

THE POWER OF US: CULTURE THROUGH CONNECTION



**GERALD
ELEMENTARY**

Presented By:

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SESSION OUTCOMES:

Attendees will identify ways to strengthen school culture by building intentional relationships, routines, and shared purpose.

Attendees will learn how student leadership opportunities, such as peer mediation, family groups, clubs, and Dutch Camp can enhance PBIS implementation and student ownership.

Attendees will understand how cultivating a positive, collaborative staff culture supports consistency, improves morale, and reinforces a thriving PBIS framework.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL:

- **LOCATED IN GERALD, MISSOURI**
 - **POPULATION AROUND 1,300**
 - **30% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME FALLS BETWEEN \$10-25K**
- **PART OF THE GASCONADE COUNTY R2 SCHOOL DISTRICT**
- **50 STAFF MEMBERS**
- **315 STUDENTS (PRE-K THROUGH 5TH GRADE)**
- **50+% OF STUDENTS ARE FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES**



PBIS AT GES



Dutch Dollars:

- Tangible given to students for following expectations

Buddy Bucks:

- Given to students for following expectations ABOVE & BEYOND
- Weekly drawing at Morning Assembly
- Students get to play PLINKO for a prize
- Photo featured on school FB page

Dutch Bucks:

- Given from staff to staff
- Weekly drawing at Morning Assembly
- Staff member gets to spin prize wheel

WHAT IF THE SECRET TO A THRIVING SCHOOL CULTURE ISN'T A PROGRAM, BUT THE PEOPLE?

At Gerald Elementary, we've found that giving students meaningful ways to connect, lead, and take ownership transforms our school community. From peer mediation and family groups to student-led projects, clubs, and traditions like 5th Grade Dutch Camp, we'll share how these experiences help students feel valued, responsible, and part of something bigger.



Peer Mediation



Art Club



5th Grade Led Dutch Camp



WHAT REALLY BUILDS SCHOOL CULTURE?



Not one program



Not a binder on a shelf



How students **FEEL** when they walk into the building:

