



# The Student Connectedness Project

*Designed by Students, for Students*

*Co-creating safe, accessible & community-focused spaces where every student is connected to adults, peers, and purpose*

## Connected to Adults

*January 28, 2026*

# Welcome



The Student Connectedness Project serves as an invitation for students to become learners, leaders, and designers of school connectedness. Together, you will explore how to ensure that every student is connected to an adult, peers, purpose, and a welcoming space.

# Season 1

## The Four Connectedness Components

01

Connected to Adults

Caring adults at school can make a big difference in your school experience.

02

Connected to Peers

Supportive friendships empower you to feel safe, understood, and encouraged.

03

Connected to Purpose

Making a difference lets you feel connected to something bigger than yourself.

04

Connected to Place

Clear academic expectations and a welcoming school make you feel motivated and like you belong.

# Who is in the room?



## Connection Circle

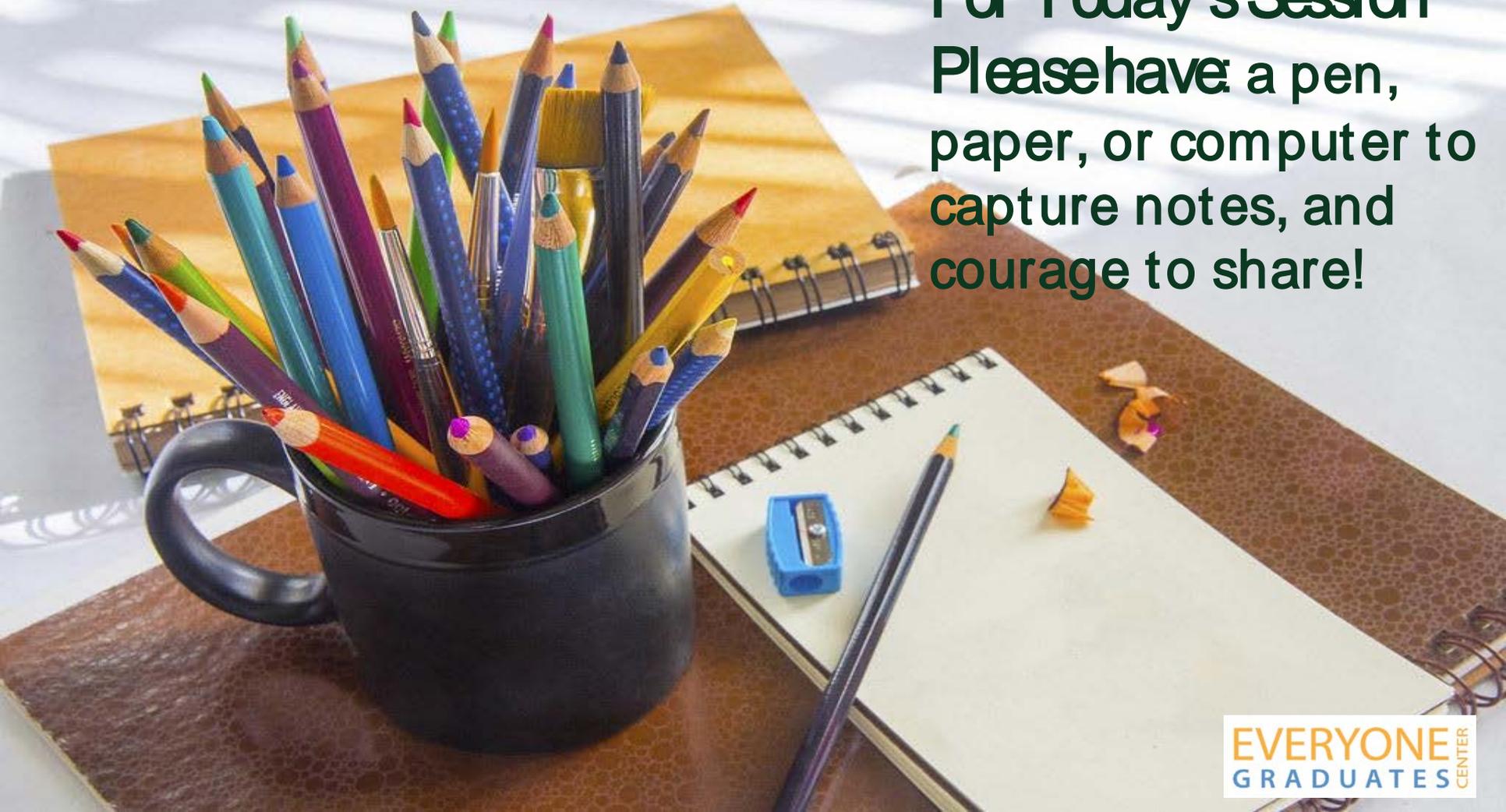
Please share your name, school, state, and describe how you are connected to the weather in your city today.

