



MEDIA RELEASE

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Transforming Practices Together: Rumson School District, KYDS, and Rutgers Unite to Strengthen Practices and Connections, Empowering Growth Through Partnership

Rumson, NJ — On January 13, 2025, the Rumson School District partnered with KYDS (Konscious Youth Development and Service) to host a professional development day for staff, supported by a Rutgers Center for Youth Social Emotional Wellness (CYSEW) grant. This partnership reflects the district's dedication to fostering a culture of empathy, positive connections, and social-emotional wellness across its schools and community.

KYDS founder Mychal Mills led two sessions, *"Restoring Conflict in Real Time"* and *"Communication Circles,"* aimed at equipping educators with strategies to strengthen relationships, enhance self-awareness, and promote a positive school environment. Mills shared, "We were honored to collaborate with the Rumson School District. By providing holistic wellness tools, we aim to cultivate environments where relationships flourish, self-regulation becomes second nature, and trust and empathy define interactions."

The sessions provided powerful, actionable strategies for fostering meaningful connections and navigating challenges with a spirit of support and growth. *"Restoring Conflict in Real Time"* offered tools to improve everyday interactions, while *"Communication Circles"* emphasized empathy, active listening, and elevating student voice. Dr. Michael Snyder, Director of Student Services, emphasized the district's dedication to trauma-informed practices: "This collaboration with KYDS exemplifies our dedication to cultivating a strong, nurturing school climate. By prioritizing self-regulation, connection, and a deep understanding of trauma's impact, we are empowering our community to create environments where every student and staff member can truly thrive."

Mrs. Jennifer Gibbons, Principal of Forrestdale School, reflected on the training's significance: "KYDS provided our team with invaluable tools to strengthen relationships, not just in moments of conflict, but as part of everyday interactions. These sessions aimed to help staff build a more connected and empathetic school environment. Our teachers were exposed to research and strategies that support building relationships to support student growth, academically, behaviorally, and socially-emotionally." The day also highlighted the importance of balanced strategies for self-regulation and open communication. KYDS' trauma-informed practices inspired participants to prioritize empathy and understanding, laying the foundation for a more collaborative and supportive school community where every individual can flourish.

Looking ahead, the Rumson School District remains dedicated to advancing its school climate framework through continued collaboration with KYDS and Rutgers CYSEW. Guided by its mission of "Igniting Potential," the district integrates evidence-based strategies to ensure all students and staff have the resources to grow and achieve excellence. Dr. John Bormann, Superintendent of Schools, remarked, "Our mission of 'Igniting Potential' drives us to create an environment where every individual feels empowered to make meaningful connections, grow personally and academically, and ultimately transform their educational experience."