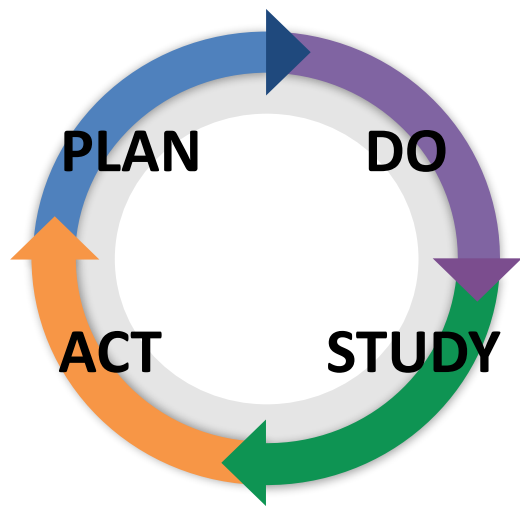


Heartopia: A Ground-Zero Student Development Initiative

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Problem Statement

Many students with adverse experiences lack access to consistent, healing-centered enrichment spaces. Traditional academic interventions often miss the opportunity to integrate emotional regulation and identity development.

PLAN

If we created an afterschool pilot rooted in mindfulness, movement, and SEL-driven enrichment, then we would see improvements in student engagement, emotional regulation, and overall well-being.

ACT

- We will continue with revised logistics, deeper parent involvement, and enhanced data tools.
- Students benefit from consistent routines rooted in SEL, especially when adults are trained and reflective.
- Short pilots generate enthusiasm but are insufficient for deep transformation—more time and more cycles are necessary. Alignment with core school goals (attendance, regulation, family partnerships) increases district buy-in.

DO

- I noticed the pilot group was too large and relied heavily on external factors (staff availability, timing, and logistics), which impacted consistency.
- Launching the program mid-year presented unexpected scheduling and behavioral challenges, especially as routines were already set.
- Heartopia's three-pillar model—student SEL, adult wellness, and extended learning—proved too ambitious to activate simultaneously within the limited pilot window.

STUDY

Qualitative: Student exit tickets, reflective journals, teacher observation logs.

Given the short duration, many emotional shifts were just emerging by Week 4. The data suggested we only scratched the surface, and a single cycle wasn't enough to evaluate sustainability or long-term gains.

Key Results

Built strong culture of trust and voice among students. Teacher and student advocacy for expansion beyond the pilot site. Demonstrated potential to close gaps in regulation, identity, and academic confidence.

Lessons Learned

Students benefit from consistent routines rooted in SEL, especially when adults are trained and reflective. Short pilots generate enthusiasm but are insufficient for deep transformation—more time and more cycles are necessary. Alignment with core school goals (attendance, regulation, family partnerships) increases participation and connections

Learn more:

