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Collaborative Classroom Releases Revised SEL, Discipline Program

ALAMEDA, Calif.-(BUSINESS WIRE)—Committed to developing students' social skills and self-discipline, the nonprofit Center for the Collaborative Classroom announces the release of the much-anticipated second edition of its nationally recognized Caring School Community™ program.

The evidence-based program—with its focus on students' social-emotional learning and classroom discipline—is in use in 8,000 K–8 classrooms, impacting 192,000 students in 92 school districts nationwide.

"The program is designed to help students become caring, responsible members of their school communities who will grow into humane, principled, and skilled citizens," says Kelly Stuart, the organization's chief operating officer.

The rollout of the revised curriculum comes as calls are increasing for students to develop a range of skills crucial to success in school and in life. Such skills include thinking critically and solving problems, communicating effectively, collaborating and resolving conflict, and being lifelong learners.

"We know that social-emotional learning is a critical piece for student learning," says Roger King, the president and CEO of Collaborative Classroom, "and we know that relationships are at the core of a successful learning community. It follows, then, that an intentional focus on strengthening students' sense of belonging at school is at the program's core."

A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

Using a three-pronged approach, Stuart says the Caring School Community program "is designed to help teachers create warm, safe, and disciplined classroom environments where students can develop the skills and dispositions they need to interact constructively with others." Specifically, she adds, the program seeks to:

- Foster caring relationships among students, school staff, and parents that are characterized by genuine warmth and interest. Daily activities, weekly classroom meetings, and conversations with family members are intentionally incorporated.
- Develop students' social skills, including ones related to self-management, interpersonal relations, and executive function, through direct instruction and targeted daily lessons. Even as each week's lessons focus on a few social skills, over the course of the year, students are given the chance to learn and practice all the skills multiple times.

- Create calm, orderly learning environments through the use of effective classroom management practices.

“By establishing a roadmap for setting up and managing a classroom effectively,” Stuart says, “the program helps students build self-control, conscience, and a sense of responsibility.”

A FOCUS ON DISCIPLINE

Peter Brunn, the organization’s vice president for organizational learning, says a key ingredient of the revised program is its focus on student discipline. Through both whole-class instruction and one-on-one interventions the program helps teachers nurture students’ innate drive to behave well.

“Students who know the procedures and routines, what the school and class rules require, and what to expect each day feel safer at school and are more likely to perform those routines and tasks successfully,” Brunn says. “In turn, they will be less likely to have behavior challenges, allowing their teachers and themselves to focus on the social, emotional, and academic learning they need to succeed.”

Typically, Brunn added, schools take a punitive approach to student discipline. “Instead,” he says, “the Caring School Community program believes that students are better served by learning from their mistakes, developing skills that help them make changes, and, ultimately, building self-discipline and agency.”

Key, too, to the program’s approach to discipline, Brunn says, is the recognition that many behavioral problems can be avoided by adopting a strong academic curriculum. After all, he adds, research has shown that an integrated curricular approach—one that integrates the development of students’ academic and social skills—improves student performance and outcomes. “When kids are engaged and have ownership of their learning, they see the relevance of what goes on in school to life beyond.”

King says Collaborative Classroom, as a nonprofit, is dedicated to keeping the cost of the Caring School Community curriculum and related resources as low as possible. This fall, the cost is about \$150 per classroom.

More information about the program is available at <https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/programs/caring-school-community/>. At ASCD Empower19, visit Center for the Collaborative Classroom in Booth 1866.

Founded in 1980 as the Developmental Studies Center by the prominent researcher Eric Schaps, the Alameda, California-based organization has contributed foundational research on social-emotional learning and pioneered the integration of social and academic development into curricula.