. Teacher circulates with a checklist to observe de-escalation language and "social armor" techniques.
- "Armor" Journal Entry: Students write a 1-paragraph reflection on a time they felt embarrassed. They must identify which "strategy" they used (or could have used) to prevent the situation from escalating.
- Upstander "Exit Ticket": Students answer: "How did [Historical Figure] overcome the negativity of their environment to take a stand?" This assesses their ability to connect resilience to historical advocacy.
- The "Vulnerability Survey": An anonymous Google Form where students identify one area where they tend to be defensive. They set one "micro-goal" for the week to replace that defense with curiosity.

Summative Assessments:

- Students select a figure from history or themselves and write a multi-paragraph analysis or create a digital presentation. Analyze how this individual navigated systemic "social friction" using the unit's skills. Requirements could include identifying the individual's core values, explaining a moment they chose proactive action over a reactive one and describing how they overcame negativity or defensiveness from others to achieve their goal.
- Unit Exam

Common Benchmark Assessments:

Quarterly Goal Review: A standardized check-in where all students review their short-term goals and provide data on their progress to ensure they are on track with the NJSLS-CHPE standards for self-management.

Alternative Assessments:

- Thoughts-Feelings-Action Comics: Students design a comic strip showing how a specific internal trigger leads to a feeling and an eventual action.
- "What Would You Do?" Digital Storytelling: Groups create a video vignette or "radio show" featuring a common middle school social friction point. Peers must analyze the characters' intentions and suggest alternative de-escalation scripts.
- "Stress-Busting" Playlists & Reflections: Students curate a musical playlist that helps them regulate specific emotions (e.g., anxiety vs. anger) and write a reflection on why each song is effective for their physiology.
- Interactive Decision-Making Games: Using platforms like Canva or Google Slides, students build a "choose your own adventure" game where players must make responsible choices to navigate a social conflict.
- Body Check-In Journals: A daily or weekly digital mood board where students use colors, emojis, or abstract art to track their physiological states and growth in self-awareness.

- I Used to Think... Now I Think: A final reflection task where students analyze how their understanding of "social friction" or "destructive patterns" has shifted throughout the unit.
- Coping Strategy Toolkits: Students design a physical or digital "toolkit" (e.g., an infographic, brochure, or coping strategy cards) featuring their top 5 personalized regulation techniques.

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Emotional regulations visuals including posters and task cards to help students identify physical "triggers," regulation strategy cards

Accommodations and Modifications: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

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-Homogenous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

Unit 5

Desired Results

Unit 5 Title: Social Awareness

Unit Summary: This unit begins with the foundational "Civic Self," focusing on personal integrity and the courage to act. As students progress to the intermediate level, they examine the psychological barriers—such as stereotypes and social anxiety—that prevent authentic connection. At the expert level, students transition from quiet leadership to public advocacy, mastering the art of influential communication to lead community change, specifically in the area of public speaking.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

NJSLS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

- Self-Awareness: Identifying emotions, personal values, and strengths.
- Self-Management: Developing a growth mindset, setting short- and long-term goals, and managing personal organization.
- Relationship Skills: Utilizing effective communication to navigate social relationships and respect diverse perspectives.
- Responsible Decision-Making: Learning from mistakes and taking responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Social Awareness: Recognizing thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others, and demonstrating awareness of differences, the need for respect and awareness of social expectations.

NJSLS Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (Grades 6-8)

2.1.8.SSH.2:2.1.8.SSH.2: Develop a plan for the school to promote dignity and respect for people of all genders, gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations in the school community.

2.1.8.PGD.1: Explain how appropriate health care can promote personal health.

2.1.8.EH.1: Compare and contrast stress management strategies that are used to address various types of stress-induced situations (e.g., academics, family, personal relationships, finances, celebrations, violence)

2.1.8.EH.2: Analyze how personal attributes, resiliency, and protective factors support mental and emotional health.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.8.CT.2: Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option
- 9.4.8.TL.3: Use digital tools to collaborate and communicate ideas to a diverse audience.

