

move
THIS WORLD

Case Study:

McComb
School
District



"You cannot have
personalized learning
without addressing the
whole child."

- Dr. Cederick L. Ellis,
Sr., Superintendent

ABOUT

McComb School District is a birth to high school public school district in McComb, Mississippi. Located about 80 miles between Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Jackson, Mississippi, this ~2,700-student district is one to keep your eye on.

McComb is leading the way on student support and personalized learning. Core district values include collaboration, character, and respect. These are much more than words on a page, but a pulse felt from classrooms to the community. Superintendent, Dr. Cederick L. Ellis, Sr., and a dedicated team of district and school staff are spearheading McComb's personalized learning model.

The six pillars of student-centered learning at McComb are:

- Scholars are grouped by readiness.
- Scholars assume ownership for their learning.
- Scholars work at their own pace.
- Scholars show evidence of mastery.
- Scholars are provided with continuous feedback.
- Teachers are practitioners.

MOVING THIS WORLD AT MCSD

STUDENT IMPACT

Move This World's social emotional learning program provided McComb School District with the video tools to strengthen their social and emotional wellbeing. The short and easy-to-use videos offered bite-sized SEL, which helped MCSD ritualize a daily practice of identifying, expressing, and managing emotions. Students were able to develop and practice healthy emotion management strategies; this contributed to healthy learning environments where effective teaching and learning could occur.

STAFF IMPACT

Move This World offered MCSD staff with ongoing coaching and support, and experiential professional development opportunities rooted in positive psychology and creative arts therapy. With a focus on staff wellbeing, Move This World's PD sessions helped MCSD educators reflect on how their emotions impact school climate and culture, and ways this newly acquired knowledge and acute self-awareness could be used to create healthier learning environments that promote the wellbeing of themselves, and their students.



ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

STRUCTURE

McComb School District looked to Move This World as an opportunity to build a daily routine around social and emotional learning, and to effectively create a structure to facilitate conversation surrounding social and emotional development.

TRAUMA- INFORMED

MCSD staff and leaders wanted to better get to know their students, and build stronger relationships, but were hesitant about addressing potentially tough conversations with students. The district sought to help everyone shift to a trauma-informed mindset.

COMMON LANGUAGE

MCSD has been a strong supporter of social emotional learning for years and has worked with several different partners. One thing that was seemingly missing was the ability for all staff members and leaders to address emotions and issues of conflict across the community using a single, common language.



IMPLEMENTATION

To fully understand the impact that effective SEL implementation played at MCSD, we look to Kennedy Early Childhood Center.

Staff say it was easy to ritualize a daily practice of implementing Move This World's online social emotional curriculum. Through our professional development sessions, McComb School District staff members had the opportunity to address their own self-care and wellness needs.

The half-day summer sessions provided staff members with embodied, guided practice, of creative social emotional strategies. Mirroring the SEL strategies in the student videos, staff members were able to try-on the work they will do with their students throughout the year. Additionally, this time allowed for collaboration and positive action planning for staff.

When the time came for implementation, students, staff and leaders said they liked having the time dedicated to self and community. Staff utilized Move This World's videos first thing in the morning and then after lunch/recess in the afternoon. Staff immediately noticed a change within students.

THE RESULTS

Through utilizing Move This World's opening and closing videos, teachers noticed a smoother transition into the second half of the school day. Using the embodied relaxation closing day videos after lunch and recess helped students to emotionally and physically reset for the afternoon's lessons.

In addition to smoother transition periods, another result of using the evidence-based videos was the development of a common language; Move This World was giving both students and teachers at Kennedy the language to identify and manage their emotions. Teachers and leaders began to notice students adopting this language in result of routinely watching the videos and following along with the actors. Students who were previously withdrawn began feeling more comfortable.

The creation of this language allowed for a safe, supportive, understanding and empathetic community for the students to share, and champion their emotions. This also addressed another need of students and teachers: building positive relationships and identifying and managing emotions.



SPOTLIGHT

Kennedy Early Childhood Elementary school

Picture yourself in kindergarten. Do you imagine well-behaved, well-adjusted children, able to articulately identify, manage, and express their emotions? You're not alone if you are imagining just the opposite; children struggling to find and use words and tools to appropriately manage heightened emotions. More than 34 million children in the United States have experienced trauma, which directly impacts the way children interact with each other and learn. Currently, there are no national laws or standards requiring trauma-informed practices and social emotional learning (SEL) to be implemented in schools. Thankfully, districts across the country, like in McComb, Mississippi, have recognized the significant impact these programs can have on their students and are prioritizing such work. Now, in kindergarten classrooms in Kennedy Early Childhood Elementary school, students are provided support daily and are building a toolkit to help manage their emotions.

**"I didn't realize the importance and need of kids
expressing themselves emotionally at such an early age."**

- Principal Thomas

Principal Felicia Thomas is in her fourth year as principal of Kennedy Early Childhood Elementary, a birth to kindergarten school. When she started, there were climate and culture initiatives, like positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), but they weren't be utilized correctly or effectively.

"Kids weren't able to express themselves. PBIS was missing important components our kids needed," says Principal Thomas.

SPOTLIGHT

Kennedy Early Childhood Elementary school



During the 2016-2017 school year, kindergarten teachers at Kennedy were provided the opportunity to access Move This World's social emotional learning program. The online platform provided teachers with short, developmentally aligned, SEL videos for easy, ritualized practice, as well as personalized coaching and resources.

Principal Thomas said there was no buy-in plan for her team.

"Nobody was 'forced' to try it [Move This World]. Teachers led this initiative completely. What started as a suggestion, led to a teacher coming to me asking if they could use it after lunch because it was helping refocus and calm their students for the afternoon. Of course, I said, 'yes!' The buy-in was natural; Move This World was working very well in one classroom, so other teachers saw it worked and started using it too."

Kennedy students immediately connected to the kinesthetic and visual parts of the Move This World videos. Staff connected with the ease of use and immediate responses they saw in their students behavior. Both students and staff enjoy doing Move This World together daily and benefit from having the time to express themselves.

SPOTLIGHT

Kennedy Early Childhood Elementary school

“Before Move This World, I didn’t realize the importance and need for kids expressing themselves emotionally at such an early age,” says Principal Thomas. There have been positive results related to social awareness and relationship skills as well. “More students are interacting with one another and most are no longer afraid of speaking in front of a crowd or expressing themselves.”

Teacher happiness and retention is also on the rise at Kennedy.

“We’re trying not to stress and sweat the small stuff this year.”

There is a health and wellness committee focused on whole-school strategies. Teachers will often take walks during their planning time. Kennedy is even a “healthy-foods” school; they provide nutritious options and the kids are deterred from bringing unhealthy snacks. Many teachers try to follow suit with saying hydrated and eating healthy.

In addition, to Move This World and PBIS, staff have tools related to cooperative discipline, character education, student conferencing, and restorative circles. When asked about one major impact the school community has seen as a result of consistent social emotional learning, Principal Thomas replied, “Scholars are taking more ownership of their learning and actions that go on throughout the day. If they do react negatively, they take ownership and want to talk about what happened and why. The consistency of Move This World has been great for both students and staff.”

THE RESULTS

"We use Move This World in the morning time and it's a release for the children. They are able to let go of any problems and focus better on their day."

- Teacher, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Over 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019, we've monitored the climate and behavior changes at Kennedy Early Childhood Center.

Below is the data measured and reported:

100%

Decrease in number of suspensions

80%

Decrease in number of incidents



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