

In a recent survey conducted by Meadow Point Elementary's Parent Teacher Community Organization (PTCO), families identified the greatest opportunity to enhance the student's experience was around social emotional learning (SEL). The survey data was shared and reviewed by the Guiding Coalition, made up of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Instructional Coach, mental health team, and key teachers. The Guiding Coalition recognized that while families may see the need for SEL for their students, they may not always be aware of the specific and direct ways that SEL is integrated into the existing curriculum and classroom activities.

To bridge this gap, the mental health team and the community liaison created a monthly column in the principal's existing weekly newsletter. The school social worker and psychologist alternated months writing and researching topics, while the community liaison reviewed the articles to be more accessible to families. The completed articles were then sent to the principal for review and inclusion in the weekly newsletter. This process showed parents that the school values the feedback they contribute to PTCO surveys, and more importantly, demonstrated the school's commitment to partnership in an area that parents felt has the greatest opportunity to improve their student's educational experience.

The column focused on exposing families to the SEL that is happening at school and providing at-home resources for families to further support their students' SEL development. The initial articles focused on defining social emotional learning, introducing the mental health team, and then continued with various SEL skills such as the Zones of Regulation, mindfulness meditation, etc. Specific exercises and SEL practices teachers did in the classroom were highlighted in the ongoing SEL article series. Each article concluded with a link for additional resources or tips for how to practice at home.

The nature of this communication is one-way, so it was difficult to evaluate its effectiveness at meeting the initial goal. There is data available about the number of clicks the newsletter received and its overall viewership, but nothing specific to the SEL articles themselves.

In replicating the practice, it would be worthwhile to collect the SEL classroom activities at the initial planning stage when enthusiasm is at its highest, and then use this collection of activities to drive article content throughout the year. Another way to improve the practice would be to build in two-way dialogue with the families about what they learned or practiced from the SEL articles or what additional questions they might have. If there is enough interest, a discussion group of parents wanting to talk further about SEL could be created and certainly, a follow up survey to see if SEL still remains the topic of greatest opportunity to improve student's experience.

### What are the Zones of Regulation?

Meadow Point Elementary uses several strategies to promote self-regulation in order to maximize learning time. One strategy that Meadow Point uses is the Zones of Regulation curriculum, as well as other social emotional curriculum as needed. The Zones of Regulation provides an easy way to think and talk about how we feel on the inside and sorts emotions into four colored Zones, blue, all of which are expected in life.



Feelings are complicated. They come in different sizes, intensities, and levels of energy that are unique within our brains and bodies. To make them easier to talk about, think about, and regulate, The Zones of Regulation organizes our feelings, states of alertness, and energy levels into four colored Zones – Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red. The simple, common language and visual structure of The Zones of Regulation helps make the complex skill of regulation more concrete for learners and those who support them. We learn to regulate our Zones to meet our goals and task demands, as well as support our overall well-being.