**Improving Student-Student Relationships**

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**What Are Student-Student Relationships?**

Student-student relationships (or peer relationships) refer to the quality of interactions between students in a school-wide context and particularly to peer acceptance and social support.

On the *Delaware School Climate Survey*, student-student relationships are assessed through students’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions of students getting along (including those of different races), and students 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.

**Why Are Student-Student Relationships Important?**

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 determine the climate of a classroom and school.

**At the individual student level,** relatedness, or a sense of belonging, is widely recognized as a key dimension of emotional well-being that plays a primary role in motivating behavior, including academic behavior. Student-student relationships also are related to the broad construct of peer social support. Peer social support, including having a close friend is not only associated with multiple positive outcomes in life but also serves as a buffer for children who experience bullying, economic disadvantage, and other stressors in life – helping protect them from negative outcomes.1-3

*Students with positive peer relations tend to have:*

* Higher self-esteem and a more positive self-concept4-5
* Greater satisfaction toward school6
* Greater academic achievement7-8
* Greater engagement in school9-13

*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 others14
* More internalizing problems, such as loneliness, depression, low self-esteem, and even suicide4-5, 15-17
* More externalizing problems, including acting out, aggression, and delinquent behaviors4, 15, 18
* Drug abuse19
* Bullying from others20-21
* Increased disliking of school or emotional disengagement22
* Greater academic problems, including lack of academic engagement and achievement23-25, school avoidance23, and increased risk of dropping out of school26

**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.27 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.

**Primary Factors Contributing to Student-Student Relationships**

Classroom and school-based factors related to positive student-student relationships are listed below. Particular attention is given to factors that are malleable and can be targeted most effectively to improve student-student relationships.

**Student Characteristics**

*Students who often exhibit the following characteristics tend to be accepted by peers and experience social support and close friendships:*

* Social skills, especially prosocial skills such as being friendly, cooperative, helpful, and kind8, 28-29
* Academic engagement and achievement.29, 30 This association declines with increasing grade level29
* Nonacademic skills and talents, such as musical ability or athletic ability, applied in small groups or teams14

*In addition to lacking in the above areas, students who often exhibit the following characteristics are at high risk for peer rejection* 28, 31-32

* Aggressive, disruptive, noncompliant behaviors
* High social withdrawal or shyness
* Low academic engagement
* Deficits and deficiencies in the social-cognitive (e.g., social understanding, social problem solving skills, moral reasoning) and emotional domains (e.g., emotion regulation).
* Communication/language deficits
* Difficulty with inhibitory control and delay of gratification

*Important Note: The 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.33 Likewise, the relation between academic engagement and social acceptance is likely reciprocal34. This has important implications for interventions; both social rejection and the behaviors associated with rejection should be targeted in prevention and intervention efforts.

**Characteristics of Classroom Management, School Discipline, Teachers, and Classrooms**

More positive student-student relationships, including fewer behavior problems and greater prosocial behavior, exist in classrooms and schools characterized by the following:

* *An authoritative approach to classroom management and school discipline that combines emotional support, or responsiveness, with structure, or demandingness* (not to be confused with the *authoritarian* approach that emphasizes only structure)*.* 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.*35-37
* *Teachers and staff who avoid publicly demonstrating liking of only certain students and disliking of others.* This is seen in teachers and staff who ensure that all students experience positive interactions with them, and who also show disapproval of *specific* behaviors of students while not conveying rejection or dislike of student per se (see recommendation #2). Not showing favorites helps create egalitarian and non-hierarchical social network structures.35, 38-40
* *Teachers and staff who are accurately attuned and responsive to the social dynamics of the classroom and peer group affiliations.* For example, they know which students are leaders and good role models, aggressive or dominating of others, victims of bullying, socially neglected, disliked, rejected, or lacking friendships.35, 40-42
	+ 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.43

*Important Note: Intervention studies show that peer acceptance increases in classrooms*37,44 *and schools*45 *in which responsiveness and student-centered practices (as opposed to teacher-centered behavioral practices) receive major focus.* They also show, however, that when teacher-centered behavioral practices (i.e., 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.9

