

**E3 ALLIANCE**<sup>SM</sup>  
EDUCATION EQUALS ECONOMICS

# **A Beginning they won't Forget:**

**designing a meaningful start for  
staff and students**

June 21, 2022

**Amy Havard and Alison Duran**  
Directors of School Improvement





**E3 ALLIANCE**<sup>SM</sup>  
**EDUCATION EQUALS ECONOMICS**

*Transforming education systems through data and collaboration so all students succeed!*

E3 Alliance is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Austin, Texas.

[www.solutions.e3alliance.org](http://www.solutions.e3alliance.org)

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# Who we are



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# Agenda

- ❑ **WHY a strong, meaningful start matters**
- ❑ **Beginning of Year Strategies for Teachers**
- ❑ **Beginning of Year Strategies for Students**
- ❑ **HOW to Keep it Going**



# Why a Strong, Meaningful Start Matters

# Here is what we Know...

***Positive school cultures provide a safe, inviting, supportive, encouraging, and inclusive environment for students and staff, which in turn allows students' academic achievement to evolve.***

**A Positive School Culture is something  
school leaders design and plan for now...**

**...why is the start of the year so important?**

**Within moments of  
arriving somewhere...**

**...you know if it is  
somewhere you want  
to be.**



Campus Systems for Success



Cycles of Feedback & Accountability



LEADERSHIP



Cycles of Assessment and Data Analysis



LEADERSHIP LEADERSHIP LEADERSHIP LEADERSHIP LEADERSHIP

Character Education

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

LEADERSHIP

Student Voice

LEADERSHIP

Behavior Systems



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Master Schedule



Instructional Playbook



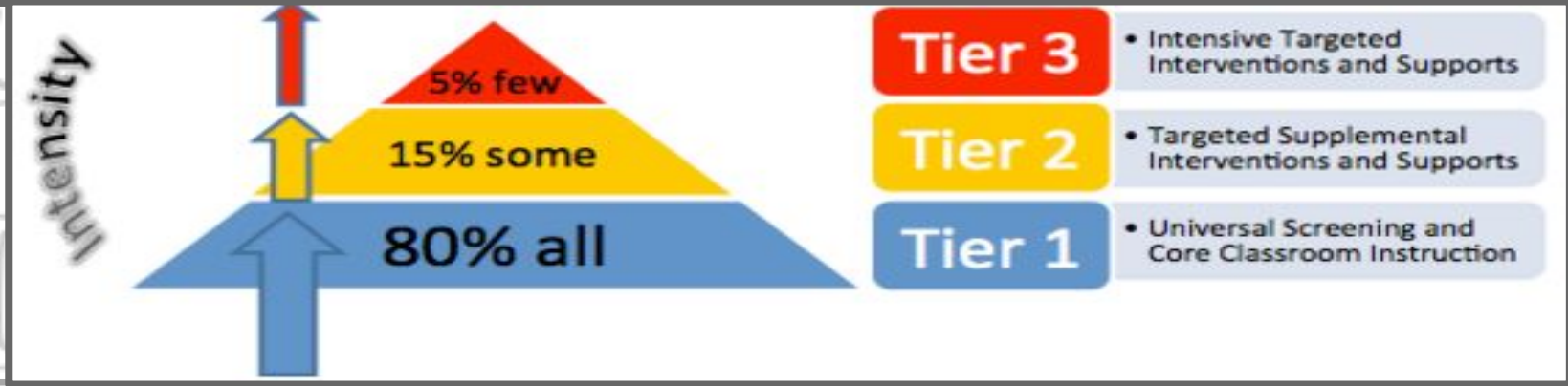
PLC Practices



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Instructional Framework

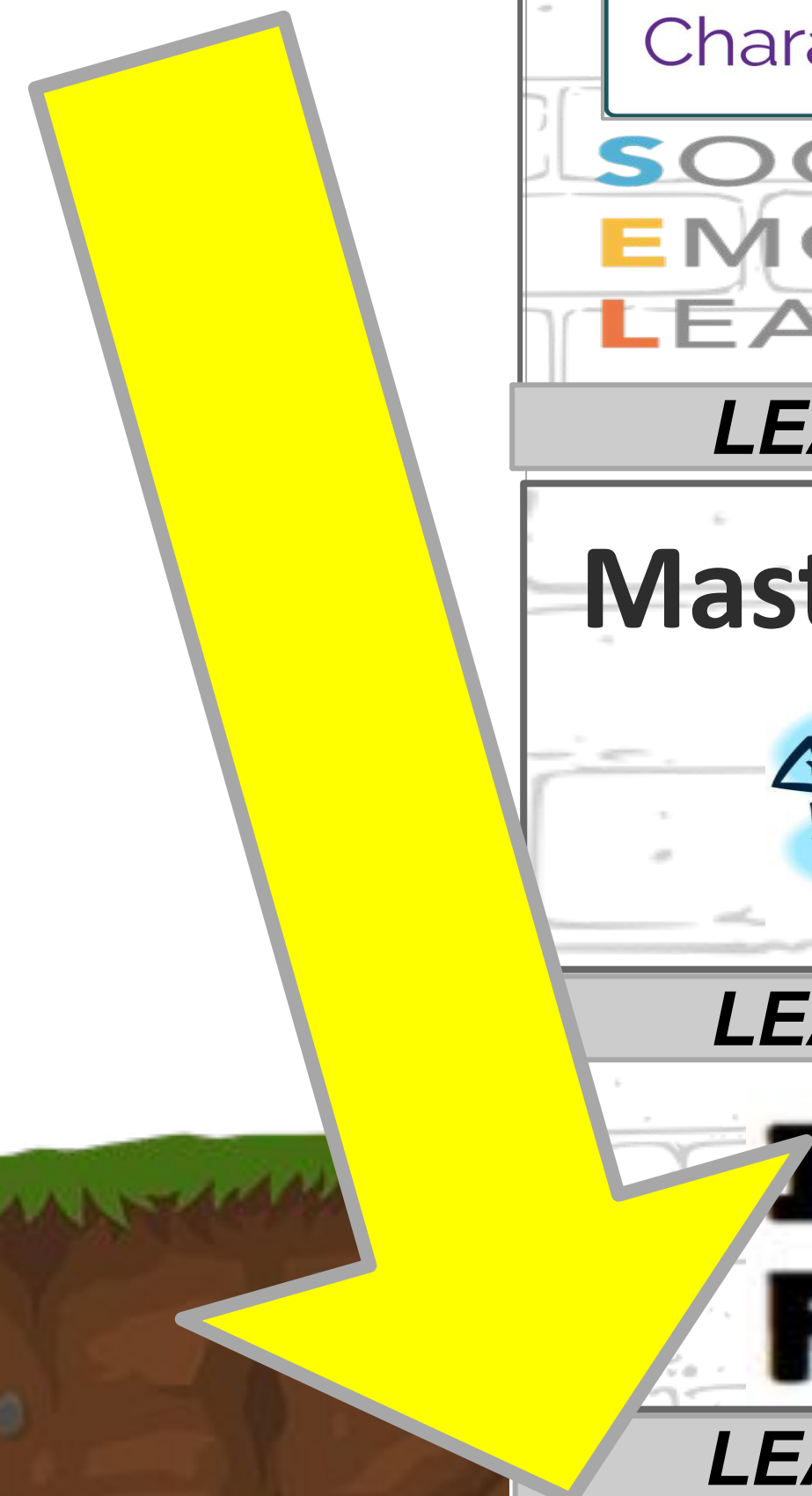
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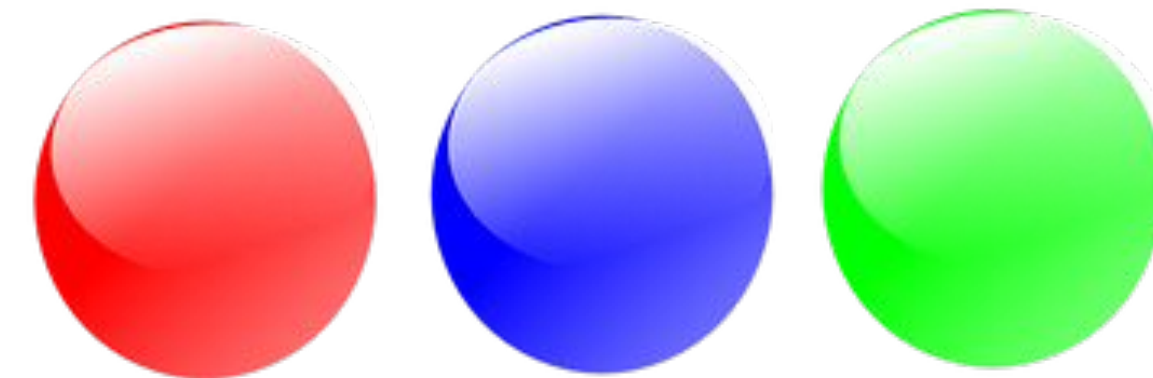
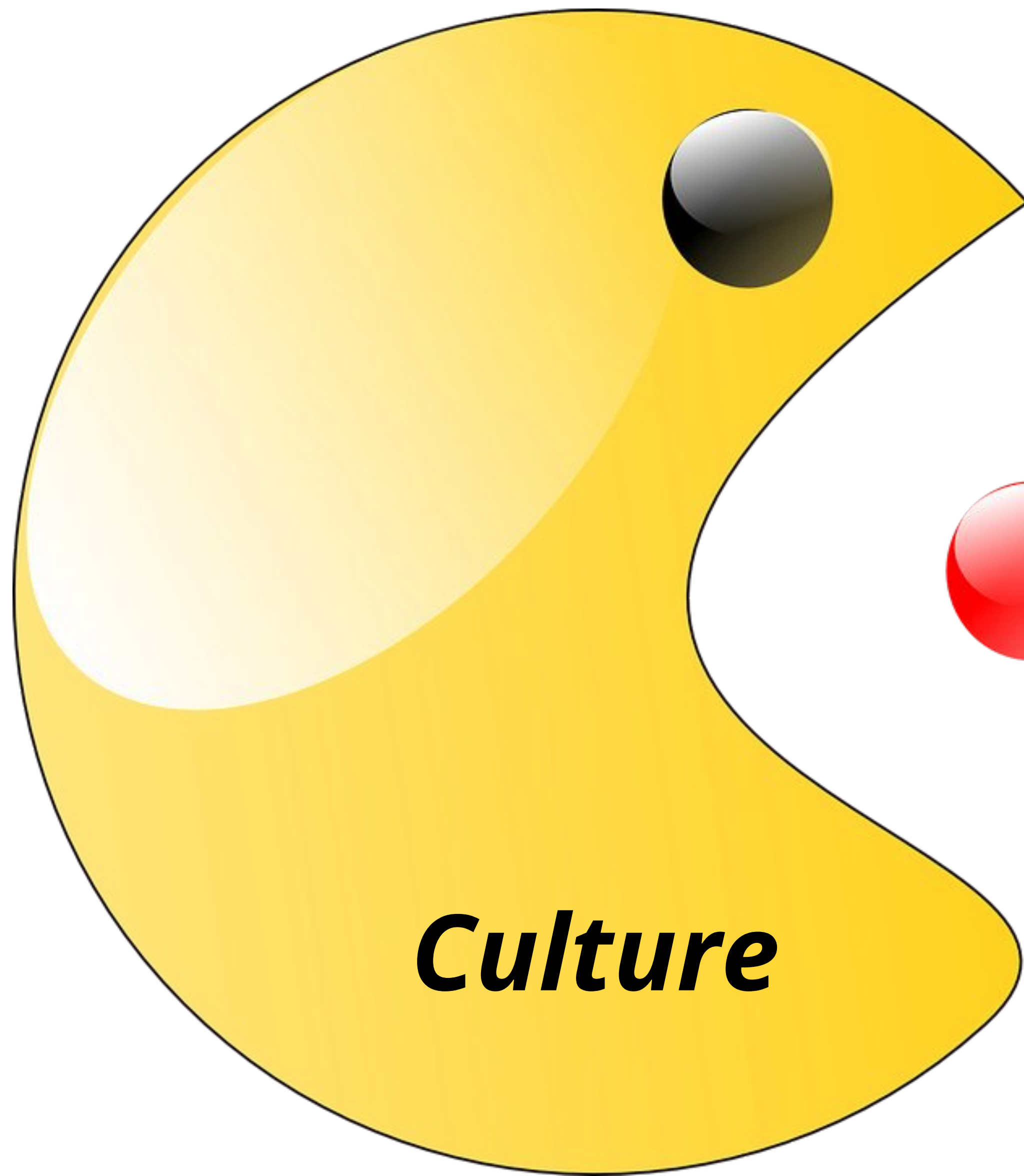