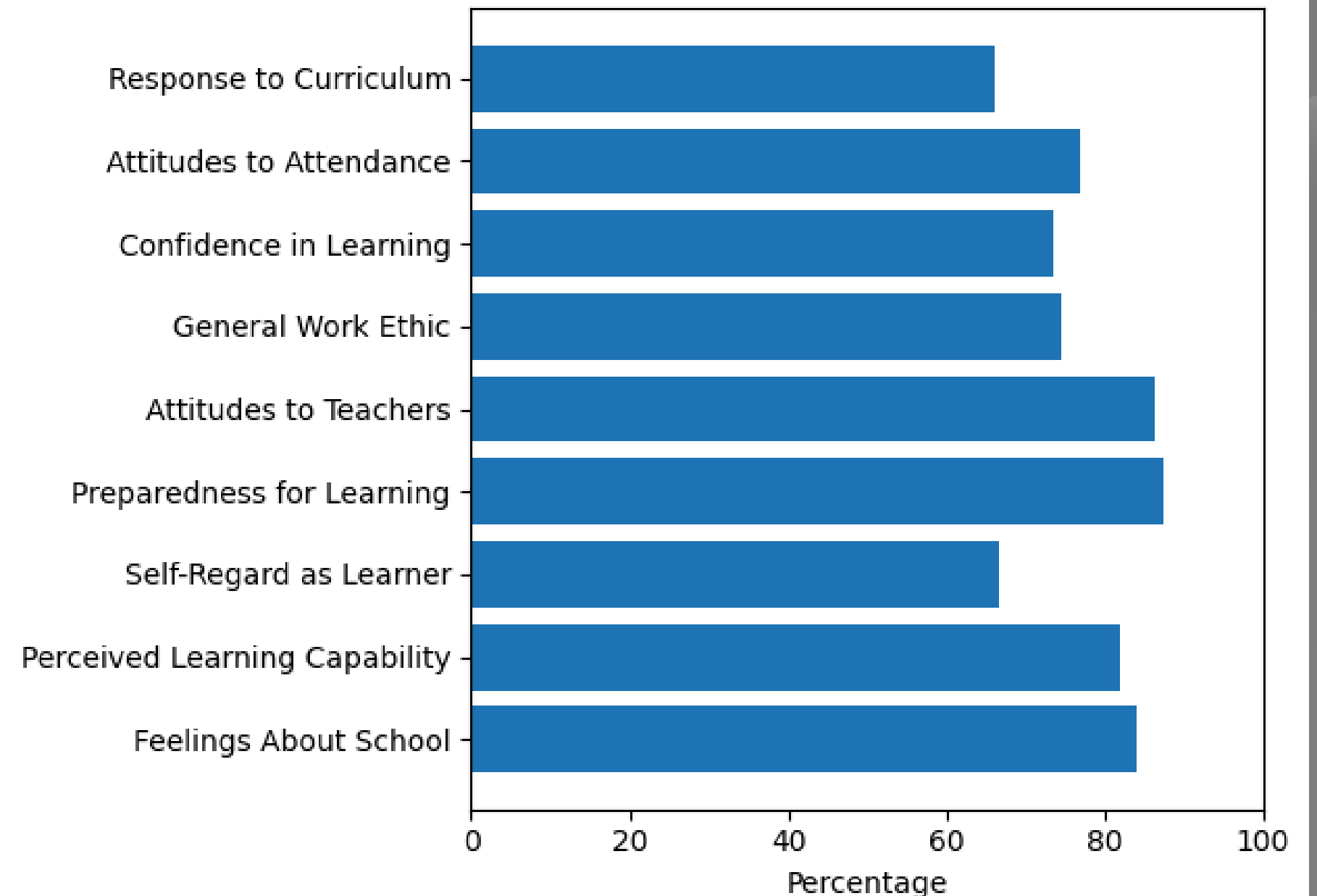
- Do you know if they belong?
- Do they matter?
- Do they have a role?



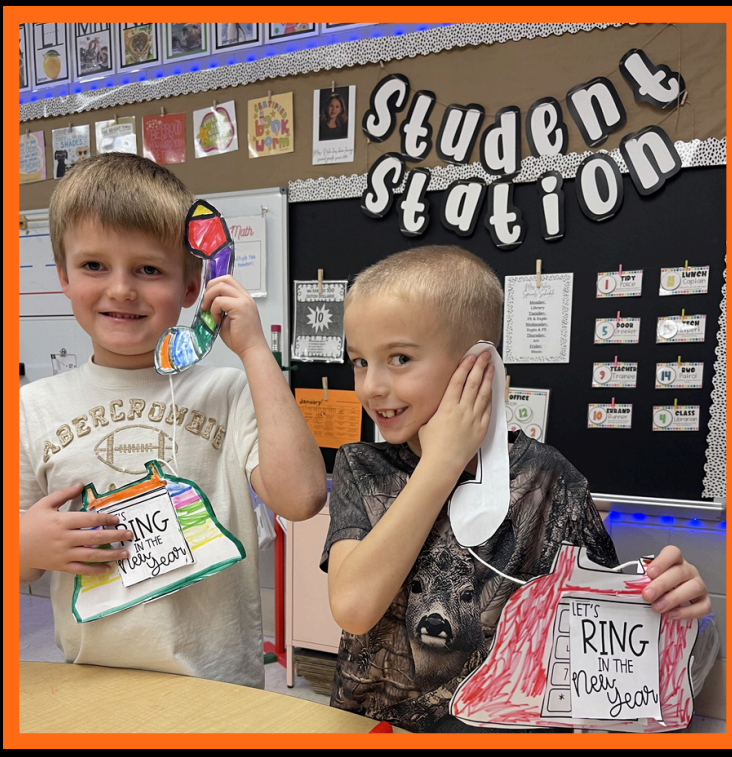
WE DIDN'T SET OUT TO CREATE "ONE MORE INITIATIVE." WE FOCUSED ON CREATING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES FOR KIDS.



