



# STORIES OF WELL-BEING, CONNECTION, AND EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

## AN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE AND PROTOCOL FOR ADOPTING A PRACTICE

To help educators equitably serve the whole-person needs of their communities, WestEd created an audio gallery of stories from American public schools and districts that are taking innovative, evidence-based approaches to this work. Because this audio gallery intends to help other school and district leaders change their own practices through inspiration and information, WestEd has also developed a series of steps you may take to introduce, adapt, implement, monitor, and refine any of the practices described in these stories to your own team.

### Introduce and Adapt a Practice

The goal of this stage is to create the foundation for adapting this practice to the unique strengths, needs, and hopes of your own school community.

- 1 CONSIDER YOUR WHY.** Start by reflecting on your “why.” What need(s) are you hoping to address or what strength(s) are you hoping to fortify? Does this practice meet those needs? If there are multiple practices you want to adopt, plan a sequence.
- 2 LISTEN. THEN LISTEN AGAIN.** Listen to the audiocast you want to focus on a few times, spaced out over a week or two. Explore the brief and related resources. Think about what it would take for this practice to thrive in your school. This personal prework prepares you to thoughtfully implement the practice in your school community.
- 3 FORM YOUR TEAM.** Adopting a new practice schoolwide requires significant, sustained effort. Take the time to build deep support with a small leadership team. Give this team plenty of time to complete the previous two steps. Discuss their ideas about implementing the practice and which resources they found helpful.
- 4 CONSIDER A VARIETY OF DATA.** As a leadership team, consider diverse sources of data to determine whether this practice is a good fit, including *student data* (e.g., academic success, absences, engagement levels), *staff data* (e.g., teacher engagement, turnover rate), and *family data* (e.g., attendance at a school function, involvement in schoolwork). If the practice still seems like a good fit, proceed to Stage 2 (Implement and Monitor the Practice). If after considering your community needs your team determines that this practice isn't a good fit for your context, listen to a few other audiocasts and choose a practice that is a better match.

#### The **BEYOND SEL Audio Gallery**

is a series of stories that capture promising practices shaping the landscape of social and emotional learning and support in schools across the country.

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[beyondsel.wested.org](https://beyondsel.wested.org)

## Implement, Monitor, and Refine the Practice

The goal of this stage is to develop a shared vision for this practice at your school and to develop an initial implementation plan for the strategy.

- 1 INTRODUCE THE STORY TO YOUR COLLEAGUES.** In an all-staff meeting, share your story of discovering this practice. Include details such as how you felt when you listened the first time and how it connects to your personal practice. Encourage your leadership team to tell their stories as well. Distribute the resource brief for the audiocast and point out the guiding questions. Then ask staff to listen to the audiocast and think through the questions; this can be done alongside other work, such as while tidying their classrooms, driving home, or taking a walk.
- 2 PONDER THE CONCEPTS.** Encourage your staff to listen to the audiocast a couple of times and chat about the possible benefits and barriers they might encounter using the practice. Model this when you encounter staff. For example, when you debrief a classroom observation, mention the practice if relevant to what you observed. Don't rush this phase. Let the idea of the practice percolate through your community over the course of several weeks.
- 3 INTRODUCE THE STORY TO YOUR COMMUNITY.** Host a community meeting to try on the idea of implementing this practice with a small group of diverse staff, students, families, and community members. Listen to the audiocast together and share why you're considering the practice for your school. Gather feedback from the group, including any suggestions for tailoring the practice to local needs.
- 4 REFLECT WITH STAFF.** At the next staff meeting, make time for staff to reflect on what they heard from colleagues, students, families, and others at the community meeting or since then. Before the meeting, alert staff that they will be expected to talk about the audiocast in small groups. An agenda for a 75-minute meeting is described in the sidebar.
- 5 DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.** As a leadership team, review the plans generated during the staff meeting and synthesize an implementation plan from those ideas. Then set it into motion. Be sure to include *diverse formats of professional learning* for staff, opportunities for all stakeholders to *provide feedback*, and multiple points to *collectively evaluate progress* along the way.
- 6 REFINE THE PRACTICE.** The plan doesn't have to be perfect! Adjust as you learn, and regularly connect with all stakeholders.

### REFLECT WITH STAFF

## Sample Agenda

#### Welcome | 5 MIN

Welcome the group and thank them for sharing their time.

#### Make Connections | 25 MIN

Group staff into teams of 3–5 to discuss the audiocast using a question scaffold, for example:

- **MAKING MEANING.** What messages or ideas stood out to you?
- **CONNECT.** Which moments in this audiocast captured your attention? Why?
- **EXTEND.** Which ideas or strategies could positively impact your school community? How?
- **CHALLENGE.** What questions arise for you?

#### Share | 15 MIN

Facilitate a whole-group discussion of key takeaways and lingering questions.

#### Plan to Implement | 20 MIN

Ask teams to discuss the following questions and record their thinking:

- What would it take to successfully implement this practice in our school?
- How would we know it worked? What differences would we notice?

#### Share | 5 MIN

Facilitate a whole-group discussion of the group findings.

#### Wrap Up | 5 MIN

Share gratitude, and describe the next steps the leadership team will take.