Computer Science & Design Thinking *(CS & DT)*:

- 8.2.8.ED.3: Develop a proposal for a solution to a real-world problem
- 8.2.8.ED.2: Identify the steps in the design process that could be used to solve a problem.
- 8.1.8.IC.1: Compare the trade-offs associated with computing technologies that affect an individual's everyday activities and career options.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies & History

- Civic Responsibility: Connect taking responsibility to the duties of a citizen, exploring how individual choices affect the local and global community. Students evaluate the necessity of government and construct arguments regarding human rights and by having students take informed action on a local issue.
- English Language Arts (ELA): Informative Writing & Advocacy focuses on writing informative or explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas. They can craft persuasive arguments or scripts for their public advocacy

Visual & Performing Arts: Media Arts & Influence

- Involves creating and distributing media artworks that communicate a specific message to an audience. Students can use digital storytelling tools or 3D modeling to create visual representations of the "Civic Self" or to produce influential media for their community change projects.

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions:	**Unit Enduring Understandings:**
Year 1 • How do my personal choices contribute to the safety and health of my community? **Year 2** • In what ways do stereotypes and social fears limit our ability to lead others? **Year 3** • How can I use my voice and public presence to advocate for those who are marginalized?	**Year 1** • Understanding that being a citizen starts with daily choices and personal safety. **Year 2** • Moving beyond the "Bystander Effect" to actively intervene in bullying and social injustice. • Identifying how small-scale leadership (helping a peer, making safe choices) builds the foundation for larger roles. • Analyzing how preconceived notions create "social friction" and prevent inclusive leadership.

	Year 3 • Developing the emotional tools to stay regulated in high-pressure social environments, allowing for more authentic interactions. • Learning to organize thoughts and project confidence to inspire an audience. • Shifting focus from personal behavior to systemic improvement; identifying local issues and proposing solutions. • Moving from intervening in a single moment of bullying to becoming a public voice for cultural change.
Vocabulary: Civic duty, upstander, bystander effect, impulse control, physiological trigger, stereotype, implicit bias, social anxiety, de-escalation, cognitive reframing, oratory, civil discourse	
Students will be able to: • Identify physiological and psychological triggers of anxiety and anger to apply immediate self-regulation strategies. • Evaluate the impact of personal choices on community safety, demonstrating Responsible Decision-Making (CASEL).	

- Differentiate between bystander and upstander behaviors, creating an action plan to intervene in bullying or social injustice.
- Model "positive contributions" by identifying daily opportunities for leadership within the school environment.
- Analyze the origin of stereotypes and their role in creating "social friction" within middle school peer groups.
- Employ de-escalation techniques and active listening to navigate bilateral interactions and resolve conflicts.
- Apply cognitive reframing techniques to manage social anxiety, allowing for more authentic participation in group settings.
- Map the "Empathy Phase" of the Design Thinking process to understand diverse perspectives before proposing social solutions.
- Conduct a root cause analysis to identify the underlying drivers of destructive social patterns (e.g., exclusion, rumors).
- Utilize data visualization tools to transform community surveys into evidence-based arguments for social change
- Deliver a persuasive public speech to advocate for a specific community improvement.
- Facilitate civil discourse, demonstrating the ability to lead a group toward consensus while respecting dissenting viewpoints.

Learning Activities & Differentiation: *(Amistad & Holocaust, Asian American & Pacific Islanders, Climate Change, LGBTQ*

and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI])

1. Activity: The "Upstander Archetype" Case Studies (Amistad/Holocaust/AAPI): Students analyze historical figures who acted as upstanders during periods of injustice (e.g., the Underground Railroad, the Danish Resistance during the Holocaust, or AAPI civil rights leaders like Yuri Kochiyama).

Differentiation: Provide a "Choice Board" where students can select a medium to present their findings (e.g., a digital poster, a recorded "interview" with the figure, or a written journal entry).

2. Activity: Designing a "Safe School" Algorithm (LGBTQ+/Disability Inclusion): Using Computer Science logic, students create a flow chart for reporting and addressing biased language.

Inclusion: Specifically address the use of inclusive language and the physical accessibility of school spaces for people with disabilities.

Differentiation: Provide sentence stems and pre-made "logic blocks" for students with language processing needs.

3. Activity: The "Human Library" of Perspectives (DEI/AAPI/LGBTQ+):Students explore "stories" (via short videos or guest speakers) from diverse backgrounds to identify and dismantle common stereotypes. They practice Active Listening and Cognitive Reframing to manage their own social anxieties during the process.

Differentiation: Use "Guided Viewing" sheets with timestamps for videos to help students with ADHD or auditory processing needs focus on key moments.

4. Activity: "Systems of Support" Mapping (People with Disabilities): Students use Design Thinking to audit the school's "Social Friction" points for neurodivergent students or those with physical disabilities.

