

## “Jet Time” at Cedar Valley High School

Our students are currently experiencing unprecedented trauma and more mental health conditions than ever before. The focus of social-emotional wellness in schools is paramount. Research has proven that when social emotional needs are not met, students are not equipped, empowered, or engaged in the learning process. Social and emotional well-being provides a crucial foundation where students are ready and able to learn. Its importance leads to some challenging questions for leaders in education: how does a school systematically provide opportunities to educate the “whole child”? How does one guarantee a viable SEW high school experience? How do we ensure that every child has a teacher/mentor that values connection? How do we find these amazing teachers that are emotionally stable themselves? How do we equip and empower our teachers so they can provide what students need emotionally?

These questions led to two years of seeking answers, reading books and articles, and talking to community stakeholders. Then I met Nate Crandall: a psychology and science teacher who was deeply committed to SEW. We both “nerded out” on next-level stuff and the vision caught on as our new school, Cedar Valley High School, was established. Our community and teachers were excited to hear of the SEW focus. Every new hire was committed to the cause. Soon the administration team, our SCC, School Leadership Team, PTSA, District SEW leadership, and Counselors were ready to support this new initiative.

One of the main obstacles to this great program was the issue of credit or where to fit the class into the school day. Anna Butler, lead counselor, and Mari Braithwaite, ASD Director of Secondary Curriculum, led the effort in finding ways to offer credit for students. There were many other considerations and hours of discussion required to finally launch the program.

The first two years of the program, SEW and literacy were the focus. Starting this year, counselors have collaborated to add weekly state comprehensive guidance and college, career readiness lessons, and a YouScience system. This YouScience is a platform that measures aptitudes to uncover students’ natural talents, match them to careers, and give them personalized feedback on how their abilities can be utilized in school, work, and in their daily lives. The system also allows students to access their individual portfolios up to ten years after graduation.

What sets this apart from other programs is that students are kept with the same teacher all four years within the community. Aviators “hijacked” the idea behind homeroom, advisory and flex models and have created a period called “JetTime.” We even created an original novel to reflect our values and our Aviator theme, *Light the Fires, From Turbulence to Triumph*. Students participate in close-reading literacy activities and apply the SEW principles within the book to their own lives. Students also learn skills such as: communication, mental health habits, focus, emotional regulation, time management, and discipline.

Jet Time:

- Is a research-based, science-backed concept that provides a credit-bearing class period.
- Creates a venue for generating more connections with fellow students and significant non-parental adults.

- Uses face-to-face interaction, a specially written book, and a Canvas Course to deliver literacy and social and emotional wellness instruction that provides students with skills and direction needed for their futures.
- Provides all students with activities and lessons that encourage post secondary education and career opportunities.
- Integrates data collection tools that will allow Cedar Valley to track gaps in learning, skills, knowledge, and equity.
- Provides students with opportunities to create YouScience Portfolios.

Students do this all under the guidance of a committed teacher-mentor who works with their class to create a safe space where they can recognize, understand, and value both themselves and one another. The importance of this effort cannot be underestimated. The research shows that improving connections, self-awareness, and emotional regulation skills benefits teens in the short and long term. As Aviators, we challenge the students and teachers to reach for the skies.

*“I have loved how CVHS has incorporated both literacy and SEW (Social & Emotional Well-being) into their JetTime. These are both essential topics for teens that can easily get overlooked in secondary school. Our students are facing more right now than they ever have in their regular day-to-day life. CVHS uses Jet Time to promote dispositions that help students feel more confident and connected to those around them. They also magnify this time by including literacy components that support student reading and comprehension through connected text. I am grateful to have my children at a school that values literacy along with my child's emotional wellbeing.”* - Jessie Cannon, Research & Evaluation, Alpine School District

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