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Campus Culture & Climate

Smiley Middle School





Efforts to improve outcomes

Efforts to support students

Efforts to integrate equitable practices and growth mindset



# Beginning of Year Strategies for Teachers

# Planning for Teachers: *Prior to Start Date*



- Send an update email middle to late July
  - BOY PD
  - Staffing Updates
  - Instructional Updates
  - Theme for 22-23 year

# Planning for Teachers: *1st Day Back*



- Create a Meaningful Moment
  - Provides Sense of Belonging
  - Promotes Teamwork
  - Collaboration Required
  - Shared Fun
- Reflects Your Campus Vision, Mission, Values & Commitments

# Meaningful Moment Example: *Act it Out!*



WHAT?	<b>Teams “Act-Out” Campus Values/Commitments</b>
WHEN?	Beginning of the year; 1-2 hours
WHO?	All staff, working in mixed teams of 4-8 each
HOW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Teaming/grouping strategy (random, chair stickers, handout stickers; avoid numbering off)</li><li>● Assign one value / commitment statement to each team (more than 1 team per statement if necessary)</li><li>● Provide guidelines for their work as a team</li><li>● Provide time to work as a team</li><li>● Structure share-out, set norms</li><li>● CELEBRATE!</li></ul>

# Meaningful Moment Example: *Act it Out!*

Assign each of these to teams

OUR VALUES	OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENTS
Collaboration	<i>We will actively engage in collaboration with a learner-mindset.</i>
Relationships	<i>We will proactively build relationships with students and each other through strategic communication and empathic practices.</i>
Accountability	<i>We will hold each other accountable for aligning our professional practice with our shared beliefs, vision and mission.</i>
Student- Centered	<i>We will plan for and facilitate high-quality instruction for our students that integrates research-based practices based on what they need.</i>
Urgency	<i>We will engage with urgency in the study of our content and analysis of data to continuously improve our instructional plans.</i>



# Meaningful Moment Example: *Act it Out!*



## Guidelines for “Act-it-Out”

Follow our NORMS ~ Share voice & participation

**GOAL:** *Prepare a short performance skit that demonstrates and/or reflects your assigned value & commitment statement*

- choose comedy or drama**
- choose a well-known character from a book, movie, or TV show that embodies your value/commitment**
- plan for a 3-5 minute performance**
- all team members participate in the performance in some way**



# Planning for Teachers: *Small Moments Throughout*



- Build Moments Together Around:
  - Common Why
  - Shared Fun
  - Fun with the Students
- Calendar for Them
  - Faculty Meetings
  - PD days
  - Alternate Schedules
  - Lunch

# Shared Fun Example

Valley Ridge Middle School

## Shared Fun Ideas


- Preparation and other directions in the slide NOTES at the bottom.
- Choose a slide and copy it into your presentation for faculty, team, department, or other meetings.
- Share this set with teachers and encourage them to choose slides to copy into their lessons.
- Continue adding new slides throughout the year.

Collaboration Relationships Accountability Student-Centered Urgency

Valley Ridge Middle School

### The Laughing Game

- Form groups of 3-10 and stand in a circle.
- As a group, repeat "HA HO HEE" while making eye contact with others in the circle
- Try NOT to laugh!
- Last person with a straightface in the circle is the winner!




Collaboration Relationships Accountability Student-Centered Urgency

Valley Ridge Middle School

### Don't say YES or NO!

- 2 minutes: Write down all the yes or no questions that you can think of:
  - Did you eat breakfast today?
  - Do you like dogs?
  - Are you a teacher?
- Find a partner
- 5 minutes: Take turns asking each other questions. See who can go the longest **WITHOUT** saying **YES** or **NO**!
- Be prepared to share your best (funniest, cleverest, strangest) with the group if chosen




Collaboration Relationships Accountability Student-Centered Urgency

Valley Ridge Middle School

### Connection Questions

- 30 seconds: **What do you love about your hometown?**
- Find a partner
- Take turns sharing your answer with each other. If you are the listening partner, ask at least one question after the speaking partner has shared.
  - Who? What? Why? How? When? Where?
- Be prepared to share out if chosen



Collaboration Relationships Accountability Student-Centered Urgency

[RESOURCE: Shared Fun Slide Set](#)

AND MORE!