Differentiation: Offer graphic organizers with icons for visual learners to map out physical and social barriers.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- The "Traffic Light" Check-In: Students use a digital form or physical cards to categorize their current state. (Red: High trigger/Anger, Yellow: Anxiety, Green: Regulated).

- "Upstander" Logic Flow: A quick Computer Science-linked activity where students map an "If/Then" algorithm for a specific bullying scenario (e.g., "If I see a mean comment online, then I will...").
- The 3-2-1 Exit Ticket:
    - 3 Physiological triggers identified.
    - 2 Ways a leader makes a safe decision.
    - 1 Question about being a "Civic Upstander."
- Stereotype "Mystery Box": Students write a common stereotype on a slip of paper. You pull them anonymously to discuss as a class, using Mentimeter for real-time, anonymous polling on how these make students feel.
- The "Anxiety Anchor" Journal: A 2-minute "stop and jot" after a simulated social interaction where students identify one Cognitive Reframing thought they used to stay calm.
- Empathy Maps: A Design Thinking sketch where students identify what a peer involved in a "social friction" moment is *Thinking*, *Feeling*, *Seeing*, *and Hearing*. Use Jamboard or Miro for collaborative mapping.

Summative Assessments:

- The Civic Decision Algorithm: Students design a comprehensive flow chart that maps out responsible decisions for three common school scenarios: bullying, physical safety, and digital citizenship.
- Historical "Upstander" Portfolio: A research project where students profile a leader from the Amistad, Holocaust, or AAPI commissions, analyzing how their "Civic Duty" impacted society.

- Stereotype Deconstruction Workshop: Groups identify a common stereotype (related to DEI, LGBTQ+, or Disability) and create a "Design Thinking" presentation. They must show an Empathy Map of those affected and propose a structural change to the school environment to reduce this "social friction."
- Social Anxiety "Toolkit" Video: Students script and film a "How-To" guide for peers, demonstrating Cognitive Reframing and De-escalation techniques.

Common Benchmark Assessments:

- Quarterly Goal Review: A standardized check-in where all students review their short-term goals and provide data on their progress to ensure they are on track with the NJSLS-CHPE standards for self-management.

Alternative Assessments:

- Interactive Decision Trees: Using Twine or Google Slides, students build a "Choose Your Own Adventure" game. Players must navigate a bullying scenario by making Responsible Decisions. If the player chooses a "Bystander" action, the game explains the social consequence and allows them to iterate their choice.
- The "Upstander" Podcast: Students record a 3-minute "interview" with a historical figure (from Amistad or Holocaust curricula) focusing on the *internal* courage required to fulfill their Civic Duty.
- Digital Empathy Maps: Instead of a worksheet, students use Miro or Canva to create a visual profile of a student facing Social Anxiety or Stereotypes. They must propose one Design Thinking solution to make a school space more inclusive for LGBTQ+ or Neurodivergent peers.

- De-escalation "Silent Film": Students film a video (without dialogue) using body language and facial expressions to demonstrate Physiological Regulation and the transition from Social Friction to resolution.

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Zones of Regulation posters, online polling like Mentimeter

Accommodations and Modifications: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

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It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

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Unit 6

Desired Results

Unit 6 Title: Digital Communication

Unit Summary: In this unit, students explored the role of digital communication in modern relationships and everyday interactions. They examine how communication through texting, social media, email, and other online platforms differs from face-to-face communication, particularly in terms of tone, clarity, and interpretation. Students learn strategies for communicating effectively and responsibly in digital spaces, including the use of respectful language, clear messaging, and appropriate timing. They also practiced skills such as interpreting tone without nonverbal cues, avoiding misunderstandings, and using digital tools to strengthen—not harm—relationships.

This unit emphasizes the importance of digital citizenship, including maintaining privacy, setting boundaries, and recognizing the impact of one's digital footprint. Students analyzed examples of both healthy and unhealthy online interactions, including cyberbullying, miscommunication, and oversharing. By the end of the unit, students will develop greater awareness of how their words and actions online affect others.

Learning Standards

NJSLS:

NJSLS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

- Self-Awareness: Identifying emotions, personal values, and strengths.
- Self-Management: Developing a growth mindset, setting short- and long-term goals, and managing personal organization.
- Relationship Skills: Utilizing effective communication to navigate social relationships and respect diverse perspectives.