* *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 (e.g., seating) and who share similar characteristics such as demographic (e.g., SES, gender, race) and behavioral characteristics (e.g., shared interests, values, sports, hobbies, etc.).46 Such opportunities include:
	+ Frequent use of peer-assisted learning (PAL) activities in the classroom, including, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and peer mentoring47-49

*Important Note: PAL activities have been associated with students having more positive perceptions about others of different races/ethnicities and having more cross-racial friendships.*84-85 *Having cross-racial friendships can help students develop more positive beliefs about diversity*.79

* + A wide range of extracurricular activities and sportsin which all students areencouraged to participate50-51
	+ Service learning that encourages all students to participate52

*Important Note: Students who are socially rejected and who exhibit behavior problems, including lack of engagement, often benefit the most from participating in supervised extracurricular activities and sports by gaining in social acceptance and reducing behavior problems.*53-55

* *Behaviors and norms that support prosocial behavior and academic engagement, oppose antisocial behavior, and lead students to believe that others care about them*.27, 56-57
	+ Norms of inclusion and acceptance and greater student empathy have been linked to increased liking of other students, including those of different races/ethnicities.80-81
	+ With respect to changing norms and accepting racial/ethnic differences, research shows that lessons and class discussions about racism and prejudice can reduce attitudes of racism and prejudice among students.82-83

**Recommended Evidence-Based Strategies for Improving Student-Student Relationships**

Below are evidence-based strategies for improving student-student relationships, divided into two sections. First, with an emphasis on prevention, classroom and school-wide strategies are presented for *all* students—those with and without problems of peer relations. In this section, strategies are organized heuristically into four general categories: **(I)** school climate data, **(II)** classroom management and school discipline, **(III)** student-student relationship building activities, and **(IV)** curriculum-based lessons.

**I. SCHOOL CLIMATE DATA: Examine data, especially school climate data, to determine the need for interventions and which interventions might be most effective.** It is strongly recommended that strategies and 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 Scale*. The survey should be completed by teachers/staff and parents, and especially by students because it is their perceptions that matter the most in student-student relationships. Moreover, teachers often are not aware of problems in peer relationships. For example, less than a third of students inform their teachers that they are bullied.86

 Results of the surveys would help answer the critical question:

* Are student-student relationships viewed favorably across students, teacher/staff, and parents, and across subgroups within those respondents, including grades (e.g., third versus fifth grade), racial/ethnic groups, and gender?
* Favorable responses across all subgroups would indicate little or no need for interventions 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 (e.g., African American students in the school, male students in fifth grade)

*Important note:*

*The Delaware School Climate Scale Interpretation Worksheets are designed to serve these purposes: To help schools determine what scores are “favorable” or “unfavorable” and to examine differences in scores between students based on grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity, as well as differences in scores between students, teachers/staff, and parents.*  See http://wordpress.oet.udel.edu/pbs/school-climate/use-of-school-climate-data/ for worksheets.

I.1. 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 all. For example, negative responses to “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.

I.2. 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 bullying victimization and low scores on school safety, 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.

I.3. Share results of the survey(s) 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/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.

**II.** **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:** **Implement strategies of classroom management and school-wide discipline 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 at-risk and targeted students who exhibit more frequent and/or serious behavior problems.

II.1. Provide multiple models of acceptance, respect, caring, and behaviors associated with peer acceptance and liking. This would include models of those behaviors by teachers/staff, peers, and community members, as well as individuals in literature, history, film, sports, etc.

II.2. 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 (e.g., “You’re a helpful and caring person.”).

II.3. Encourage students to praise and reinforce one another for prosocial behavior, such as by having students post praise notes weekly for every student.58-59

II.4. At the beginning of the school year, develop a class vision 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.

II.5. 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*.

II.6. Communicate and highlight the importance of social acceptance and related skills in classroom meetings, school-wide activities, morning announcements, pep rallies, media (e.g., newsletter, website), etc.

II.7. Recognize 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 (see unit on Teacher-Student Relationships).

II.8. 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.

II.9. Communicate and collaborate with students’ families. This can help prevent behavior problems associated with negative peer relationships and help promote positive peer relationships.

