

Parent Communications

Mindful Moment 2019-20

Dear Families,

During the 2018-19 schoolwide Thoughtexchange survey, you offered many ideas on how to best support our students. One of the concerns raised was our students' ongoing social-emotional learning and mental health wellness. Many of you pointed out the need to help students reduce their stress and anxiety, and to help students deal with academic and social pressures.

One way we are doing this is by implementing a "Mindful Moment" each day at all PUSD schools, starting this school year.

The purpose of a "Mindful Moment" is to provide an opportunity for students to calm themselves and have a quiet moment to prepare for learning. Teachers will not tell students what to think about or reflect upon during this time, but merely provide 60 seconds of quiet time before instruction begins. Our current culture is filled with stimuli and input for the mind, from the time we wake up to the time we go to bed. A "Mindful Moment" allows our students a chance to pause and reflect upon the day ahead. We are asking for your help in discussing the "Mindful Moment" with your children at home as well as possible topics or thoughts for them to focus on.

Educators are not always aware of the struggles children face at home or in their personal lives. Research has shown that by participating in a quiet moment each day, students feel less anxious, less stressed, calmer, and more able to focus. This, in turn, improves learning as well as behavior at home and school.

Parent Role:

- Read parent letter and FAQs provided about PUSD's "Mindful Moment"
- Discuss with your children the significance of a "Mindful Moment" and what topic or thoughts they might focus on to start off their day with purpose and positivity

Student Role:

- Listen to the teacher for the beginning and ending the "Mindful Moment"
- When the minute begins, students may wish to close their eyes or put their heads down
- Students should focus their mind on an important thought or something positive, calming, or quieting
- No talking, cell phone use, or school work during this minute

Teacher Role:

- Encourage students to put away all distractions
- The teachers signals the start of a "Mindful Moment" at the beginning of the school day

-Follow the provided script to lead the “Mindful Moment” (see attached)

-Keep track of the time for one minute, then announce the end of the “Mindful Moment”

Currently, 12 states mandate a “Moment of Silence” and 24 other states encourage the practice in schools. While it is not required in California schools, we believe in taking this positive, proactive approach to our students’ well-being. Please continue reading for answers to frequently asked questions.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is my child’s participation required?

A: Your child will not be required to participate, but it is strongly encouraged because we believe the “Mindful Moment” is beneficial to all of our students. If a student does not participate, they will still be expected to be quiet and not disrupt others during the “Mindful Moment.”

Q: Is this a religious practice?

A: No. PUSD’s “Mindful Moment” is neutral and non-religious. It does not encourage prayer over any other quiet, contemplative activity. Some students may choose to use the time for prayer or meditation, but no one will be mandating what to do or think about during this time. It is important that families discuss potential thoughts or topics that are consistent with their family values.

Q: Doesn’t this take up valuable instruction time?

A: 60 seconds cannot be reasonably construed as a burden on the instructional portion of the school day. Rather, this allows students to transition from “off time” to “school time” more quickly, which allows for a state of mind more conducive to learning.

Q: Where does this idea come from?

A: The idea stems from a nationwide effort called “Moment of Silence.” Organizers hope to improve society by implementing a “Moment of Silence” in schools: www.momentofsilence.info After additional feedback from community members, counselors, and principals, PUSD decided on its own version called “Mindful Moment.”

Q: Where can I read more about the benefits of this practice?

A: You can read letters written by children who have participated here: <https://www.momentofsilence.info/#letters>

Q: What are some things my child could think about or reflect on during the “Mindful Moment?”

A: Here are possible topics to consider:

- How I will be grateful for what I have in my life
- How I appreciate my family
- How I am proud to be an honest person

- What I am looking forward to today
- What makes me happy
- How I can better relax in class
- How I can better focus in class
- How I can respond better to my teacher
- How I can show more respect towards my parents/grandparents
- How I can contribute to society or the world around me
- How I can play more fairly with friends
- Ways to respond to being disappointed, without getting angry
- Ways that I can help my classmates
- How I will think of the good points of my classmate
- Ways to help at home- i.e., help with younger siblings
- Ways to avoid fights with siblings
- How I can do great things
- How to react when I am being bullied or teased
- Ways I am getting better every day
- Which people are those who I should look up to
- How I can look into the good of everything
- I have the ability to follow my dreams
- Things I like about my best friend
- Why I like silence

Q: What will the teacher say during the “Mindful Moment?”

A: Mindful Moment Script:

1. OK, Class, let’s take a moment to have our “Mindful Moment” to start our day.
2. The “Mindful Moment” is so we can all start the day together with our minds ready to learn and focus for the day.
3. Remember to put away all distractions and make sure you’re sitting comfortably.
4. You can close your eyes or put your head down on your desk if you want to, or you can keep your eyes open too. Just make sure you are quiet and still.
5. Try to think about important or positive things that will help you be your very best today.
6. You may have spoken to your family about what you should think about during this time, but if you’re not sure, you can start with how you might better focus in class today.
7. This is an opportunity to make the most of your time and abilities while you’re at school.

8. The mindful moment starts now and will last for 60 seconds. Remember no talking or distractions for yourself or others. Ready, go.
9. (After 60 seconds.) Alright, Class, that's the end of our "Mindful Moment."