

**Hopewell Elementary School
Taunton, Massachusetts**



TRANSCRIPT: “EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD”

STEPHANIE HOYE, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR: A well-rounded student is not just about academics. It’s about incorporating family, incorporating feeling, incorporating arts and music. And we feel as though if you take the child as a whole person and you incorporate the community, the family, give them opportunity to succeed in the arts and in music and in different areas, then academically, they’re also going to succeed.

MICHELLE ROBERTS, VICE PRESIDENT, BRISTOL COUNTY SAVINGS BANK: I really do think that if you want to develop a really well-rounded, community-minded financially literate student, it takes more than an educator; it takes more than the parent. It takes everybody working together, and, you know, that’s the role that we try to fill as the corporate partner is, we’re trying to provide them the funding so they don’t have to worry about where the money’s coming from, that they can get on with what they need to do, and they can help the parents to do what *they* need to do. And you know I just really think that it takes more if that’s what you’re really looking to get out of the educational process, is to have kids that come out in the end that are well-rounded academically and non-academically.

Social and Emotional Learning

STUDENT: In Open Circle, what we do is we push all the desks to one side and we sit in one big circle.

Open Circle is a social and emotional learning program developed at Wellesley College.

JANE MCGUIRE, TEACHER: Open Circle is a program where social skills are taught to children, usually two fifteen- to twenty-minute sessions per week and during that time, they’re taught social skills handling problems on their own, there are lessons on problem-solving, dealing with dangerous and destructive behavior, dealing with annoying behavior. They’re taught calm breathing and they’re taught self-talk, so that they’re able to decide what their best option is.

When we learned to be facilitators of Open Circle we were taught a number of things, such as repeating what the child said so that you don’t give the child the feeling that one answer is right over another. So rather than just saying “Yes, that’s true,” or “I agree,” we just repeat what they say. And another thing was wait time, giving them time to think, giving them time so that they’re not impulsive, giving them time to allow other people a chance to come up with an answer too. So those are basic philosophies of Open Circle.

DEB GARNETT, TEACHER: It helps them with the blurting, too. They want the quick answer. We don't want the quick answer, we want the thoughtful answer. And they really do stress that wait time. And it is difficult because we're used to fixing—that's a really important thing for the kids, and for us.

STEPHANIE HOYE, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR: I'm finding that children are being able to solve and resolve their own issues, they're being given strategies to talk things over, language that helps them differentiate between something that's imperative and something that's maybe not so imperative. It really gives the children—Open Circle gives the children the strategies that they need to be successful with peer relations, peer pressure, and everyday problems that arise in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. So it really is giving them a better repertoire of ways of handling situations that they may not have been able to handle otherwise.

Negotiating social relationships is one of the most difficult challenges young children face.

JANE MCGUIRE, TEACHER: I just notice that less time is being spent with the teacher having to solve children's problems, and less time is being spent having to take time out of the day, having to take time out of the curriculum, to have to deal with the problems, to have to settle the problems between two people. I just find that there's less of that, more time that they're spending doing this on their own. So less time we're spending kind of out in the hallway trying to solve children's problems.

Extended Learning Opportunities

NANCY SYLVESTER, VICE PRINCIPAL: Last year on any given day in this building on a Saturday there are approximately 100 students in this building. They enjoy coming here. They enjoy coming here both for academic and if we can work it in, the enrichment programs. My idea when I presented this was the fact that, some of these students who have a lot of talent in a lot of different areas, because of the financial issue, may not ever be exposed to that. That's why we work so hard to get those enrichment programs in here, so that now you see students who are getting chess lessons. They would never, never be able to do that—you know, the art lessons, the music lessons, Spanish. The chess program, when we initially started, one student comes to mind, but there are many since then, that it allows them to focus and to think and to think ahead and to re-think. These skills that these kids need, sometimes they're so active or over-stimulated, that they have a hard time developing these skills. So I can think of one in between who couldn't even sit still. And yet, when he started to focus on that chess board, it was a whole different person.