Overall Student Perception Data (All Students)



CULTURE IS BUILT WHEN STUDENTS ARE...



CONNECTED — **THEY BELONG**
Family Groups, assemblies, service, peer mediation

LEADING — **THEY'RE EMPOWERED**
Beta Club, mediators, announcements, mentoring, leadership opportunities

GIVEN OPPORTUNITY — **THEIR VOICE COUNTS**
PBIS, classroom roles, student led projects, WIN time, clubs

FAMILY GROUPS



- Mixed-age groups
- Student remain in the same family
- Safe place for relationships beyond the classroom
- Older students mentor, younger students
- Creates a sense of family and belonging within our school
- Participate in a variety of lessons and activities:
 - PBIS (data based)
 - Community Service
 - Buddy Reading/Board Games
 - Character Lessons

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

- STUDENT LED T/TH
- ANNOUNCEMENTS
- CELEBRATIONS/SHOUT OUTS
- PRIZE WHEEL/PLINKO
- GYM CLASS HEROES
- BIRTHDAYS
- SPECIAL GUESTS
- PLEDGE
- STAFF V. STUDENTS



MORNING MEETINGS



Our morning meeting has evolved this year along with the renovation of our gym. What started as administrator or teacher-led became daily digital meetings. Now students lead a whole school meeting twice a week, with digital meetings on Fridays. This shift has given students real opportunities to lead and take ownership, and it's become something they're proud of.



Kiss the
Mrs. Pincall 3rd

Kiss the
Mrs. Pincall 3rd

Kiss the
Mrs. Pincall 3rd

Kiss the
Mrs. Pincall 3rd

Kiss the
Mrs. Pincall 3rd

Kiss the
Mrs. Pincall 3rd

Kiss the
Mrs. Turner

Kiss the
Mrs. Turner

Kiss the
Mrs. Turner

5TH GRADE LED DUTCH CAMP

Our 5th graders take the lead on our January Dutch Camp by working together to create a slideshow, partnering with Mr. T to make a video, and teaching our younger students what the Dutchmen Way looks like in all areas of our school.



Worked with teams to create a Dutchmen Way slideshow for an area of our school.



Created videos with the help of Mr. T. from OHS T.V. Studio.



Presented their "lessons" to students Pre-K-4th grade students.