II.10. 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 (a) seating preferred by students (e.g., next to a reciprocated friend), and (b) the need to include those at risk for peer rejections/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

*Important Note: The impact of classroom composition appears to be greatest for children with more significant behavior problems. That is, those with behavior problems are affected most negatively when placed in classrooms composed with a high number of students with behavior problems.*60 *Thus, try not to group students with behavior problems together.*

II.11. Closely monitor and respond to social dynamics of the classroom and school.

* + Observe peer interactions and affiliations during structured and unstructured activities. Discuss them with past and current teachers. Based on such information, take steps 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.

II.12. Avoid encouraging hierarchical peer social network by indicating “favorites” in the classroom. Instead, strive for egalitarian networks.

II.13. **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.

II.14 When correcting misbehavior, consider how the actions taken might impact student-student relationships.

* + 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.
	+ When correction is used, *always* combine it with recognition of positive behaviors.
	+ Where appropriate, use the situation as an opportunity to teach skills that would help prevent the misbehavior from reoccurring (and leading to peer rejection).
	+ Use inductive discipline, which emphasizes the impact of the student’s behavior on others and relations with others (e.g., a focus less on punitive consequences, and more on empathy, social perspective taking).

II.15 **In the classroom, consider implementing the Good Behavior Game (GBG; see Bear, 2010).** 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.
	+ See resources for steps on the implementation of the GBG.

**III.** **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTIVITIES. Implement a wide range of classroom and school-wide activities for fostering positive interactions among students.**

III.1. **Provide 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/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.
* Carefully consider which students work best together.
* Make sure groups have students who are skilled leaders, problem solvers, and those who will be effective at understanding and explaining the task.61
* 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. Consider grouping students of different races/ethnicities to promote cross-racial relationships.

III.2. **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.

III.3. **Play games that promote not only fun (and thus enhance emotional engagement) but also 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.

III.4.**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.” (https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/class-yellow-pages)

* + Students are asked to think of things they are skilled at and can help classmates with (i.e., I am good at solving math problems, I am good at spelling, I am good at drawing).
	+ Students then look through ads in the yellow pages and create their own ad for services they can offer the class. Next, copy the ads on yellow paper and make a book out of it.

See Responsive Classroom blog for additional ideas for getting to know you games: <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/how-well-do-your-students-know-each-other>

**IV. CURRICULUM-BASED LESSONS. Within the context of the regular curriculum and classroom and school-wide practices, or a packaged curriculum, teach lessons related to peer relations.**

IV.1. **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 (e.g., 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.
* Focus on student-student relationships during “Teachable Moments,” such as when students are not getting along or when they are exhibiting exemplary prosocial skills.
* 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.

IV.2. **Adopt a packaged social-emotional learning curriculum.** 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 (see CASEL.org).

* 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 (e.g., being helpful, cooperative, respectful, self-confident) and the absence of antisocial behavior (e.g., bullying, aggression, rejection of peers). They 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, self-confidence/assertive skills.
* A number of programs have been shown to improve student-student relationships (i.e., improved prosocial behavior, social acceptance, or friendships, and/or reduced antisocial behavior). See CASEL.org for a list of such programs, and descriptions of each. Packaged programs available for purchase and/or training and with the most substantial research evidence follow:

*PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, Preschool-grade 5)*

 *http://www.prevention.psu.edu/projects/paths.html*

* + Emphasis on curriculum lessons that target comprehensive SEL skills
	+ Improved social skills, prosocial behavior, and social acceptance; reduced a number of externalizing and internalizing behaviors related to peer acceptance, including aggression, compliance, social withdrawal, and poor on-task behavior and academic engagement62-67

*Second Step (Preschool – Grade 8)*

 *http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step*

* Emphasis on curriculum lessons that target comprehensive SEL skills.
* Improved social skills and prosocial behavior; reduced several externalizing and internalizing behaviors related to peer acceptance, including aggression, compliance, anxiety, and poor on-task behavior and academic engagement68-71

*Responsive Classroom approach*

 http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/

* + Comprehensive approach to classroom management and developing SEL skills, with an emphasis teacher support, morning meetings, home-school collaboration, and active involvement of students in decisions making and social problem solving.
	+ Increased social skills and prosocial behavior; improved perceptions of school, teacher, classroom and school38

*Note: The Caring School Community is a comprehensive evidence-based program that shares many features of the Responsive Classroom approach*. It also includes a strong cross-age peer assisted learning component (“Buddies”) and inductive discipline (focusing on empathy and perspective taking). This program has been shown to improve multiple aspects of student-student relationships, including decreasing antisocial behavior and improving prosocial behavior, academic engagement and achievement, and peer acceptance.45, 72-75 Unlike Responsive Classroom, however, support materials and training for other schools are lacking.

