

What Does Our School Receive With Participation?

1. Three 2-hour trainings: ACE Interface, Trauma Informed Schools, and Healing Centered Engagement for all school staff and community partners.
2. Streamlined trainings in English and Spanish for families and interested community members.
3. An FEA-assigned Coach to support the school and partners with visioning, community asset mapping, community engagement, etc.
4. Support for hosting a community engagement gathering.
5. Connections to other resources and learning opportunities.
6. Participation in a statewide HCE community of practice.

What Does Participation Require?

1. Whole school community participation. In order for this work to shift school culture, we encourage involvement of all people who work with students and school community, including all teachers, administrators, clerical staff, custodians, para-professionals, security, food services, bus drivers, etc.
2. Schools need to assemble a school support team including:
 - **Existing School Team that focuses on aligned issues such as the School Climate and Culture committee:** This project requires the partnership of an existing school team (preferably your School Climate team) to assist the Trusted Messengers in disseminating information to your school community, and to contribute to the action plan. This team will interact with the Trusted Messengers, Collaborating Community Organizations, and Family Liaison and coach.
 - **Two Trusted Messengers:** Trusted Messengers act as facilitators of the Healing Centered Engagement (HCE) project and serve as liaisons with the school's assigned coach. They work

together with their principal, the selected school team, community and family representatives, and coach to create and help implement a whole school HCE action plan. There can be overlap with members on the Existing School Team.

- **Two Collaborating Community Organizations:** This project requires two community organizations to be included in the HCE process at all stages of training and development of the HCE Action Plan. The community-at-large is an important stakeholder in HCE work and can bring fresh ideas and access to resources. We define community for this initiative as "all humans who interact with our students and are critical to advancing a Healing Centered Engagement Approach." Possible community stakeholders include but are not limited to a full range of associations and nonprofit organizations (social service, arts, environmental, fraternities/sororities); business leaders; clergy and religious support organizations; and state or city entities such as the Department of Health, Department of Education, Law Enforcement and Fire Departments.

Funders and Partners

The Burke Foundation
The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
The New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund
The Princeton Area Community Foundation
The Mental Health Association in New Jersey
The New Jersey Education Association

For more information, contact Ellen Sbarro at esbarro@njpsa.org or (609) 860-1200

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Healing Centered Engagement Project Fact Sheet



“The human capacity to face, overcome, and be strengthened by adversity is not only the capacity to thrive under stress, it is also the strength and ability of families, schools and communities to provide children with the things they need to adapt and thrive.”

- Ann Brickson



What Is the HCE Project?

The Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA), working with members of the New Jersey ACEs Funders Collaborative (see below), a Development Team, and over 50 additional thought-leaders and advisors, has designed a comprehensive program to forward best practices that advance Trauma Informed, and Healing Centered Engagement in schools across New Jersey. THE HCE Project model, based on a flexible and holistic Blueprint informed by research and promising practices, will help schools and communities address the systemic issues that cause students and teachers not to attain their highest educational and personal goals. The work represents a paradigm shift and moves the focus on the individual student to the systemic and mindset shift work that must be done. This critical work will take place in a partnership between schools and the communities they serve to address systemic issues, while building resilience in every child and teacher to persevere and thrive.

What Is Healing Centered Engagement (HCE)?

We use a definition inspired by Dr. Shawn Ginwright:

“Healing Centered Engagement offers an important departure from solely viewing young people through the lens of harm and focuses on asset-driven strategies that highlight possibilities for well-being. An asset-driven strategy acknowledges that young people are much more than the worst thing that happened to them, and builds upon their experiences, knowledge, skills, and curiosity as positive traits to be enhanced. Healing Centered Engagement has an explicit focus on restoring and sustaining the adults who attempt to heal youth — “a healing the healers” approach.”

Why Should Our School Participate?

As a nation, we are experiencing the collective uncertainties and resulting traumas of the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators continue to transform the ways that they connect with, teach, and support students and families under these extraordinary circumstances. They will increasingly be called on to meet the social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of students. Recent estimates have suggested a substantial number of students will need critical support, including many who experienced school success before the COVID-19 pandemic and who typically did not require a higher level of assistance. Given these emerging needs, students and educators will benefit from systemic efforts to implement

universal, culturally affirming, and relevant Social and Emotional Learning. This project provides resources and training for educators to create a school environment that meets the social and emotional challenges of students, supports their own self-care, and offers an opportunity to authentically connect with families and community in positive healing ways.

Overall Goals for the HCE Initiative

1. Schools will have deepened their shared understanding of how trauma impacts learning and why a school-wide approach is needed for creating a trauma-sensitive school.
2. The school will be able to effectively support all staff, students, and community to feel safe — physically, socially, emotionally, and academically.
3. Schools can address students’ needs in holistic ways, taking into account their relationships, self-regulation, academic competence, and physical and emotional well-being.
4. Schools explicitly connect students to the school community and provide multiple opportunities for students to practice newly developing skills throughout the school.
5. Support staff’s capacity to work together as a team with a sense of shared responsibility for every student.
6. Help the school anticipate and adapt to the ever-changing needs of their students and the surrounding community.