

HOPE Note
The Ripple Effect

March 5, 2019

Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects. ~ Dalai Lama

Her name is Brielle* and she is a student whose discipline record is less than stellar. Staff have described her behavior as confrontational, disruptive and disrespectful. Brielle's mother has had an extremely volatile and contentious relationship with district administrators regarding Brielle's behaviors. Brielle is a student in the Susquehanna Township School District.

Brielle was referred to a mentoring group that is facilitated by one of our community partners. During group sessions, students are given the opportunity to discuss a variety of topics to include peer pressure, self-image, emotional health and personal stressors. After hearing another student share an emotionally charged experience during a recent meeting, Brielle felt compelled to act. With the help of her mother and a building administrator, Brielle found a way to assist the student anonymously, careful not to embarrass the other student or make her feel targeted. Through this one act of kindness, Brielle's mother was also afforded the opportunity to repair a once strained relationship with building administrators. Ripple effects.

One of our core values states that community partnerships are vital to our success. Mentoring programs like the one Brielle attends was created this school year to redirect and restore students exhibiting challenging behaviors. Mentoring was just one of the interventions that our district level SEL team recognized as a need. Brielle is just one example of a student whose life has been impacted by the presence of a positive relationship, opportunities for self-reflection, and safe spaces for student conversation. Hers is just one illustration of the impact of our SEL efforts, district-wide.

In his book, *Managing the Speed of Change*, Daryl Conner asserts that "change is not a discrete event that occurs by linear progression; rather it unfolds on many different levels simultaneously." Our process has been anything but linear, rather change is happening at multiple levels. So how do we keep the momentum going?

- The SEL committee will continue to deploy the SEL action plan and share the updates with you;
- The leadership team will continue to review student and staff SOAR surveys and develop action items to address trends;
- We will provide additional PATHS and Developmental Designs training in May;
- Staff will participate in a Poverty Simulation in May through a partnership with Tri-County Community Action;

- Building level MTSS teams will continue to work with the IU and PaTTAN to strengthen our core programming for all students; and
- We will continue to communicate our process and our vision to parents and members of our community.

I encourage you to keep making a difference in YOUR part of the district, whether it's in the cafeteria, the classroom or the board room. Remember, the ripple effect begins with a single pebble.

In partnership,

Tamara Willis, Ph.D.
Superintendent

**The student's name has been changed*

Piece of the Puzzle



Please join me in thanking Steve Sexsmith, Elena Charles, Rebecca Slavinsky, Vince Harper, Barry Seilhamer, Robert Stroble, Tae Kim, Tracey Mitchell, Mary Olley, the STHS Gospel Choir, the National Honors Society, the Key Club, and the Interact Club for contributing their time to the 10th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service. Special thanks to Takia Colston-Krow for assisting with the planning of the event.

I'd also like to recognize Jeff Swanson, from the middle school, for assisting a co-working in what could have been a life altering event. Thank you for caring enough to support a member of our Hanna family.