**Narrative of the Student-Student Relationship Module**

*Available for use by participants while viewing the presentation.*

Slide 1

**Narrative:** Welcome to the School Climate and Student Success module focusing on supporting positive Student to Student Relationships. In this module, we will give an overview of what student-student relationships are, why they are important, what factors contribute to both positive and negative student relations, and recommended strategies to improve these relationships.

Thank you to the Delaware Department of Education for supporting this work through the Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project and School Climate and Student Success Grant.

Thank you to our lead authors, Dr. George Bear and Dr. Lindsey Mantz from the University of Delaware

Thank you also to Dr. Michelle Demaray from Northern Illinois University for her content review and valuable feedback.

Slide 2

**Narrative:** The goal of this module series is to provide information to schools that can lead to improvements in school climate and behavioral outcomes. You are most likely here because data, such as school climate survey or office discipline referral information, led your team to identify Student-Student Relationships as an area of need.

Before we dive into the content, please note the following. On our website you can also reference a research-based module narrative that focuses on this topic in great detail. This presentation is based on that narrative. You will see endnotes throughout the slides which correspond to the references in the narrative.

If you see a gold star on a slide, this indicates that a resource is available on the Delaware PBS website for your use.

Let’s get started.

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**Narrative:** So what are student-student or peer relationships? This type of relationship refers to the quality of interactions between students in a school-wide context and particularly to peer acceptance and social support.

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**Narrative:** On the *Delaware School Climate Survey*, student-student relationships are assessed through students’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions of students getting along and demonstrating friendliness, caring, and respect toward each other in their school. Thus, positive student-student relationships are seen in students exhibiting prosocial behavior *and* refraining from antisocial behavior.

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**Narrative:** So why is it that as a school, we need to focus on student relations?

It is well documented that student-student relationships not only play a critical role in the mental health and social and academic development of individual students, but also largely determines the climate of a classroom and school.

By supporting positive relationships among our students, we can have an impact at the individual level along with classroom and school-wide levels.

At the individual student level, relatedness, or a sense of belonging, is widely recognized by research as a key dimension of emotional well being that plays a primary role in motivating behavior. Social support, including having a close friend, also is recognized as a buffer for children who experience bullying, economic disadvantage, and other stressors in life – helping protect them from negative outcomes.

At the classroom and school levels, student-student relationships impact classroom and school climate by influencing classroom norms and group behavior, both positively and negatively. For example, when the majority of students respect one another, as well as adopt and follow the social and academic expectations of their teachers, there is peer pressure for others to do the same.

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**Narrative:** Let’s look at the impact that peer relationships have on students. Students with positive peer relations tend to have: higher self-esteem and a more positive self-concept, greater satisfaction toward school, greater academic achievement, and greater engagement in school.

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**Narrative:** In contrast, students lacking peer acceptance and support from peers tend to experience decreased opportunities to learn and practice social skills and to develop healthy friendships and relationships with others; more internalizing problems, such as loneliness, depression, low self-esteem, and even suicide; more externalizing problems, including acting out, aggression, and delinquent behaviors; bullying from others; greater academic problems, including lack of academic engagement and achievement; school avoidance; and increased risk of dropping out of school.

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**Narrative:** Next we will explore the characteristics of students as well as the primary classroom and school-based factors that contribute to student-student relationships. This awareness will help us see where we as educators can have an impact in supporting peer relations. We are focusing our attention on factors that are malleable and can be targeted most effectively to improve relationships.

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**Narrative:** Students who often exhibit the following factors tend to be accepted by peers and experience social support and close friendships. These factors include social skills, especially prosocial skills such as being friendly, cooperative, helpful, and kind; academic engagement and achievement (this association declines with increasing grade level); and nonacademic skills and talents, such as musical ability or athletic ability, applied in small groups or teams.

