



## GRATITUDE FOR THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

*“May the work of your hands be a sign of gratitude and reverence to the human condition.”  
— Mahatma Gandhi*

### OVERVIEW

A practice to use at the beginning or end of a meeting, to express gratitude for members of the school community.

### PLANNING FOR IT

#### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- At the beginning or end of a staff meeting
- Other types of collegial meetings or at parent meetings

#### TIME REQUIRED

- 15 minutes

#### LEVEL

- Adult

#### MATERIALS

- Writing Materials

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Staff will:

- Express gratitude for members of the school community who have been helpful

#### ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Relationship Skills

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a moment to reflect on the many helpful ways individual staff members contribute to the school. How did this person's act make you feel?

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Ask everyone to journal for a few minutes as they think, beyond their closest colleagues, about the many people in the school community they depend on in order to do their best work. Think broadly and specifically about what each person contributes.
- Begin to list individuals and their contributions. For example, the custodian for cleaning up the mess your class made during a science experiment or the school secretary for comforting students when they're upset.
- Return to the whole group and share some of these contributions.
- Think about ways you might be able to show gratitude to these people.
- Get into groups of three and share someone in particular you'd like to thank. Make a commitment to do so in the coming week and describe what you will do.

### REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice a shift in how the adults talk to each other during the school day and/or staff meetings? Do they express more gratitude or kindness to one another?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Research on gratitude in the workplace links gratitude to more [positive emotions](#), [less stress and fewer health complaints](#), a greater sense that [we can achieve our goals](#), [fewer sick days](#), and [higher satisfaction with our jobs](#) and our [coworkers](#).

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

How often do the adults in a school say "thank you" to each other? Part of cultivating a positive school climate is becoming more aware of and expressing gratitude to the individuals who contribute to the running of the school, whether or not we interact with them directly. When we do, we ultimately are acknowledging others' worth and building trust with them.

## SOURCE

[\*Leading Together\*](#), a program that strengthens relational trust among school staff from the [\*Center for Courage and Renewal\*](#)