# Planning for Teachers: *Day Before Students Arrive*



- Build one last Moment
  - Centered around Why
  - Connect it to your Goals for the Year
  - Aligned with your Mission & Vision
  - Challenge them to create moments with their students

# Planning for Teachers: *New Teachers*



Make their first experience memorable:

- Entrance to the event
- Meet the team
- Team building Activity
- Campus Swag Bag



Fostering connection and belonging:

- Pre-welcome
- Buddy
- Lunch Bunch
- Support

**“...relationships among educators define the culture within the school and the power we have to transform lives.”**

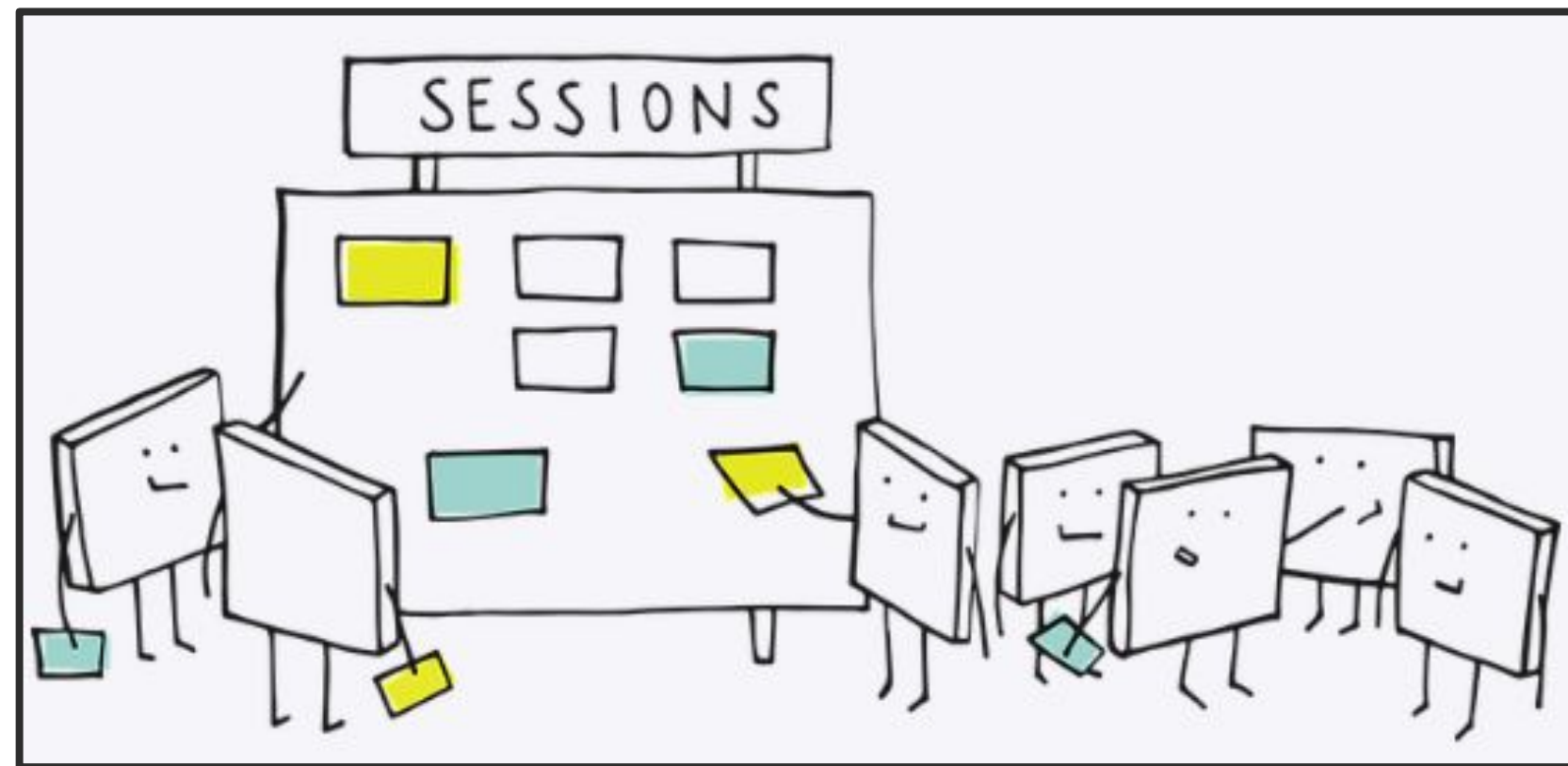
**~Tracey Smith and  
Jeff Waller**



# Beginning of Year Strategies for Students

# Planning for Students: *Before they Come Back*

- Brainstorm what your students need:
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Healthy Body & Mind
  - Mindset
  - Campus Expectations
  - Communication: In-person & Digitally
  - Relationship Building
  - Mentor