*Also consider evidence-based programs for preventing bullying, which include strategies and lessons for improving student-student relationships (see module on Bullying), such as:*

* *Steps to Respect:*

 <http://www.cfchildren.org/steps-to-respect.aspx>

* *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*

 <http://www.violencepreventionworks.org>

* *KiVa Anti-Bullying Program*

 <http://www.kivaprogram.net/>

**Strategies and Interventions for Students at Tiers 2 and 3**

Whereas the strategies and interventions above are for ALL students, those that follow are more appropriate for students who are at greatest risk for poor peer relationships, such as many students with disabilities (e.g., students with emotional disturbance, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, intellectual disabilities), as well as students who are currently experiencing problems of peer rejection (often indicated in high ODRs, bullying victimization, school absences, exclusion from games, etc.).

**1. Apply the strategies and interventions listed above as 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.
* More comprehensive, including 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.
* More individualized and guided by a more thorough assessment of the student’s needs and 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. Identifying those deficits would help determine the social skills to be targeted, such as managing emotions, social perspective taking, communication skills, and prosocial skills.
	+ Academic deficits and contributing factors.
	+ Individual strengths that might be used to help foster peer acceptance.
	+ Social networks in the student’s classrooms and in the school, such as which peers are bullying, rejecting, or otherwise communicating non-acceptance, which peers are potential close friends for a student lacking a friend, etc.
	+ If classroom management practices need improvement.
	+ 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. Strategies and interventions would be individualized and aligned with the assessment results.

**2. Provide social skills/SEL 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 (i.e., 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 (pre-teaching) or afterwards (booster sessions).
* It 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 as Incredible Years (preschool-grade 2; see incredibleyears.com), Coping Power (grades 4-6; see Copingpower.com), PEERS78 (middle and high school; see semel.ucla.edu/peers). Each of these programs includes training for targeted students *and* their parents.

*Important Note. Care must be taken, especially for Tier 2 interventions, in grouping students together who share similar antisocial behaviors, as this may result in “deviancy training” with peers modeling and reinforcing antisocial behavior*.76-77

1. **Where appropriate (e.g., Tier 3), develop a behavioral contract** that targets specific social skills necessary for positive student-student relationships (refer to module on Tiers 2 and 3).
2. **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 (e.g., school counselor or psychologist).** This often buffers the student from the negative effects of peer rejection.
3. **Work closely with the home in targeting social and academic skills** (see Home-School Communication and Collaboration module).
4. **Arrange or provide more intensive supports, as needed, including individual counseling, family therapy or parent management training, and social services.** Parent management training has been shown to be a critical component for the effectiveness of programs at Tiers 2 and 3.