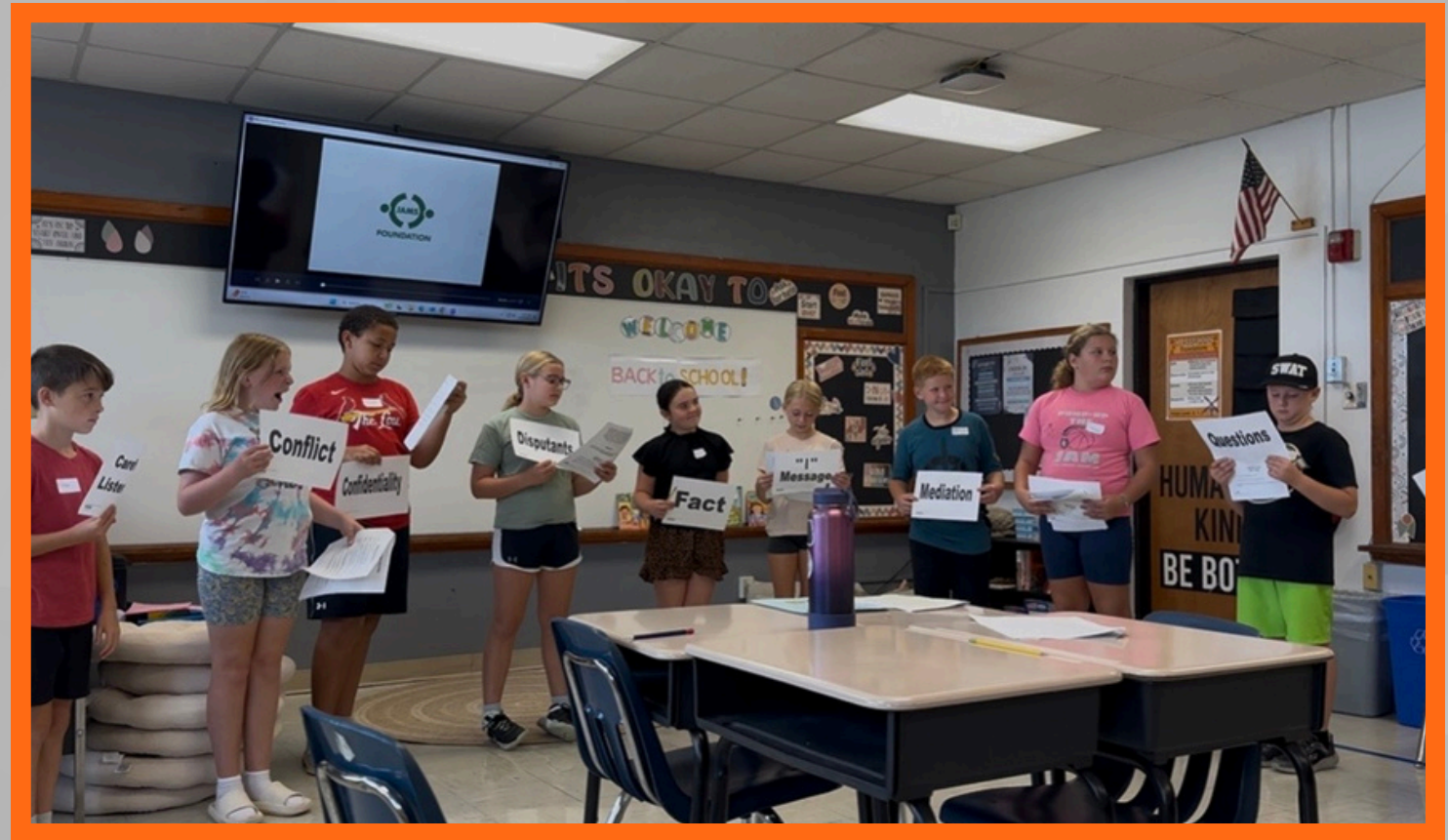
PEER MEDIATION

PreventEd's Peer Mediation program trains students, to become peer mediators, facilitating conflict resolution between their peers by teaching them problem-solving skills to address issues before they escalate.



PEER MEDIATION

- Our 4th & 5th Beta leaders get the chance to apply, showing they're ready to take on responsibility.
- Teachers provide input, strengthening the connections between staff and student leaders.
- After Prevent Ed training, mediators step into their roles, leading, problem-solving, and helping others... building both their confidence and our school culture.

