

Morning Meetings and Calming Corners

Many of our elementary teachers incorporated a couple new measures into their classrooms this year in order to increase social emotional support. The training and materials were made possible thanks to the Aware Grant. In 2019 the school district in conjunction with Heartland Counseling received the Aware Grant to better help students and families deal with stress and adversity. This grant has definitely increased access to mental health services for students, but more importantly it works in preventive ways by teaching students to cope and self-regulate. The grant has also educated teachers and staff on Trauma Informed School Practices, funds site-based Mental Health Therapists, and introduced **Morning Meetings and Calming Corners**.

What is a morning meeting?

Morning meeting is an intentional way to transition students from home to school. Ideally, morning meetings occur for 15-20 minutes at the beginning of the day to set the tone for respectful learning, establish a climate of trust, motivate students to feel significant, create empathy and encourage collaboration, and support social, emotional, and academic learning. This practice builds a sense of community and sets your students up for success both academically and socially.

There are 4 parts to a morning meeting:

Greeting--Students and teacher greet one another by name

Sharing--Students given a prompt to share something about themselves, classmates given opportunity to empathetically respond or ask questions

Activity--A teamwork activity that encourages social/emotional skills (could be an academic activity that encourages teamwork or cooperation)

Morning message--Students/Teacher gives a message about what to expect for the day.

What is a calming corner?

A place students can go when they identify the need to regulate themselves. It provides students with a safe space to process emotions and feelings. A calming corner teaches students life long coping skills, cuts down on classroom management issues, and takes some of the burden off of you as a teacher. A calming corner is not used as a punishment or a timeout.

What do students do in the calm corner?

- Set a timer. (3-5 minutes)
- Do a feelings check.
- Use a calming strategy.
- Do a feelings check.
- If calm, return to activity or debrief with the teacher.
- If not calm, use the same strategy or choose a different strategy
- Do a feelings check.
- Return when calm or with adult support.



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