**ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM**

What’s the difference between teasing and bullying? Horseplay and fighting? Sometimes these are hard lines to draw, and if you have ever wrestled with your siblings you may understand that one can easily mutate into the other. Helping children understand the differences takes more than just a lecture; it requires a conversation.

MACS has several programs underway to help students recognize bullying, the impact it can have, and what to do in situations involving bullying, one such program is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Olweus has been integrated into schools worldwide since the 1990s, and the only evidence-based nationally recognized bullying prevention program. It uses class meetings to create a safe space for discussion and gives teachers an avenue to open up conversations regarding what bullying is and what to do about it.

“Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power. Most often, it is repeated over time,” Mr. Nichols states during the eighth grade’s first classroom meeting. Olweus gives a wide range of suggestions to help.

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**SCHOOL UNIFORM CHANGE**

Any shoe that is ENTIRELY one (1) of our school colors is acceptable including but not limited to: Old Navy, Sperry, Vans, Skechers, Famous Footwear, and others. Any tennis shoe is acceptable for gym.

**Shoes must be in uniform colors: Gray, Black, Burgundy, or White.**

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL CONSTITUTION DAY**

The students at the Sarah Heinz House hold their heads up high today as they walk into the gymnasium. On the far end of the gym the preamble is written using makeshift license plates from all fifty states. Sitting in two rows in front of this display are representatives from the mayor’s office, recent law school graduates, members of the federal courts and Pittsburgh City Council. After the students give an impressive recitation of the preamble from heart, Judge Joseph Williams steps up and speaks of community and restorative justice. The middle schoolers follow along with their heads nodding. Such phrases are familiar to the students at the Sarah Heinz House, in class and in conversation you can hear them spout out words like “punitive” and “penal.”

Over the last few weeks, judicial community members have been helping Sarah Heinz House learn about the constitution and aiding the students in the formation of their own youth court. Youth Court is a student run court that focuses on rehabilitation and the restoration of balance through communication and working together rather than punishment. Not only does this approach give the students a chance to discuss their side instead of just getting detention as Amira in eighth grade points out it is “Giving the students a way they can lead and teaching them how to become leaders.”

After some of the community members speak, three of the eighth graders present the Constitution the middle schoolers wrote together. When the motion to ratify is presented to the school, not not a single student seemed tempted to say “Nay”... even in jest.

Keep your eyes and ears out for a story on NPR featuring Constitution Day at Manchester Academic Charter School.

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**ANTI-BULLY PROGRAM**

(Continued from page 1)

students who are being bullied from “get help from an adult” to “be a friend” and standing alongside the student being bullied.

In addition to the classroom meetings, students are learning how to be peer mediators, where students from varying grade levels are trained as arbitrators. If a non-disciplinary dispute arises, students are given the option to meet with a peer mediator in order to work together to resolve their problems. This gives students an opportunity to learn how to constructively address conflict on their own and encourages the application of conflict resolution skills.

Many of these conflict resolution skills are taught through the I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) program, discussed with Kindergarten through

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**PROJECT BASED LEARNING**

If you ask a middle schooler from the Sarah Heinz House what they learned in science class or in social studies you may receive an unlikely response. That’s because MACS Middle School is branching out from the traditional structure of classes. Students are still learning about these subjects, but now through a relatively new approach called Project-Based Learning (PBL).

PBL combines knowledge across subjects through a technique that goes beyond the regurgitation of information and requires the use of critical thinking. Different from subject-based learning, PBL puts the focus on how students react to, shape, and apply the information they learn, rather than focusing on the content itself.

Projects include building a bridge to scale and mock debates on current issues such as incarceration. These opportunities give the students a real world application for the knowledge and skills they learn from their teachers. Furthermore, PBL requires the
Second Grade at MACS Elementary, ICPS teaches children how to conceptualize and talk about their conflict, think of solutions, and predict different consequences. Part of the curriculum includes promoting prosocial behavior and understanding feelings (both their own and other’s.)

Understanding and respecting each other’s feelings is a core message of anti-bullying and conflict resolution programs, and a vital part of the pathway to becoming a caring and empathetic individual. As Mrs. McCandless talks about the new programs at MACS, she emphasizes “Everyone has a right to their feelings,” a key message bestowed upon all of the students at Manchester Academic Charter School.

I am humbled and honored to serve as the new Educational Director at MACS Junior High. I look forward to working with everyone as we work towards expanding our community of Project Based Learning at MACS Junior High!

Historically, we’ve demonstrated how working together, families, educators and community support can prepare and inspire our youth. Moving forward we are driven to meet and exceed PA State and Common Core Standards through projects focused on:

- Civil Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy
- Urban and Environmental Sustainability
- Entrepreneurship, Financial Education and Business Acumen
- Future Technologies

I have been provided a unique opportunity to work with a talented, resourceful, and committed network of individuals and organizations, both in our building and throughout the region. All of whom are dedicated to children having access to and attaining knowledge and opportunities beyond a textbook, a classroom, or a demographic boundary.

I look forward to working with you to prepare our children for opportunities both today and tomorrow. - Mr. Henderson

students to collaborate in structuring and executing their given task. When their project is finished they present it to the class, building their speaking and presentation skills as well as their confidence. “There’s a lot of hands on learning. I enjoy it, and I think the kids do too,” says Mrs. Knight.

It is the first year MACS Middle School has implemented the program, but the students already seem to be embracing it. In comparison to last year, Jamilah from eighth grade mentions that “We do a lot of activities and we get to do more teamwork.” However, Somaiah points out that, “It’s not an easy class, but it helps you.” She just finished up building her bridge and said, “If we were doing the bridges projects last year, we would have had to look up our own facts about bridges. Now, we learn about what really helps our bridge stand up, and what makes it fall down.” Instead of just learning the facts they have taken the information and are presented with an opportunity to think about it critically using Project-Based Learning.

I look forward to working with you to prepare our children for opportunities both today and tomorrow. - Mr. Henderson
Our Mission:
We foster the dreams of all children by providing an outstanding and dynamic education in a nurturing environment.

Our Vision:
We will continue to be an educational center of excellence and become a community pillar of support where students excel, families are engaged, teachers are empowered, and alumni flourish.

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