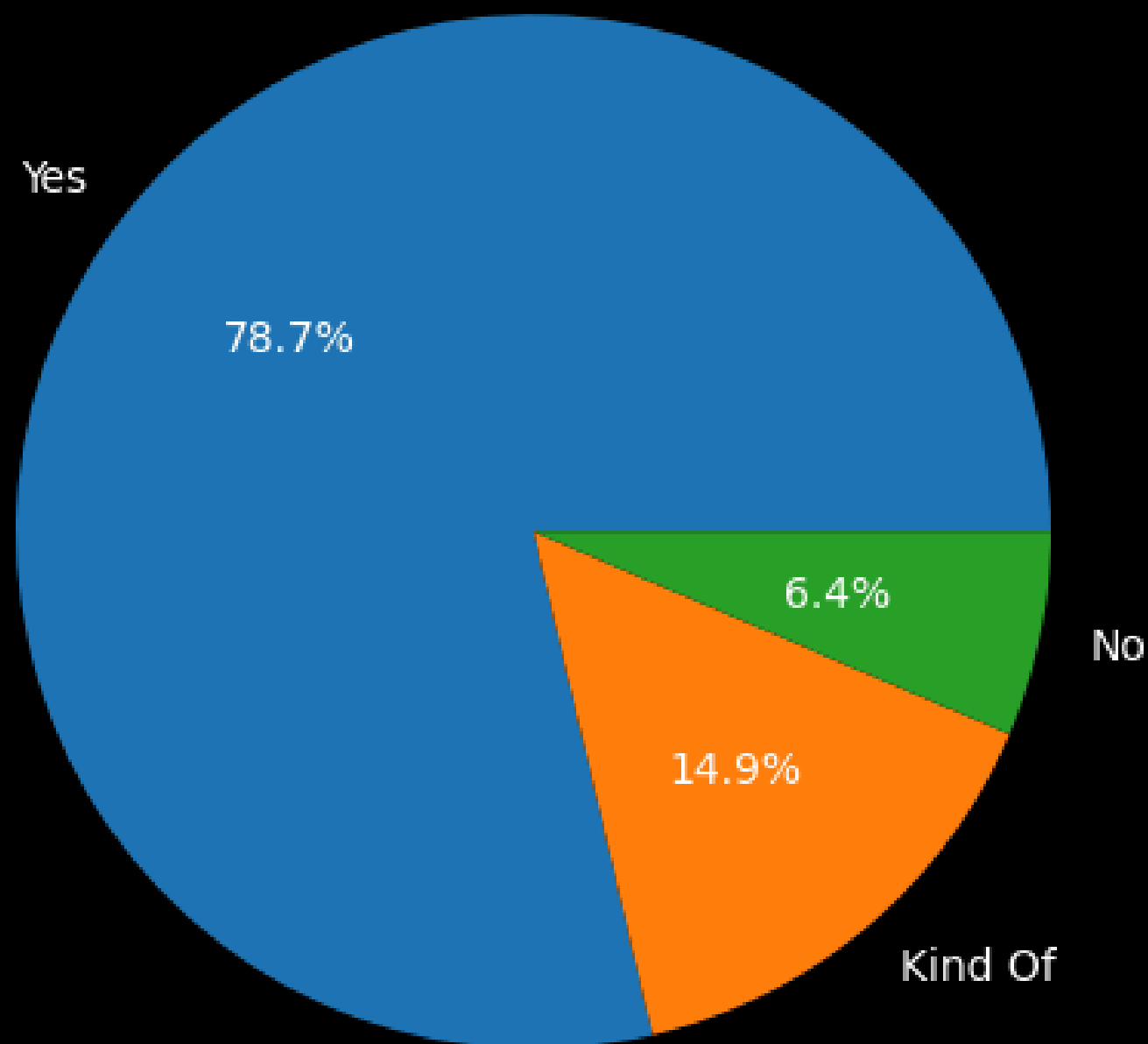


***In an Elementary
School Far Far Away....
There were kids on the
playground who couldn't get
along!!! What were the
teachers supposed to do??***

Peer Mediation!

PEER MEDIATION: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT IT...

The Peer Mediators Helped Me Feel Heard



Students shared that peer mediation was valuable because it

- helped them solve problems
- work through conflicts in a positive way
- often leading to resolution and even reconciliation.

Mediators were described as

- kind, respectful, and good listeners
- who made them feel calm, comfortable, and understood.

Students appreciated having the opportunity to share their side of the story and talk things through.