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**Narrative:** Conversely, students who often exhibit the following characteristics are at high risk for peer rejection. These factors include: aggressive, disruptive, and noncompliant behaviors; high social withdrawal or shyness; low academic engagement; deficits and deficiencies in the social-cognitive and emotional domains, such as social understanding, social problem solving skills, moral reasoning, and emotion regulation; communication and language deficits; and difficulty with inhibitory control and delay of gratification.

Also, it is important to note that relations between student characteristics and social rejection often are reciprocal. For example, externalizing problems increase the likelihood of being rejected, just as social rejection increases the likelihood of a student exhibiting externalizing problems, such as aggression toward peers. Likewise, the relation between academic engagement and social acceptance is likely reciprocal. This has important implications for interventions, as both social rejection and the behaviors associated with rejection should be targeted in prevention and intervention efforts.

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**Narrative:** Now, let’s look at characteristics of Classroom Management, School Discipline, Teachers, and Classrooms that contribute to positive student-student relationships.

More positive student-student relationships, including fewer behavior problems and greater prosocial behavior, exist in classrooms and schools characterized by the following. First is an authoritative (not authoritarian) approach to classroom management and school discipline that combines emotional support (or responsiveness) with structure (or demandingness). Both emotional support and structure are important in preventing behavior problems, but emotional support from the classroom teacher is particularly important in promoting positive student-student relationships.

Second, teachers and staff who avoid publicly demonstrating a strong liking (or disliking) toward individual students promote more positive student-student relationships. This helps create egalitarian and non-hierarchical social network structures. Also, teachers and staff who are accurately attuned and responsive to the social dynamics of the classroom and peer group affiliations help promote positive peer relations. For example, teachers and staff who do this know which students are leaders and good role models, aggressive or dominating of others, victims of bullying, socially neglected, disliked, rejected, or lacking friendships. In demonstrating attunement to classroom social dynamics, teachers use seating arrangements to enhance opportunities for social engagement, prevent behavior problems, and encourage a more egalitarian, as opposed to hierarchical, social network.

It is important to note that peer acceptance increases in classrooms and schools in which responsiveness and student-centered practices (as opposed to teacher-centered behavioral practices) receive major focus. Research also shows, however, that when teacher-centered behavioral practices, meaning increased structures, such as frequent praise and rewards from teachers and peers for prosocial behavior, are implemented with aggressive students, those students improve in on-task behavior and social acceptance.

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**Narrative:** Furthermore, positive peer relationships are supported by teachers and staff who provide multiple opportunities for students to interact with one another in supervised settings. In providing such opportunities it is recognized that students tend to establish relationships with others who are close in physical space, such as seating, and who share similar characteristics such as demographic characteristics, like SES, gender, and race, and behavioral characteristics, like shared interests, values, sports, and hobbies.

Such opportunities for supervised student interactions include frequent use of peer-assisted learning (PAL) activities in the classroom, including peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and peer mentoring. Peer-assisted learning activities have been associated with students having more positive perceptions about others of different races and ethnicities and having more cross-racial friendships. Having cross-racial friendships can help students develop more positive beliefs about diversity.

 Other opportunities for supervised student interactions include a wide range of extracurricular activities and sports in which all students are encouraged to participate, and service learning that encourages all students to participate. It is important to note that students who are socially rejected and who exhibit behavior problems, including lack of engagement, often benefit the most from participating in extracurricular activities and sports by gaining social acceptance and reducing behavior problems.

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**Narrative:** Additionally, positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include behaviors and norms that support prosocial behavior and academic engagement, oppose antisocial behavior, and lead students to believe that others care about them. Research has shown that norms of inclusion and greater student empathy are linked to greater liking of other students, including those of different races. With respect to changing norms and accepting racial and ethnic differences, research shows that lessons and class discussions about racism and prejudice can reduce attitudes of racism and prejudice among students.

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**Narrative:** Now that we covered why student-student relationships are important, and the primary factors contributing to these relationships, let’s explore recommended evidence-based strategies to improve peer relations. These strategies place an emphasis on prevention, and classroom and school-wide strategies for *all* students—those with and without problems of peer relations. In this section, strategies are organized heuristically into four general categories: school climate data, classroom management and school discipline, student-student relationship building activities, and curriculum-based lessons.

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**Narrative:** The first classroom and school-wide strategy is to examine data, especially school climate data, to determine the need for interventions and which interventions might be most effective. It is recommended strongly that interventions for improving student-student relationships are guided by a needs assessment that includes a comprehensive school climate survey, such as the *Delaware School Climate Survey*. The survey should be completed by teachers/staff, parents, and students. The students are especially important because it is their perceptions that matter the most in student-student relationships. Results of the surveys would help answer the critical question: Are student-student relationships viewed favorably across students, teachers and staff, and parents, and across subgroups within those respondents, including grades, such as third versus fifth grade, racial and ethnic groups, gender, and classrooms?

Favorable responses across all subgroups would indicate little or no need for the interventions that follow or for related staff development. Unfavorable responses across multiple subgroups would indicate the need for comprehensive and sustained interventions, including related staff development. Unfavorable responses for specific subgroups would indicate the need for more targeted interventions for those subgroups, such as African American students in the school or male students in fifth grade.

The Delaware School Climate Scale Interpretation Worksheets are designed to serve these purposes for the Delaware School Climate Survey. These worksheets can help schools determine what scores are “favorable” or “unfavorable” and to examine differences in scores between students based on grade level, gender, and race and ethnicity, as well as differences in scores between students, teachers and staff, and parents. These worksheets can be found on the Delaware PBS website, under the “school climate” tab, on the page titled “Use of School Climate Data.”

Be sure to look at responses to specific items on surveys, such as on the Student-Student Relationship subscale. Examine if students respond favorably to some items, but not to all. For example, negative responses to the item “Students of different races get along,” but positive responses to all other items that do not include race would indicate that the school should examine student-student relationships and interventions that are more race specific, such as communicating greater understanding and respect toward one or more racial groups.

If data from the school climate surveys indicate that student-student relationships is an area of need, additional data should be gathered and examined to help determine *why* respondents view students in their school as *not* caring, friendly, respectful toward one another, and getting along. Scores on other subscales of the surveys and data from other sources should provide some clues. For example, high scores on a bullying victimization subscale and low scores on a school safety subscale, especially combined with high office discipline referrals and suspensions, would indicate that aggressive and noncompliant behaviors are likely to be a factor in students reporting poor student-student relations. Thus, interventions targeting those behaviors, and students who exhibit them, would be warranted.

It may be helpful to share results of the survey or surveys and other data with focus groups comprised of representatives of subgroups that responded unfavorably to the items. For example, if fifth grade teachers or Hispanic and Latino students responded negatively, consider meeting with those groups to gain insight into their perceptions of poor student-student relationships, as well as which of the interventions recommended below are likely to be effective.

\*Please note the gold star in the lower right hand corner of this slide. This means that a resource for conducting focus groups is available on the DE-PBS website for your use. On the next slide, you will also see a brief summary of the features of this resource.

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**Narrative:** Presented here is the cover page to a focus group guide that is part of the resources available to you on the Delaware PBS website. This guide, from Duke University, provides information on designing focus group questions, recruiting participants, conducting the focus group, and analyzing the data from the group. The guide also provides examples of different materials used to conduct a focus group.

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**Narrative:** The second set of classroom and school-wide strategies involves classroom management and school-wide discipline. We shared that many contributing factors to positive student-student relations are related to classroom management and school discipline, so it makes sense to explore related strategies that that prevent behavior problems *and* promote positive student-student relationships.

Classroom management and school-wide discipline have a profound impact on student behavior, including student-student relationships. They not only prevent behavior problems but also are instrumental in developing social-emotional skills related to positive peer relationships. The following strategies are likely to be most valuable in promoting student-student relationships. These apply to all 3 tiers of intervention (i.e., universal, at-risk, and targeted groups). Additional strategies are listed later that are more specific to at-risk and targeted students who exhibit more frequent and/or serious behavior problems.