- Responsible Decision-Making: Learning from mistakes and taking responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Social Awareness: Recognizing thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others, and demonstrating awareness of differences, the need for respect and awareness of social expectations.

NJSLS Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (Grades 6-8)
2.1.8.EH.2: Analyze how personal attributes, resiliency, and protective factors support mental and emotional health.
2.1.8.SSH.3: Demonstrate communication skills that will support healthy relationships.

NJSLS-ELA: Grade 8

SL.ES.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
SL.PI.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
SL.UM.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
SL.AS.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Standard 8.1 – Computer Science / Technology
8.1.C – Communication and Collaboration: Students use digital tools to communicate and collaborate effectively
8.1.D – Digital Citizenship: Students understand ethical, safe, and responsible behavior online
8.1.B – Creativity and Innovation: Students create and communicate ideas using digital tools

Interdisciplinary Connections

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills *(CLKS)*:

9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect

Computer Science & Design Thinking *(CS & DT)*:

8.2.8.ED.4: Investigate a malfunctioning system, identify its impact, and explain the step-by-step process used to troubleshoot, evaluate, and test options to repair the product in a collaborative team.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Collaborative Conversations : Students must "acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views." This directly connects to the unit's Intermediate focus on accountability and Expert focus on reducing defensiveness.
- Character Analysis : By learning to identify their own "triggers" and "values," students gain a deeper technical vocabulary to analyze how a protagonist's internal values influence their navigation of social relationships in a novel.

Science

- Systems Thinking: Self-regulation can be taught as a "system" where inputs (stressors) lead to outputs (actions). Understanding how one part of a system—like a defensive reaction—affects the whole team reflects the concepts of "Cause and Effect"

Learning Targets

Unit Essential Questions: **Year 1**	**Unit Enduring Understandings:** **Year 1** • Digital communication shapes relationships.

• How does digital communication shape our relationships and interactions? • What makes digital communication effective—or ineffective? • How does the absence of tone and body language affect understanding online? • What responsibilities do we have when communicating in digital spaces? • What does it mean to be a responsible digital citizen? • How do our online actions impact others—and ourselves? • What is a digital footprint, and why does it matter? • How can we balance freedom of expression with respect for others online? **Year 2** • Why do misunderstandings happen more easily in digital communication? • How can we clearly express tone and intent in messages? • When is digital communication appropriate vs. face-to-face communication? • How can digital communication strengthen or harm relationships?	• The way we communicate online influences trust, connection, and understanding in personal and professional relationships. • Effective digital communication requires clarity and empathy. • Tone and nonverbal cues are limited online, so intentional strategies are necessary. • Emojis, punctuation, timing, and phrasing can help convey intent and emotion. • Responsible digital behavior protects self and others. **Year 2** • Students should understand digital citizenship, including privacy, boundaries, online safety, and ethical behavior. • Digital interactions have lasting consequences. • Online actions create a digital footprint that can impact relationships, reputation, and opportunities over time. **Year 3** • Conflict can arise online, but it can be managed effectively. • Digital communication is a skill that can be developed and improved.

<table>
<tr>
<td>Year 3
What are healthy boundaries in online communication?
How should we handle conflict in digital spaces?
How can we evaluate whether a digital interaction is healthy or harmful?
What strategies can we use to prevent or resolve online conflict?
How can we use digital tools to build positive and meaningful connections?</td>
<td>Reflecting on past interactions and applying strategies leads to stronger, healthier relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Vocabulary: Year 1: Digital Communication, Message, Tone, Audience, Feedback, Emoji / Emoticon, Thread / Conversation Thread, Privacy, Direct Message (DM), Punctuation & Formatting. Year 2: Digital Citizenship, Digital Footprint, Cyberbullying, Netiquette , Clarity. Year 3: Boundaries, Conflict Resolution, Empathy, Active Listening, Respectful Communication, Digital Literacy, Misinformation / Disinformation, Ethics, Responsibility, Verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Students will be able to:
Communicate clearly and respectfully using digital tools (text, email, social media).
Interpret tone and meaning in online messages, including emojis, punctuation, and formatting.
Provide constructive feedback in digital conversations.
Use active listening and clarify understanding in digital interactions.
Explain the concept of a digital footprint and its long-term impact.
Demonstrate responsible and ethical behavior in digital spaces.
Identify and respond appropriately to cyberbullying, harassment, or unsafe online situations.
Set personal boundaries and respect others’ boundaries in digital communication.
Recognize healthy vs. unhealthy online interactions and relationships.</td>
</tr>
</table>

- Apply conflict resolution strategies in digital contexts.
- Demonstrate empathy and perspective-taking when communicating online.
- Evaluate online information for accuracy, bias, and credibility before sharing.
- Differentiate between reliable and misleading digital content.
- Use digital tools to collaborate and share ideas effectively.

