

***Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District***  
***School Administrative Unit #63***

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The 2018-19 school year will be the second year that our school psychologist, Megan Sass, who, in addition to administering all cognitive and social emotional evaluations for our district, providing individual counseling for special education students identified as requiring such support and attending numerous evaluation planning, evaluation review and IEP meetings, has been able to fulfill a growing need for student social-emotional support district-wide through targeted group interventions.

Groups are an excellent way to increase the number of students (special education students and general education students) who can receive support around their social emotional learning needs. Topics include: Social Thinking, Emotional Regulation, Coping with Stress (changing family structures, loss), Attention and Impulse Control and Executive Functioning.

There is a significant need for these group interventions at both FRES and WLC, although the need seems to be greater at FRES where the younger children still require instruction around basic skills that come intuitively to some, but not all. Many students require explicit instruction and practice around the social-emotional aspects of their school experience.

At Florence Rideout Elementary school, students are grouped by grade level and gender (i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade boys). Participation requires parental permission, and has been granted when requested approximately 80% of the time. Most groups run for eight weeks, which appears to be a sufficient time to be of worthwhile benefit to the students, while also allowing us to offer the intervention to as many students who need it as possible during the course of the year. Other groups, such as a social thinking group designed for an autistic student with Social Thinking goals and group counseling services specified in his/her IEP, may run for the duration of the school year.

During the 2017-18 school year, of the 96 students who were referred by teachers and administrators for group interventions, Miss Sass was able to include 30 of them in groups over the course of the year – prioritized to offer the intervention to those with the greatest need.

By acquiring the skills through guided practice around these topics, students emerge better equipped to meet the social emotional demands of their lives, resulting in an increased availability for positive participation and learning/achievement at school.



