

Dear Academy Members,

Here in the Northeast, we are excited to see the weather warming up and the trees starting to bloom! As we move into the final phase of the 2020-2021 school year, we want to congratulate all of our Academy members for persevering through a truly unimaginable school year. We also want to share the pride and joy we felt on International SEL Day, as we saw the many ways our community celebrated SEL with students, staff and faculty.

In an effort to support your hard work, the Academy VPLC is here to assist you as you implement Social-Emotional Learning and Character Development initiatives. Reach out to the VPLC anytime with questions, ideas or concerns by emailing [SELvplc@gmail.com](mailto:SELvplc@gmail.com).

We look forward to hearing from you!

### #SELDAY in Cranford, NJ




Collage from Livingston Avenue School in Cranford, NJ

Grace Rivetti, a school counselor at Livingston Avenue School and Walnut Avenue School in Cranford, NJ, shared what was happening in her schools on SEL Day.

At Walnut Avenue School, Ms. Rivetti showcased an SEL choice board in a Google Slides presentation she created. The presentation informed her students about SEL and offered different SEL activities, such as a read-aloud with one of the teachers, a mindfulness coloring activity led by the school’s art teacher, and a movement exercise led by the school’s PE teacher.

SEL facts were shown throughout the presentation that explained how the different activities were beneficial to the students’ social and emotional development.

At Livingston Avenue School, Ms. Rivetti told us about a new after-school club that combines the students’ passion for art with SEL. In celebration of SEL Day, students in the club created a collage made of hands that they colored and designed in their own unique ways. The collage highlights the importance of community, connection and diversity and included speech bubbles of SEL topics, such as peer pressure, mindfulness, and kindness.



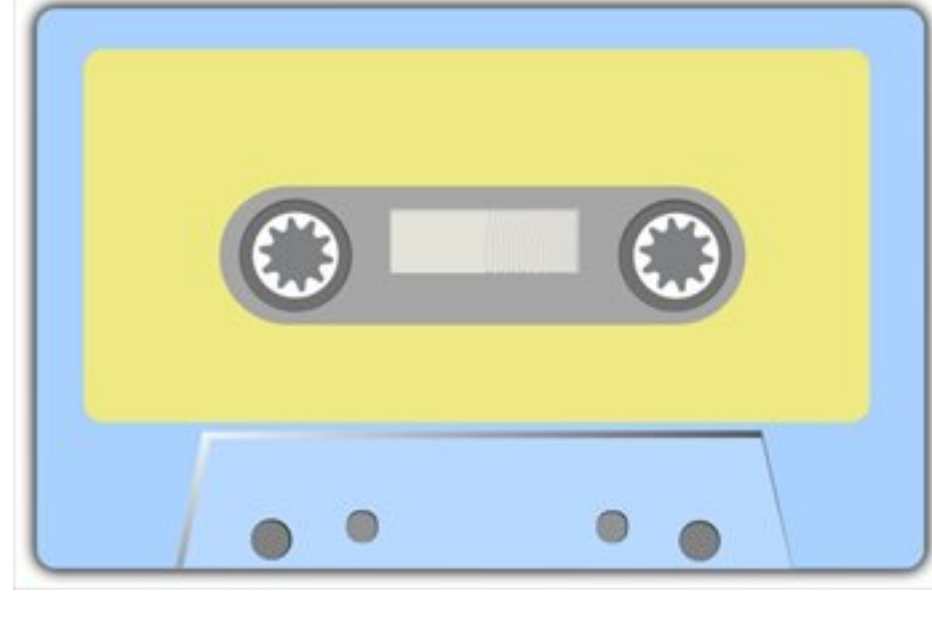
**BRIDGING DIFFERENCES**

We shared Greater Good Science Center's "[Bridging Differences Playbook](#)" in our last newsletter. Because the playbook is such a wonderful resource, we want to highlight the interpersonal skill, "Try Self-Distancing", from the playbook. This skill takes a lot of practice, but is useful for difficult conversations that leave you overwhelmed in the heat of the moment.

To use the skill, you (emotionally) "self-distance" by taking on the perspective of an outsider and referring to yourself in the third-person. Instead of just imagining the other person's point of view, using third- or second-person pronouns helps you to step back and change perspectives. By self-distancing, you internally remove yourself from the situation to gain a neutral perspective from which to ask yourself, "Why do 'you'..." (instead of asking yourself "Why do 'I'...") feel overwhelmed. Teachers can teach their students to "self-distance" by encouraging them to use third- or second-person pronouns when reflecting on arguments. This allows students to practice the skill until they can use it by themselves during arguments. The skill can also be used with colleagues to remain professional when conflicting stances arise.

You can be a Bridge Builder to foster a more empathetic and safe community by practicing this skill, or any of the other 13 skills, found in the "[Bridging Differences Playbook](#)".

### Podcast Recommendation



Check out the Social-Emotional Learning & Character Development (SECD) Lab’s very first podcast episode. In this episode, Dr. Maurice J. Elias joins co-hosts Mallika Verghese and John Khalil from Rutgers SECD Lab to promote International SEL Day and the importance of implementing SEL skills in schools. While International SEL Day has already passed, the podcast offers ageless information on the need for SEL.

After listening to Dr. Elias’ interview, we encourage you to subscribe to the SECD Lab Podcast Channel. The podcast guides school-based efforts on prevention, social-emotional learning, social decision making, social problem solving, violence prevention, and character development.

The podcast is available on Anchor and [Spotify](#)

### Upcoming Events

Don’t feel discouraged from attending this Pure Community webinar, if you haven’t been to the previous parts of this webinar series! In this webinar series, teachers and administrators can learn ways to implement SEL and self-care in their classrooms. This specific webinar focuses on promoting sense of belonging, sharing ways to add “brain breaks” to your class to help your students manage their stress and increase productivity, and providing strategies to implement a “culture of care.”

**Topic:** Ride: Culture of Care, Part 4 (Teachers & Administrators)

**Date and Time:** Monday, April 12 | 9:00AM - 12:00 PM EST

**Register:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_m7MWjkmoSXGHAQtunZAqtQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_m7MWjkmoSXGHAQtunZAqtQ)

### Virtual Professional Learning Community

Our Virtual Professional Learning Community (VPLC) is always looking for new topics or areas of interest. If you could send us an issue, topic, or question for which you would most like consultation/support we would greatly appreciate it!

Emails can be sent to: [SELvplc@gmail.com](mailto:SELvplc@gmail.com)

OR

Complete this [Google Form](#)



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