Learning Activities & Differentiation: *(Amistad & Holocaust, Asian American & Pacific Islanders, Climate Change, LGBTQ and People with Disabilities, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [DEI])*

1. Communication Skills Practice: Role-plays: Students act out digital communication scenarios (conflict resolution, boundary setting, tone interpretation). Message Rewriting: Take unclear or poorly worded messages and rewrite them for clarity and respect.

Differentiation: Provide sentence starters or templates for students who need support. Allow video/audio responses for students who struggle with written communication.

2. Digital Citizenship & Ethics: Digital Footprint Exploration: Students search for their own digital footprint and reflect on privacy and long-term impact. Cyberbullying Case Studies: Analyze examples of online harassment and propose appropriate responses. Netiquette Scenarios: Identify correct and incorrect behaviors in simulated social media posts or emails.

Differentiation: Use guided worksheets or graphic organizers for students who need structure, Provide independent research opportunities for advanced learners. Pair students for peer-supported reflection on ethical dilemmas.

3. Relationship & Social Skills: Boundary-Setting Exercises: Students identify personal boundaries and practice expressing them digitally. Empathy Mapping: Students analyze an online interaction from multiple perspectives to understand feelings and reactions. Conflict Resolution Simulation: Groups negotiate and resolve a digital disagreement scenario.

Differentiation: Offer role options (observer, communicator, mediator) to match student strengths. Provide sentence stems for empathy responses for students who struggle with perspective-taking. Encourage journaling reflections for learners who process better in writing.

4. Critical Thinking & Media Literacy, Information Verification: Students research online claims and identify misinformation or bias. Message Analysis: Compare a professional vs. casual digital message and discuss tone, clarity, and impact. Scenario Problem-Solving: Analyze complex online situations and propose best practices for communication.

Differentiation: Provide checklists or guiding questions for evaluating sources, Assign simpler scenarios or pre-selected articles for struggling learners. Allow independent or group choice for advanced learners to tackle more complex content.

5. Reflection & Personal Growth:Digital Communication Journals: Reflect on personal habits, successes, and areas for improvement.Action Plan Creation: Develop a personal plan for safe, respectful, and effective online communication. Peer Feedback Sessions: Exchange feedback on communication skills and digital behavior.
Differentiation: Offer structured reflection prompts for students who need guidance. Encourage creative formats (video, infographic, or presentation) for expression. Provide one-on-one or small group conferencing for personalized feedback.

6. Optional Enrichment Activities: Debates: Discuss topics like privacy, social media responsibility, or freedom of speech online. Digital Communication Projects: Create tutorials, videos, or campaigns on netiquette and responsible behavior. Cross-Curricular Connections: Tie digital communication skills to health, career readiness, or literacy lessons.
Differentiation: Allow student choice for topic and format. Scaffold projects with checklists, timelines, and milestone checkpoints.

Assessment Evidence

Formative Assessments:

- Reflective Journals
- Role-Play Scenarios
- Think-Pair-Share Discussions
- Exit Tickets
- Self-Assessment Checklists
- Case Study Analysis
- Quick Writes / Scenario Responses

Summative Assessments:

- Personal Relationship Portfolio
- Role-Play Performance Task
- Group Presentation or Workshop
- Real-Life Application Reflection

Common Benchmark Assessments: Quarterly Goal Review: A standardized check-in where all students review their short-term goals and provide data on their progress to ensure they are on track with the NJSLS-CHPE standards for self-management.

Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials

Computers, laptops, or tablets with internet access, Email or messaging platforms for practice (e.g., Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Slack) Social media examples (screen captures or simulations for analysis) Online discussion boards or forums, Videos or short clips illustrating digital communication skills, tone, and etiquette, Tutorials on digital citizenship, online safety, and privacy, Infographics about digital footprints, cyberbullying, or online safety Vocabulary lists and glossaries, Worksheets on communication strategies, conflict resolution, and reflection prompts,

Accommodations and Modifications: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

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