# Connected to Adults- The Power of Caring Relationships

## Our Time Together

- Learn how having adults you can trust can make a big difference in how connected and engaged students feel.
- Sharing ideas for connection, how do you know the adults really “know” you?
- Design Sprint - learning how to test ways to build meaningful connections with adults to strengthen support, guidance, and engagement in school.

For Today's Session  
Please have a pen,  
paper, or computer to  
capture notes, and  
courage to share!



# The Research

- When students have at least one caring adult in their school who supports them, they are more likely to do well in school, feel motivated, and believe in themselves.
- Students thrive when adults take time to know them as individuals - listening to their ideas, respecting their experiences, and recognize what makes them unique.
- Negative or disrespectful relationships with adults can stick with students for a long time, affecting how they feel about school, learning, and themselves.



*The Greater Good in Education- Positive Student Teacher Relationships; Nature- The impact of teacher emotional support on learning; PubMed - Student Teacher Relationships, a Longitudinal Study*

# Sharing Ideas - Breakout



Is there an adult at school you feel comfortable talking to about personal challenges or asking for advice?

How does this adult show they care about you or your experiences at school?

What actions or words from this adult make you feel supported and included?

# Sharing Ideas - Breakout



When you were a student at school who were you comfortable talking to about personal challenges or asking for advice?

How did this adult show they care about you or your experiences at school?

What actions or words from this adult made you feel supported and included?



Time  
to  
Share

# What does a healthy, trusted adult relationship



Feel Like



# Waterfall Chat

What does a healthy, trusted adult relationship



Sound Like



Waterfall Chat

What does a healthy, trusted adult relationship

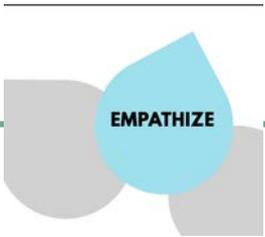


Look Like



**Waterfall Chat**

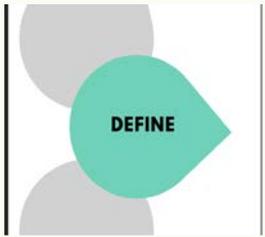
# Design Sprint



**EMPATHIZE**

**Gain Multiple Perspectives**

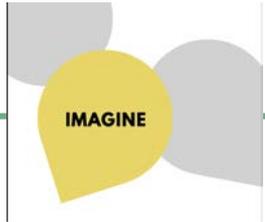
How might students feel more connected at school?



**DEFINE**

**Define the Challenge**

How might we help students feel more connected at school?  
What might make our relationships stronger?

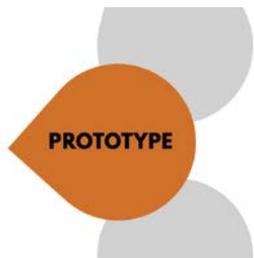


**IMAGINE**

**Ideate**

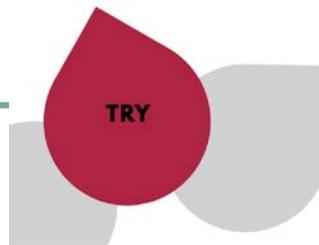
Build on each other's ideas.

# Design Sprint



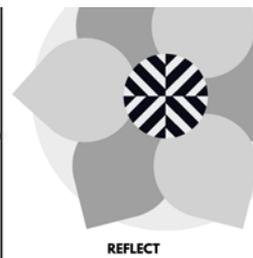
## Prototype

How might the idea work? Doesn't have to be perfect.



## Try

Try your idea.



REFLECT

## Reflect

What worked and what didn't work?  
How might we build on what is working?

# Design Sprint

How might we design  
a way for us as  
students to feel more  
connected at school?



# Gaining the Perspectives of Others - Understanding Our Context

- Empathy Interviews
- Student Surveys
- Shadows
- Conversation Cafes
- Focus Groups



# Shadows



[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qXafCDH-VhVjtroHoscp\\_b28jIO4V-BPHQ2CqzGEquM/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qXafCDH-VhVjtroHoscp_b28jIO4V-BPHQ2CqzGEquM/edit?tab=t.0)

# Breakout Room Conversations

## Room 1

- Empathy Interviews
- Student Surveys

## Room 2

- Conversation Cafes
- Focus Groups

After 8 minutes, we will switch rooms.

# Whole Group Share Out



# How Might Your Team Gain the Perspectives of Others

For our next session, we will share the approaches you selected to gain the perspectives of the others and your results.



# Next Steps

Create a  
team

January  
2026

Attend Virtual Sessions  
and Co-Creation

Connected to Adults  
January 28

Connected to Peers  
February 11

Connected to Purpose  
February 25

Connected to a  
Welcoming Place  
March 11

Office  
Hours

March 25

Virtual  
Showcase

April 29



Questions?

*thank  
you*



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The Everyone Graduates Center  
Team