# Planning for Students: *BoY Curriculum*

[RESOURCE: BoY Dragon Camp](#)

**DHS Dragon Camp: Better Together**  
(First 3 days of school + every Friday Meeting)

**Dragon DNA** → Better through Diversity: learn who we are and how our differences are also our strength.

**Wellness Workshop** → Better through Balance: physical health and wellness and how to take care of ourselves.

**Mindset Study Seminar** → Better through Mindset: how our mindset can impact our attitude, achievement and happiness.

**The Dragon Way** → Better through Self-discipline: routines and behaviors that support success in school and life.

**Community through Communication** → Better through Conversation: always improving how we talk to each other and the words we use.

**Believe There is Good** → Better through Kindness: We can't heal ourselves by wounding each other. Dragons, you'll find, are kind.



# Planning for Students: *BoY Dragon Camp Example*

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
		First Day of School  Dragon Camp- Day 1	Dragon Camp- Day 2	Dragon Camp- Day 3
Regular Schedule/ Classes				During Advisory- Team/Family Meeting
				Advisory- Dragon Camp  Dragon Lunch
				During Advisory- Team/Family Meeting

## *August/September Calendar*

- Calendar out purposeful events

# Planning for Students: *Dragon Camp Example*

<b>DRAGON CAMP SCHEDULE 9th Grade - day 1</b>	
8:00-8:25	Lair/BIC: Teach Expectations for BIC, Hallway and Assembly; Launch Dragon Camp Course Organizer
8:30-9:00	School-wide assembly: Mission, Vision, Staff & Student Commitments, announcements, welcome back, purpose/expectations, "We are Dragons" chant, school song
9:00-9:05	Return to Lair
9:05-9:50	Believe There is Good / Be the Good
9:50-10:40	The Dragon Way/Conference
10:40-11:30	Mindset Study Seminar
11:30-12:00	<b>Dragon DNA</b>
12:00-12:30	Community through Communication
12:30-1:00	9th GRADE LUNCH
1:00-1:40	Wellness Workshop
1:40-3:00	Data Review and Personalized Pathway Goal Setting
3:00-3:45	Grade Level Team Building

# Planning for Students:

## *Habits of Connection and Communication*



Hand Signals



Logos / T-shirts

### Visuals of Connection

**"CLAYTON PROUD!"** → **"SAY IT OUT LOUD!"**  
**"FALCONS RISE!"** → **"ABOVE THE SKIES!"**

### Call and Response



### Social Media

# Planning for Students: *Before they Come Back*

## Calendar for...



...relationship building

...shared fun

...taskforce meeting to respond to data

...community and family events

 Building Relationships:  
Example Activities for the Classroom

	The HOW
Greet at the door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stand by the door during transition periods.</li> <li>Welcome each student by name with a positive statement.</li> <li>Use a connection signal (high-five, shaking hands, fist bump, thumbs up, etc.)</li> <li>Monitor the hallway and classroom to reinforce expectations (make positive comments or redirections when needed).</li> </ul>
2 minute connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a slide with an engaging question (your favorite ____, would you rather..., if/then, etc.)</li> <li>Read the question and review your routine for partner conversations.</li> <li>Direct students to talk with their partner.</li> <li>Set a timer for two minutes.</li> <li>Walk around and listen to conversations.</li> <li>When time is up, ask or randomize 1-2 students to share out.</li> <li>Share your answer with the class.</li> <li>Plan for time to complete this activity 2-3 times per week at the beginning or</li> </ul>

**Weekend Recap**

- Each monday, plan for a 2 minute partner conversation (like 2 minute connect) for students to share with each other how they spent their weekend.
- OR
- Plan for 5 minutes to allow for students to volunteer to share with the whole class. Set a limit for sharing before your start (state the # of students who will be called on or set a timer for 5 minutes).

