

# Student Services Newsletter

## November 2018



### Unlock Potential. Find Your Password!

At the Marshfield School District, we want our students to reach their potential and develop skills to thrive in school and in life. This year **National School Psychology Awareness Week** is November 12-16, and the theme is “Unlock Potential. Find Your Password!” The theme emphasizes how students can find their own “password,” or personal key for unlocking any number of challenges and opportunities in their lives to help them thrive. The goal is to highlight how identifying a “password” can assist in unlocking resources, reaching potential, and developing proactive or preventative skills to thrive in school and life. Words such as “imagine,” “encourage,” “learn,” “connect,” and “contribute” are examples of passwords that can push students forward in developing critical academic and social-emotional skills.

Unlocking potential can take many forms, such as: speaking up when bullying occurs, engaging in learning, trying a new activity or skill, cleaning up trash on the playground, doing something kind for a classmate or neighbor, or making new friends. These actions empower students and create compassion while strengthening connections and building resiliency. Unlocking their potential to grow as an individual and making their world a little bit better, which creates a long lasting impact in their lives.

There are many ways families can help their student take action to make positive changes. For instance:

- Talk to your student about passwords to help them unlock potential. Password ideas include: dream, laugh, connect, imagine, create, encourage, share, listen, help, explore, try, speak up.
- Assist your student in developing positive relationships with peers and adults by modeling respectful, caring behaviors.
- Help your student identify their strengths and interests.
- Create a home environment that allows your student to explore skills like building, drawing, and music.
- Encourage your student to learn new skills, and emphasize that learning and growing require trying new things and that success comes from small steps.
- Seek out support systems available in the community to help your student learn new skills.
- Emphasize the importance of deliberate practice and that talent is developed over time through skillful practice.
- Have your student create goals and map out a plan for achieving those goals. Praise their attempts, as well as their successes, and make sure you focus on the effort or hard work put into the process.
- Help your student work through setbacks, or lack of self-confidence, by having them identify negative thoughts that suggest concerns about their ability to be successful.
- Assist your student in seeing that persistence during a challenge, and overcoming obstacles is all part of succeeding; and showing them that setbacks are not permanent or all-encompassing.
- Encourage your student to participate in school and community activities. In particular, volunteer activities may encourage the development of positive behaviors.



## Bullying vs. Conflict, how do you determine the difference?

Conflict is often confused with bullying, and is an inevitable part of group dynamics. It's important that you and your student know the difference; here are some quick ways to determine what the situation is:

### Conflict is:

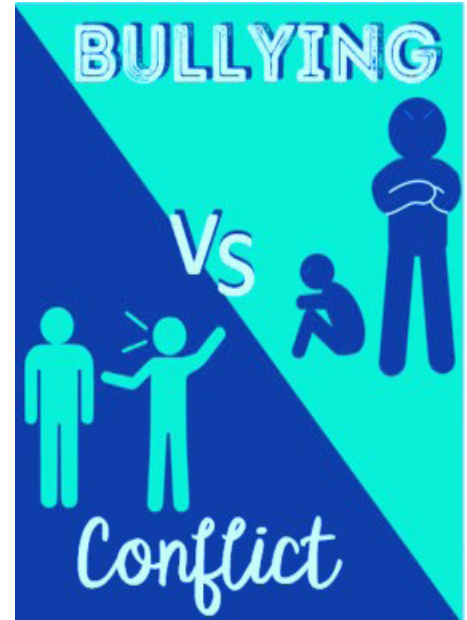
- a disagreement or difference of opinion.
- equal power between those involved.
- typically, an isolated incident.
- involved in making an effort to resolve disagreements and/or differences of opinion.

### Bullying is:

- one person exerting power over another.
- repeated intentional harm of another.
- serious and causes physical and/or emotional harm.

Encourage your student to talk to an adult when they are feeling frustrated with a situation. By discussing the situation they will be able to figure out a reasonable solution to the situation. Talking through the conflict will also help them determine if the situation whether the situation is conflict versus bullying, and give them the courage to speak out.

If you would like to read more information about the differences in conflict versus bullying, please reference Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center resource at <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/questions-answered/conflict-vs-bullying.asp>.



## Kindness Rocks!



For our district's Kindness Day, November 1st, the **Middle School** students worked in their Learn classes on making kindness rocks to add to the new Literacy Garden. Discussions were had about the importance of being kind to one another because no one knows what someone else is going through.

The **High School** MCLA student group hosted an anti-bullying/kindness week October 29 - November 2. The week focused on how to treat others and being kind in all situations. On November 1st there was an ACP advisory lesson where students learned about bullying prevention and what bystanders can do when they observe bullying.

This summer our **elementary student leadership** teams came up with the idea to make kindness rocks. These rocks have positive, inspirational messages or pictures painted on them. Some schools have added them to their landscapes, and other schools had students hide them on the playground. The idea is that when a student finds a rock they will give it to another student who could use some cheering up. Then that student gets to hide the rock again for a positive game throughout the year. Kindness really does "rock" and keeps our school environment warm and caring.

At **Madison Elementary**, students pledged to "stick" together against bullying. To do this each student signed a piece of colored duct tape and attached it to a banner. The banner is displayed in the school to remind students of their pledges. In classroom guidance lessons the students will continue to focus on recognizing bullying, peer pressure, and preventing being a bystander.