The first strategy is to provide multiple models of acceptance, respect, caring, and behaviors associated with peer acceptance and liking. This would include models of those behaviors by teachers and staff, peers, and community members, as well as individuals in literature, history, film, sports, etc.

The second strategy is to use praise and other recognitions wisely and strategically to highlight and reinforce positive student-student relationships. In doing so, target specific social and emotional skills that characterize student-student relationships, such as caring, respecting others, sharing, cooperating, and listening to others. Also target social-cognitive and emotional skills and qualities that underlie those behaviors, such as empathy, emotion regulation, perspective taking, values, moral reasoning, and social problem solving. Praise not only specific prosocial behaviors and skills, but also dispositions, such as saying, “You’re a helpful and caring person.” A resource containing information about how to effectively praise and reward students is available on the DE-PBS website for your use. On the next slide, you will also see a brief summary of the features of this resource.

The third strategy is to encourage students to praise and reinforce one another for prosocial behavior, such as by posting praise notes weekly for every student.

The fourth strategy is to develop a class vision at the beginning of the school year jointly with students that is linked to expectations and class rules and highlights how the class desires to function as a group or caring community. This theme is repeated throughout the school year.

The fifth strategy is to consistently communicate and highlight social acceptance and related skills in school-wide behavioral expectations, such as by highlighting how social acceptance is related to the school’s expectations of respect and responsibility.

The sixth strategy is to communicate and highlight social acceptance and related skills in classroom meetings and school-wide activities, such as morning announcements, pep rallies, etc.

The seventh strategy includes recognizing that positive *teacher-student* relationships are instrumental in fostering positive *student-student* relationships; thus, be sure to emphasize strategies that promote positive teacher-student relationships. It may be helpful to consult the module on Teacher-Student Relationships for additional strategies.

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**Narrative:** Presented here is part of the resource on providing effective praise and rewards that is available to you on the Delaware PBS website. This resource provides general strategies for effectively praising and rewarding students and gives specific script examples of what to do or what to say to students. An activity for teacher and staff practice is also available.

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**Narrative:** Now we will continue to look at classroom and school-wide strategies involving classroom management and school-wide discipline that can be used to promote positive peer relations.

One strategy is to ensure the implementation of additional strategies for preventing behavior problems, including monitoring of student behavior, and establishing and following routines, procedures, and rules that help prevent behavior problems and negative peer relations.

Another strategy involves communicating and collaborating with students’ families. This can help prevent behavior problems associated with negative peer relationships and help promote positive peer relationships.

Yet another strategy is to arrange seating to promote opportunities for positive social interactions and social acceptance, especially for students who otherwise might be isolated or socially rejected. Where feasible, seat students in clusters instead of rows that mix groups based on seating preferred by students, such as next to a reciprocated friend, and the need to include those at risk for peer rejection or isolation. For example, during one making period, a grouping of four students might include two friends interspersed with two classmates without friends. The seating would be changed the next marking period. Use a brief sociometric tool to help determine friendships and lack thereof, and thus seating arrangements. A resource containing information about how to use a sociometric seating tool is available on the DE-PBS website for your use. On the next slide, you will also see a brief summary of the features of this resource.

Another strategy that can be used to promote positive student-student relationships is to closely monitor and respond to social dynamics of the classroom and school.

Teachers and staff can observe peer interactions and affiliations during structured and unstructured activities and discuss them with past and current teachers. Based on such information, steps can be taken, where appropriate, to prevent peer rejection. For example, knowing which students tend to bully others would help guide supervision in the cafeteria, playground, and hallways.

An additional strategy that teachers can adopt is to avoid hierarchical peer social network structures and strive for more egalitarian ones by not indicating “favorites” in the classroom.

