

Collaborative Problem Solving and Special Education Collaboratives

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SUMMARY

The speaker, a retired director of student services at Reeds Academy, discusses the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) at the academy, emphasizing its effectiveness and the integration of CPS with existing educational frameworks. They highlight the importance of training staff, building a supportive culture, and using a common language to foster empathy and problem-solving among both staff and students.

- *CPS has been a long-term passion for the speaker, who worked to implement it at Reeds Academy.*
- *The integration of CPS with CASTLE standards has helped staff better understand and target students' needs.*
- *CPS serves as a foundational approach, complementing other educational practices like restorative justice and social thinking training.*
- *Staff training is structured, with all new employees receiving introductory training and ongoing support to become champions of CPS.*
- *The use of a common language among staff promotes empathy and collaboration, enhancing the overall school culture.*
- *The speaker acknowledges the challenges of implementing CPS but emphasizes its potential for positive change.*
- *Building a supportive community among staff is crucial for successful CPS implementation.*

Hi, Dearra Dow Pizudo. I am the retired director of student services at Reeds, although I spent 36 years of my career there working at the academy with um the population of kids that are near and dear to my heart at Reed's Academy. CPS is something that I had been trying to bring to Reeds pre- pandemic um for years and years talking with Dr. Stuart Alblon and um I never gave up. So once Desessie recognized um Think Kids as a as a partner, we were able to jump on that and very happy to have the grants and to do the work. So CPS is my jam.

It's my passion and it works. I think we've all really used castle standards. They're very clinical. They're very therapeutic. Um, we have used castle standards at reads for years. What we have done with our staff, we've looked at the comparing the thinking skills lists and those categories and really putting them side by side with the castle standards and making those connections.

some of the feedback that we've received from our pareducators, our special ed assistants and even our teachers, clinicians really understand. Um I'm a social worker too by my roots or in social worker as a clinician. Um the staff really can wrap their f have said to me, you know what, we can wrap our brains around the thinking skills and understand like help really get specific and target um what the kids need to work on. So, I just wanted to throw that out there because that's one of the things in our implementation that we're working on is really helping people understand the connection between the castle standards and the CPS thinking skills. And the

thinking skills are we talk about CPS being like actionable. People have said when they read the the castle standards, they have to stop and pause. What does that mean? and when they look at the list of thinking skills, they can say, "Aha, I see that. I observe that it's more concrete for people." So, just wanted to throw that in. That's been a g that's been a really interesting um evolution for us really looking at our work. It really truly is when we break it down, it's it's a very actionable um approach.

I like I like to think about collaborative problem solving is like our umbrella >> and we kind of use it as our base as our foundation. And when we go through the process, when we try to come up with solutions, our solutions involve other things like restorative justice or social thinking training or um there's there's just a lot of different things that CPS helps us and we tap into all the other things that we have done as far as best practices and they become it channels how would how to use them gives us an effective like a plan how to implement specific specific interventions for specific kids based on their specific skills or lack of skills.

Um we're in just finished year three and training of people having a think kids was critical in helping us develop a plan for our staff and where we're at kind of right now. Um year one we tr we were lucky we had a grant. We know not all of you are going to be in that fortunate position to have a a grant, but I do believe there are ways to do implementation and build up to it. You don't need huge grant monies.

It's that ripple, you know, start with that ripple. >> Um, but right now, every staff person at Reeds Academy coming on boarding right away gets an intro and then within the first three months of employment, they get the essential, the two-day training. And then we have a whole plan for like champions who and it's about who wants to do it. Who are the staff among us that want to that really wrap their brains around really embrace it. They become our champions. And then we have right now all of our counselors are um certified at the certified level and we have five trainers in the collaborative. So we've done that in three years. I think it's on the fast track. I think there think kids people think that's crazy the way we did it, but it was like me. I'm just I'm not like taking credit for it, but I have been like so I they call me like the super champion because I keep everybody kind of on the track. So like that's something like everybody needs like to build your champions whoever it is like in your organization that buys into the philosophy and take willing to take the risk to kind of practice it and then it kind of kind of has this ripple effect from from there.

>> The other piece is that we use it a lot with each other. the common language we find ourselves, you know, what are your concerns? Well, my concerns are, you know, how are we going to work through through this together? Um, the kids at the academy have picked up, they see the staff using the same language with each other and having that empathy ingredient and the listening when people feel heard and listened to, it's amazing how, you know, because then everybody's regul, you know, everybody's more calm.

And we do it with our colleague, we do it with each other like we we talk about it with each other to solve problems. Helps us build empathy and concern with each other because we all kind of can take a look at each other and say, you know, if are we on today or off today and can can my colleague access all her skills today or did she have a rough night and how do we work together to support and deal with, you know, whatever the day ahead brings us. So, >> um it's it's and it's not um it's not all roses and unicorns and rainbows. I live I live in the

real world, right? So, it um it's a process. It's a learning process, a learning and a it's a culture. It's a shift when we do CPS.

Like a little ripple of just changing the way people think about people do well if they can can really build