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# Building Relationships

## *Example Activities for the Classroom*

[RESOURCE: Building Relationships: Example Activities for the Classroom](#)

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
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# ***Devonville High School***



## **Dragon Fun Lunch Schedule**

11:30-11:40	Welcome to PRIDE Friday Fun Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Today's Activity</li> <li>• Expectations for PRIDE Friday Fun Lunch</li> </ul>
11:40-12:20	PRIDE Friday Fun Lunch Activity	Kickball Games (5 Dragon Dollars per student on the team, 9 students/teachers per team—you can only have 3 teachers on your team and they must eat lunch at the same time as you)
12:20-12:30	Dismissal	PRIDE Friday students will return to the cafeteria and sit at tables prior to being dismissed to class following the normal Cafeteria dismissal

# Student and Staff Shared Fun Example

[RESOURCE:  
Example Shared Fun-Friday Fun Lunch](#)

**“A feeling of BELONGING is  
foundational to every student’s  
experience of school.”**

**~Russell J. Quaglia et. al.**

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***HOW to  
Keep it  
Going...***



# Why is it important to “Keep it going?”



Inspiration & Connection  
can recharge the batteries  
to sustain the Work!



Build relationships of trust  
“with a sustained practice of  
words and actions over time.”  
~Michael Fullan



# Faculty Meeting Outline

**Internal Use ONLY**

September 7, 2022

Location: Cafeteria

**Mission:**

We are a community of learners who maintain a safe environment for ourselves and others, and provide high-quality learning experiences to make our school thrive and grow.

**Faculty Meeting Norms:**

- 1) Start and end on time.
- 2) Follow an agenda.
- 3) Be positive and solution oriented.
- 4) Be respectful and attentive participants.

Agenda	Notes to
1) (10 min) Celebrations	Pass the Dragon's time this year—pic Incentives Team b will be passed on award)
2) (2 min) Grade Posting	Left over from In-s go. (AP-Burnes w
3) (3 min) Data with Mr. Ramos	Show attendance, data. Have print o later.
4) (20 min) Divide into Groups based on Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentive Committee: PRIDE Friday calendar</li> <li>• Trouble-Shooting: Expectations Videos to show in Advisory</li> <li>• Social Media: Outreach for Upcoming Family Event (Meet the Teacher) and how to best recognize our student's of the week</li> <li>• Others- PBIS Check-In: Look at Referral Data and come up with solutions</li> </ul>	Divide into (predet the list for staff to  Each group will sp classrooms in the Check-in group wi  They will bring upd minutes
5) (15 min) Share	Each committee will share with the group and gain consensus if needed.

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# Utilize a Task force!

- 4) (20 min) Divide Into Groups based on Committees:
- Incentive Committee: PRIDE Friday calendar
  - Trouble-Shooting: Expectations Videos to show in Advisory
  - Social Media: Outreach for Upcoming Family Event (Meet the Teacher) and how to best recognize our student's of the week
  - Others- PBIS Check-In: Look at Referral Data and come up with solutions

Divide into (predetermined groups—display the list for staff to know where to go)

Each group will split off into designated classrooms in the 9th grade wing, PBIS Check-in group will stay in the cafeteria

They will bring updates at the end of the 20 minutes

[RESOURCE: Example Faculty Meeting Agenda with Taskforce](#)



# Tips for Keeping it Going



- Ask for authentic feedback
- Observe, listen
- Add it to the calendar
- Plan ahead
- Frequent pulse checks

**This is the  
beginning of  
anything  
YOU want.**

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**E3-3D | DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING EVENT**

**JUMPSTARTS:**

# High School Pathways that Predict Postsecondary Success in Central Texas

**TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2022**

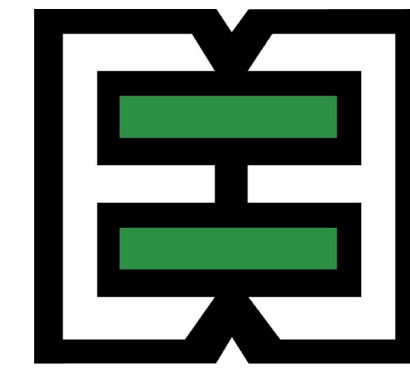


**[LINK TO REGISTER](#)**



**THANK  
YOU!**

Resources will be provided in a follow-up email along with the recording



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