Finally, teachers and staff can encourage students to talk to teachers, other school staff, and peers about what might be interfering with positive relations at the individual, classroom, and school levels (e.g., bullying, exclusion, values, etc.). This should include talking individually with adults such as teachers, counselors, and administrators, but also discussions in the context of class discussions and meetings, student committees, clubs, and government.

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**Narrative:** Presented here is part of the sociometric seating tool resource that is available to you on the Delaware PBS website. This resource includes an Excel spreadsheet and instruction guide for using the tool. The general process is that students list 3 peers with whom they would like to sit, and teachers or staff track students’ responses in the Excel spreadsheet (an example of the spreadsheet is shown in this slide) to see *who is, and who is not*, nominated by one another.

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**Narrative:** Classroom and school-wide strategies involving classroom management and school-wide discipline must also focus on correcting misbehavior. When correcting misbehavior, it is important to consider how the actions taken might impact student-student relationships. We will now discuss several strategies that can be used to correct misbehavior and promote more positive peer relations.

First, where feasible, correct misbehavior privately instead of publicly. Calling attention to a student’s negative behaviors in front of peers can have an unintended consequence of reinforcing other students’ negative peer perceptions toward the student being corrected.

Next, when correction is used, *always* combine it with recognition of positive behaviors.

Additionally, where appropriate, use the situation as an opportunity to teach skills that would help prevent the misbehavior from reoccurring and possibly lead to peer rejection.

Finally, use inductive discipline, which emphasizes the impact of the student’s behavior on others and relations with others. This means focusing less on punitive consequences, and more on empathy and social perspective taking.

\*Please note the gold star in the lower right hand corner of this slide. This means that resources are available on the DE-PBS website for your use.

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**Narrative:** Presented here is a resource that explains how to correct misbehavior without hindering peer relationships. This resource is available to you on the Delaware PBS website. The flow-chart presented in this slide includes steps that demonstrate how to problem solve with the student and follow-up to support future positive behavior.

Slide 23

**Narrative:** Another strategy that can be used prevent behavior problems *and* promote positive student-student relationships is the Good Behavior Game. The GBG is an intergroup contingency behavior reinforcement system designed to provide the frequent monitoring and reinforcement of targeted behavior. Those behaviors are typically behaviors that are consistent with classroom rules, but also could include behaviors more directly related to positive student-student relations.

Although the game is appropriate for all classrooms, it is best for classrooms lacking in effective classroom management and with a high number of students with behavior problems who are not responsive to typical classroom management practices.

The picture you see in this slide is a handout that provides specific instructions on how to implement the game. This resource is available to you on the Delaware PBS website.

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**Narrative:** The third category of strategies aimed to improve student-student relationships are relationship building activities. Teachers, administrators, and staff can implement a wide range of classroom and school-wide activities that foster positive interactions among students.

-Such activities include providing ample opportunities for students to engage in peer-assisted learning and other activities that promote positive student-student interactions.

This includes peer tutoring, peer mentoring and coaching, and within or across classroom “buddy” systems. When using such strategies, consider your students’ stage of development. Elementary students may work best in pairs with students of a similar skill level, while older students may be able to work in larger groups with students of varying skill levels. With that said, carefully consider which students work best together, and make sure groups have students who are skilled leaders, problem solvers, and those who will be effective at understanding and explaining the task. Also, include classroom committees that allow students to work together with a shared goal and demonstrate responsibility. Consider grouping students with peers they do not know well and also consider grouping students of different races/ethnicities to promote cross-racial relationships.

-Another way to promote student involvement in relationship building activities is to encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities and sports, including student government; clubs, such as business and vocational clubs, religious clubs, game clubs, service clubs, academic clubs, foreign language clubs; and fine arts (music, band, chorus, drama, art club). Participation in such activities increases opportunities for positive interactions with peers, exposes them to positive role models, and fosters a sense of community.

-Additionally, teachers and staff can play games that promote fun, thus enhancing students’ emotional engagement, while also promoting positive social interactions, thus enhancing social acceptance. This would include academic games in the classroom and games during recess that are closely monitored and supervised.