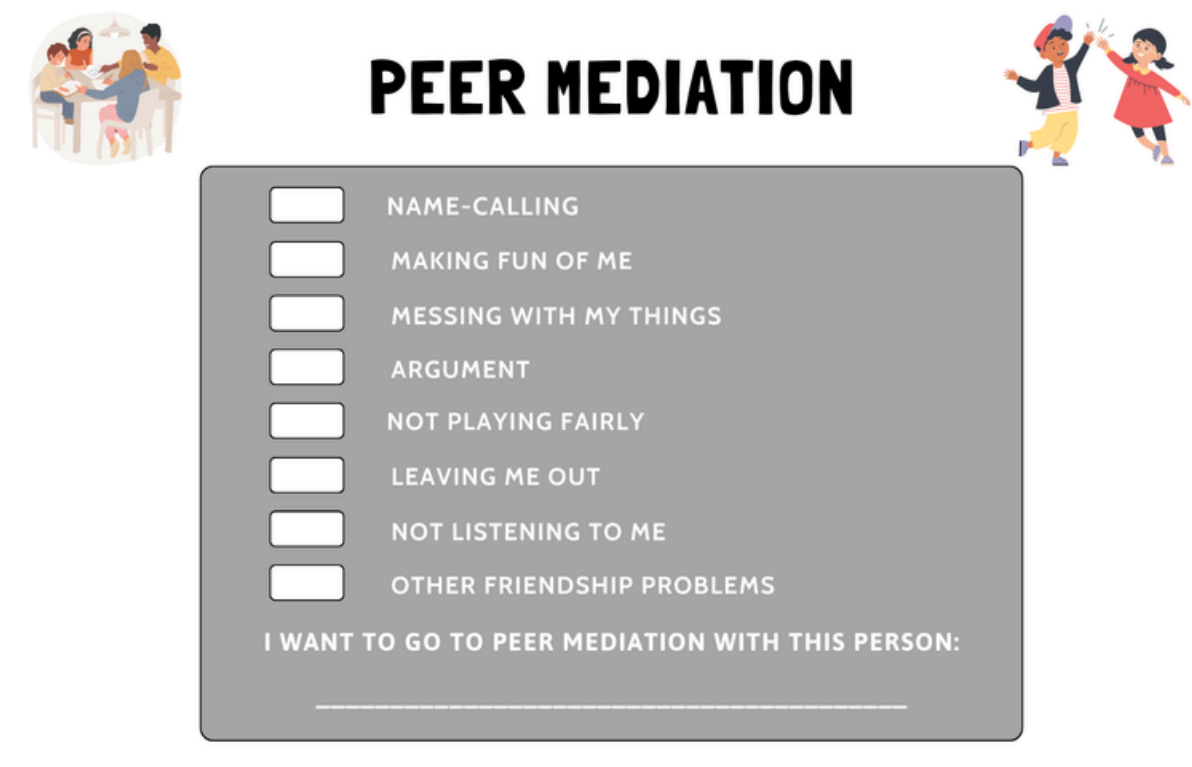
Some students also noted personal growth, saying the process helped them improve, better handle issues, and contribute to a school environment with less conflict.

PEER MEDIATION: WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT IT...



Peer Mediation Impact

- Students feel heard and reflect on their behavior.
- Conflicts decrease through safe, guided conversations.
- Teachers gain support during recess.
- Mediators model strong student leadership.
- Pre-forms ensure the right support for students.



PEER MEDIATION

NAME-CALLING

MAKING FUN OF ME

MESSING WITH MY THINGS

ARGUMENT

NOT PLAYING FAIRLY

LEAVING ME OUT

NOT LISTENING TO ME

OTHER FRIENDSHIP PROBLEMS

I WANT TO GO TO PEER MEDIATION WITH THIS PERSON:

Peer Mediation Impact

AS OF JANUARY 2026:

- 278 INCIDENTS BROUGHT TO MEDIATION
- 600 STUDENTS
- #1 INCIDENT-RECESS (INSERT SURPRISED FACE HERE)
- #2 INCIDENT-CLASSROOM (TOUCHING, POKING, BOTHERING, ETC.)





CLUBS

Clubs help students find their place and grow as leaders. Students take pride in being part of these groups. They show responsibility, support one another, and help shape the positive culture of our school. Similar to our Peer Mediators, all of our GES clubs use an application process that includes teacher recommendations.

STEAM Club

STEAM Club is an opportunity for students to engage with various engineering, science, and art projects throughout the year. STEAM Club will meet Tuesdays from 2:30-3:00. Students that wish to participate need to fill out an application.