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| **Checklist of Activities for Fostering Positive Student-Student Relationships**Using the rating scale below, please rate each of the following strategies for fostering positive student-student relationships. Where appropriate (e.g., all classroom teachers), please rate each strategy according to your use of that strategy (i.e., classroom level) and your perceived use of the strategy school-wide. |
| **NA = Not appropriate for grade or school (e.g., some activities might be** **viewed as not age appropriate in elementary school or high school)****1 = Weakness: Something we should devote more attention to****2 = Neither Weakness Nor Strength****3 = Strength: This is done often and well** | Rating for MyClassroom | Rating for the School |
| Faculty review and discuss results of the Delaware School Climate Survey and other sources of data pertaining to student-student relationships and bullying (e.g., ODRs) and use those results to help guide strategies and interventions. |  |  |
| In general, classroom management and school discipline practices prevent and correct behaviors that are harmful to positive student relations (e.g., monitoring and supervision of students, including in hallways and at recess; close teacher-student relationships; engaging instruction; clear expectations, routines, procedures; fair rules). |  |  |
| Multiple models are provided of acceptance, respect, caring, and behaviors associated with peer acceptance and liking. This would include models of those behaviors by teachers/staff, peers, and community members, as well as individuals in literature, history, film, sports, etc. |  |  |
| Individual students are praised or rewarded by teachers and other adults in a wise and strategic manner for exhibiting positive student-student relations, especially behaviors associated with *friendships, caring, kindness, working together, and respect.* (see handout on 14 features of the wise and strategic use of praise and rewards). |  |  |
| *Classes* are recognized for behaviors associated with positive student-student relationships |  |  |
| Students are encouraged to praise and reinforce one another for prosocial behavior. |  |  |
| At beginning of the school year, a class vision is developed 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. |  |  |
| Social acceptance and related skills are consistently communicated and highlighted in school-wide behavioral expectations such as by highlighting how social acceptance is related to the school’s expectations of *respect* and *responsibility*. |  |  |
| The importance of social acceptance and related skills is communicated and highlighted the in classroom meetings, school-wide activities, morning announcements, pep rallies, media (e.g., newsletter, website), etc.  |  |  |
| Teachers and staff recognize that positive *teacher-student* relationships are instrumental in fostering positive *student-student* relationships; thus, they emphasize strategies that promote positive teacher-student relationships (see unit on Teacher-Student Relationships). |  |  |
| Teachers and staff communicate and collaborate with students’ families to help prevent behavior problems associated with negative peer relationships and help promote positive peer relationships.  |  |  |
| Seating arrangements are designed to promote opportunities for positive social interactions and social acceptance, especially for students who otherwise might be isolated or socially rejected. |  |  |
| Teachers and staff closely monitor and respond to social dynamics of students (e.g., which students tend to be bullies or rejected). Based on such information, steps are taken, where appropriate to prevent negative outcomes for students (e.g., changing seating, monitoring social interactions). |  |  |
| Teachers and staff avoid encouraging hierarchical peer social network structures and strive for more egalitarian ones by not indicating “favorites” in the classroom.  |  |  |
| When correcting misbehavior, teachers and staff consider how the actions taken might impact student-student relationships. For example, they try to correct misbehavior privately instead of publicly, combine punitive consequences with recognition of positive behaviors, and attempt to help promote empathy and social problem solving during disciplinary encounters. |  |  |
| Students are encouraged to talk to teachers, other school staff, and friends about what might be interfering with positive relations at the individual, classroom, and school levels (e.g., bullying, exclusion, values, etc.). |  |  |
| Students’ skills and talents are identified and showcased to help students get to know each other better and to recognize each other’s positive qualities.  |  |  |
| Games are played that promote not only fun (and thus enhance emotional engagement) but also 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.  |  |  |
| Ample opportunities are provided for students to engage in peer-assisted learning and other activities that promote positive student-student interactions (e.g., service learning, “buddy” systems, classroom committees). |  |  |
| Students are encouraged 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). |  |  |
| The regular curriculum, class meetings, and everyday life of the classroom and school are used 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: * ***Writing assignments*:** (e.g., story starters on caring or respect; journaling)
* ***Literature*** (relations with others are highlighted)
* ***Class discussions*** of assignments in general curriculum (e.g., discussion of “respect” as it relates to a character in a story)
* ***Social Studies*** (e.g., empathy and perspective taking are emphasized)
* ***“Teachable Moments”***
* ***Other:***
 |  |  |
| All students are taught lessons from a *packaged curriculum* (e.g., Second Step) that highlight values and behaviors related to positive student-student relationships, especially *friendships, caring, kindness, working together, and respect.*Packaged curriculum (list): |  |  |
| A variety of Tier 2 and 3 supports are provided that are individualized and designed to improve student-student relationships, such as:* Intensive social skills/SEL training
* Bullying interventions for bullies and victims
* Mentoring (adult and peer)
* Behavioral contracts
* Counseling
* Support groups
* Parent support/parent management training
 |  |  |
| All students are taught lessons from a *packaged curriculum* (e.g., Second Step) that highlight values and behaviors related to positive student-student relationships, especially *friendships, caring, kindness, working together, and respect.*Packaged curriculum (list): |  |  |
| Please list any additional activities used to promote student-student relations  |  |  |