-Yet another way to build student-student relationships is to identify and showcase students’ skills and talents to help students to get to know each other better and to recognize each other’s positive qualities. Responsive Classroom offers an excellent example of such a technique, called the “Yellow Pages.” A brief description of this resource is provided on the next slide.

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**Narrative:** Seen here is a picture of the Responsive Classroom website with directions on how to implement the Yellow Pages activity.

-In this activity, students are asked to think of things they are skilled at and can help classmates with. Examples include: I am good at solving math problems, I am good at spelling, I am good at drawing, etc. Students then look through ads in the yellow pages and create their own advertisements for services they can offer the class. Next, advertisements are copied on yellow paper and made into a book.

-This resource is available to you on the Delaware PBS website. Also available to you on the Delaware PBS website is the Responsive Classroom blog that provides additional ideas for getting to know you games.

http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/how-well-do-your-students-know-each-other

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**Narrative:** The last category of strategies aimed to improve student-student relationships are curriculum-based lessons. Within the context of the regular curriculum and classroom and school-wide practices, or a packaged curriculum, teachers and staff can teach lessons related to peer relations.

-One way to do this is to use the regular curriculum, class meetings, and everyday life of the classroom and school to teach lessons on peer relations, and especially the behaviors and social-emotional skills associated with positive peer relations, including acceptance of others and friendships. This would include highlighting lessons in language arts, such as in literature and in writing assignments, social studies, health, and elsewhere that concern peer relations. Specific issues such as rejection, bullying, prejudice, and friendships should be discussed. Also, teachers and staff should focus on student-student relationships during “Teachable Moments,” such as when students are not getting along or when they are exhibiting exemplary prosocial skills. Another way to integrate lessons related to peer relationships into the general curriculum and everyday life of the classroom is to highlight and discuss issues pertaining to social relationships in current events in the media, such as in examples of prosocial behavior, and the consequences of peer rejection.

-Schools can also adopt a packaged social-emotional learning curriculum to teach lessons on peer relations. SEL curriculum packages target responsible decision making at school, home, and in the community; self-management of emotions and behavior; relationship skills; social awareness; and self-awareness.

Look for programs that include lessons on relationship skills, particularly student-student relationships, and that have been *shown* in empirical studies to improve student-student relationships. Such programs should include lessons and strategies that target specific social skills associated with prosocial behavior, such as being helpful, cooperative, respectful, and self-confident, and the absence of antisocial behavior, including bullying, aggression, and rejection of peers. Programs should target not only those observable behaviors, but also the emotions and cognitions that underlie them, such as empathy, social perspective taking, prosocial goals, moral reasoning, social problem solving, anger management, and self-confidence and assertive skills.

-A number of programs have been shown to improve student-student relationships through improved prosocial behavior, social acceptance, friendships, and/or reduced antisocial behavior. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, known as CASEL, lists such programs and descriptions of each on their website (CASEL.org). Several packaged programs with substantial research evidence are available for purchase and/or training. Such programs include Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Second Step, Responsive Classroom approach, and the Caring School Community. A resource including an Excel sheet with information about various SEL programs is available for your use on the Delaware PBS website.

In addition to teaching lessons on peer relations and adopting an SEL curriculum, also consider evidence-based programs for preventing bullying, which include strategies and lessons for improving student-student relationships. Examples of such programs are: Steps to Respect, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, and KiVa Anti-Bullying Program. Additional information about these programs and preventing bullying can be found in the module on Bullying, as well as in the resources on the Delaware PBS website.

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**Narrative:** The resource mentioned in the previous slide that is available for your use on the Delaware PBS website consists of an Excel spreadsheet that lists different SEL programs/curricula, grade levels that these programs serve, and different expected outcomes for the programs. These outcomes are broken down by classroom quality, teacher-student relationships, social skills, prosocial behavior, and aggression, emotions and knowledge, academics, and other.