Session 1: Fall-Girls
Session 2: Spring-Boys

Applications need to be submitted to Mrs. Boehm or Ms. Connor by 12-16

Name: _____
Grade: _____
Teacher Signature: _____

Fill Out and Return by December 16th

Why do you want to join STEAM Club? List at least two reasons.

Note of Recommendation from GES Staff Member.



ART CLUB

BETA



STEAM

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Through our ExcEL program (21st CCLC grant), students have access to enrichment opportunities like Jr. Bloomers, TV Studio, and Choir, creating more ways for students to belong, lead, and grow.



CHOIR gives students the opportunity to share their talents, work together, and build confidence as they perform for our school and community.



Jr. BLOOMERS work together to improve and beautify our campus, building pride and ownership in their school community.

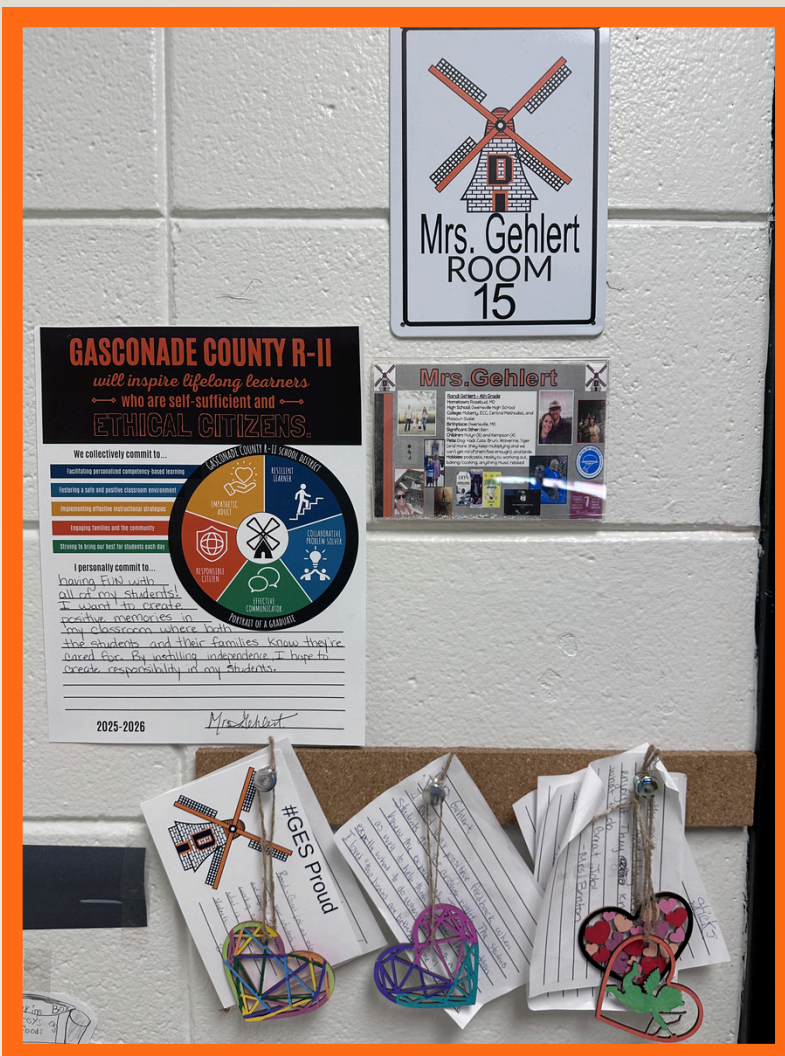


TV STUDIO students are responsible for our Friday digital meetings and create videos that promote character, leadership, and pride in our school.

STAFF CULTURE



- Learning Walks
- "Shout Out" Cork Strips
- Teacher Snack Cart
- Wellness Challenges
- Team Building Activities
- Appreciation Week
- Staff Celebrations
 - Professional
 - Personal
- Name Plates
- Interest Inventory
- Book Club
- Staff Outings



Gerald Elementary

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