Be sure to pay special attention to the Social skills, prosocial behavior, and aggression column; as these outcomes are closely tied with developing social-emotional competence and skills.

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**Narrative:** Now, let’s talk about recommended strategies for improving student-student relationships for students at Tiers 2 and 3. Whereas the strategies and interventions we just talked about are for *all* students, those that follow are more appropriate for students who are at the greatest risk for poor peer relationships, such as many students with disabilities, such as students with emotional disturbance, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and intellectual disabilities, as well as students who are currently experiencing problems of peer rejection, which is often indicated in high office disciplinary referrals (ODRs), bullying victimization, school absences, exclusion from games, etc.

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**Narrative:** The first strategy to improve peer relations for students at Tiers 2 and 3 is to apply the same strategies and interventions mentioned before as being appropriate at the universal level and for all students. However, for improving peer relations at Tiers 2 and 3, those interventions should be of greater frequency and intensity. For example, praise, monitoring, and supervision should be more frequent, and efforts to provide opportunities for peer interactions should be more deliberate and closely supervised.

-Those interventions should also be more comprehensive, and include multiple components. This would include not only targeting multiple areas, such as the development of a range of social, emotional, and cognitive skills but also their delivery across multiple settings and providers other than the school, especially the home.

-Interventions should also be more individualized and guided by a more thorough assessment of the student’s needs, especially individual and environmental factors that might help explain and contribute to poor peer relations. For example, where appropriate, an individual assessment might be conducted by a school psychologist and others to identify specific social skill deficits, academic deficits and contributing factors, individual strengths that might be used to help foster peer acceptance, and systems of social support and resources, including those in school, home and the community, that might be needed and useful in fostering positive student relations. Accordingly, strategies and interventions would be individualized and aligned with the assessment results.

-Another strategy that can be used to improve peer relations for students at Tiers 2 and 3 is to provide social skills and SEL (social and emotional learning) training, in addition to that provided in the regular classroom, that targets specific prosocial skills and antisocial behaviors related to social acceptance, friendships, and peer rejection that are linked to results of an individual assessment of needs. Such additional training might be provided in small groups or individually by the school counselor or school psychologist.

This might be done using lessons from a universal or Tier 1 curriculum, such as Second Step or PATHS, that are taught not only when lessons are taught to the entire class, but also to selected individuals before, as pre-teaching, or afterwards, as booster sessions.

-This additional social skills and SEL training also might be done using evidence-based curriculum lessons that are designed more specifically for use at Tiers 2 and 3 instead of Tier 1. Such programs include Incredible Years (for preschool through grade 2), Coping Power (for grades 4 through 6), and PEERS (for middle and high school). Each of these programs includes training for targeted students *and* their parents.

-Another strategy that can be used to improve peer relations, specifically for students at Tier 3, is to develop a behavioral contract that targets specific social skills necessary for positive student-student relationships.

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**Narrative:** -Another strategy for students who are at the greatest risk for poor peer relations is to place increased emphasis on helping ensure that targeted students have a close, supportive relationship with at least one other person, such as with a parent, sibling, person at home or in the community, close friend, teacher, or another adult in the school, such as a school counselor or psychologist. This often buffers the student from the negative effects of peer rejection.

-Also, working closely with the home in targeting social and academic skills can help improve peer relations in these at-risk students.

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**Narrative:** Now that we reviewed why focusing on student relationships is important, discussed factors that contribute to these relationships, and heard some research-based recommendations, what actions will we as a team or staff take?

Think about which strategies shared would be a good match for your school context and resources. Be sure to set aside time to action plan and answer the questions: Who is going to do what actions by which time? Once action steps are decided, be sure to monitor implementation and data outcomes.

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**Narrative:** Thank you for your participation in this module. We hope that you found this information helpful and easy to understand. We welcome your feedback and questions.

Remember that as data-identified needs arise, you are welcome to check out other resources provided through the School Climate and Student Success Module Series.