

SUSTAINABLE TEACHING PLAYBOOK

A key component of sustainable teaching is developing a repertoire of mindfulness practices and *actually using them* to build personal resilience and professional longevity. In the busy life of teachers, the “actually using them” part is the real challenge. Teachers from the 2019-2020 Cherry Creek School District Institute for Sustainable Teaching curated the following set of resources based on time frames that are actually relevant to teachers’ schedules, as follows:

- **“Potty break practices”** can be completed in 5 mins. or LESS (depending :).
- **“Passing period practices”** can be completed in 7 mins. or LESS.
- **“Planning period practices”** can be completed in 30 mins. or LESS.
- **“Post school-day practices”** can be completed in varied time frames, including MORE than 30 mins.


POTTY BREAK PRACTICES (can be completed in 5 mins. or LESS)				
What’s the name of the PRACTICE? (Sources are linked to URLs if they are online.)	What does it entail?	How long does it really take?	Why is it worth the effort?	If this isn’t an online resource, where can you find it?
Breathing Practice Script by Molly Robbins	It’s a simple, structured way of taking 3 deep breaths.	1-2 mins.	Great way to down-regulate acute stress and/or to create an instant sense of calm & focus.	N/A
Microwave Moment	Take five deep breaths as you heat up your lunch.	1 min.	Every time you microwave your lunch, take five mindful deep breaths. This is a great way to stay mindful while you eat and let the stress of the morning float away.	N/A
Faculty Bathroom Cave	Turn the lights off in the faculty bathroom, do not bring your phone, and just enjoy some peace and quiet in the dark.	5 mins. or less	This five minutes of uninterrupted time is a time to let gravity do its work (literally) and ground you back to reality :)	N/A
Recite a mantra	Have/create a personal mantra, for example, “I am enough.” This mantra will always be available to you in a time of need.	Less than 1 min.	Having a personal mantra can help see you through a time of despair or distress. Reciting a personal mantra that has meaning to you/builds you up can help clear your mind or disrupt negative voices inside (or outside) your head.	N/A
Anger Mantra from <i>Anger: Wisdom for</i>	When fuming about something say to yourself; “Seeing myself being burned by the fire of	1-3 mins.	Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, compares the sensation of anger to a burning house. If you leave your burning	N/A

<i>Cooling the Flames</i> by Thich Nhat Hanh	anger. I breathe in. Feeling compassion for myself burning with anger. I breathe out.” When dealing with an angry person say the following to yourself; “Contemplating [INSERT NAME OF PERSON] in anger, I breathe in. Seeing the suffering of that person. I breathe out”.		house to chase the arsonist, you will return to find nothing left. You must first stop and put out your burning house (anger) before you can proceed after the arsonist. In this book, he provides a series of mantras and breathing exercises to help you recognize and then subdue the fires of anger.	
Do something nice for another adult in your building or your life outside of school.	Choose an adult, offer to run an errand, buy a cup of coffee/tea, listen, compliment, etc.	2 minutes to all day	Giving to another makes you feel better!	N/A
Eat a peppermint patty.	Unwrap, pop it in your mouth, and enjoy!	About 30 seconds	This refreshing moment can instantly help you refocus and recharge..	N/A
Gratitude Break	Before the start of your day and/or even during the day take a 2 minute break to stop, breathe, and name three things you’re grateful for in your life at that moment.	Before, during and after school	This is time for you to re-center yourself by contemplating the things you are thankful for in your life.	N/A
Gratitude Attitude	Keep a running record throughout the day of positive interactions with students and teachers.	5 mins.	Keeping a visible document reminds you of how many people appreciate you, and diminishes the power of the negative interactions.	N/A
PASSING PERIOD PRACTICES can be completed in 7 mins. or LESS.				
What’s the name of the PRACTICE? (Sources are linked to URLs if they are online.)	What does it entail?	How long does it really take?	Why is it worth the effort?	If this isn’t an online resource, where can you find it?
5 Senses Focus	Stop. Observe in detail what is occurring at that particular moment, using each of your five senses (i.e., What’s one thing you see/hear/smell/taste/ touch in that moment?). Take a deep breath with each sense, and try not to attach any judgment to your observation. In other words, you might think, “I see a clock with a white face and black hands,” instead of thinking, “OMG, I can’t believe everything I have to get done before the end of the day!”	PASSING PERIOD (less than 2 mins.)	Great way to get out of your head and bring yourself back to the present. Also great for staving off panic attacks if you say, “In this moment, I am safe” at the end of your observations.	N/A
5MJ -- Five-Minute Journal by Tim Ferriss	In a journal, list 3 “things that would make today great”, “3 things you’re grateful for,” and 3 “affirmations.” Later in the day (or	5+ minutes, depending on the level	It’s a manageable way to document the positive ways that you’re spending your life energy. <i>Bonus:</i> Research shows that	N/A

	when you get home), list “3 things that made today great” and “3 things that would have made it better.”	of detail	documenting gratitude can, reduce depression and increase your sense of well-being because it <i>physically</i> rewires your neural pathways in positive ways.	
Sing a Song OUT LOUD	Go outside and sing a song that you need.	5 mins. or less	Singing out loud makes you feel good, and makes everyone around you smile, especially if they join in!	Your choice!
Politeness Day	Say something nice to a teacher all day (Ex.: You look nice today!)	Every passing period	Teaches you to appreciate others. It will make you (and them!) smile.	N/A
Meditation apps: “Calm” App Stop, Breathe, and Think Headspace	These apps for your phone have amazing material for children all the way up to adults including music, sleep stories, and various meditation practices.	Different time options are provided for the length of the meditations.	These sites all have free versions. Calm and Stop, Breathe, Think include educator resources.	N/A
Mindful Eyes and Feet	As you walk down the hallway, make eye contact with everyone possible. Hold their gaze and smile. OR, as you walk down the hall, breathe in every 4 steps, breathe out every 4 steps. Pay attention to your breath, or the feeling of your feet as they make contact with the floor, or everything on the wall--choose something!	5 mins. or less	The hallway can feel chaotic, and this practice counteracts that energy, helping you stay calm. Making eye contact with the adults and students in the hallway can also feel energizing.	N/A

PLANNING PERIOD PRACTICES can be completed in 30 mins. or LESS.

What’s the name of the PRACTICE? (Sources are linked to URLs if they are online.)	What does it entail? (Briefly describe the practice)	How long does it really take?	Why is it worth the effort?	If this isn’t an online resource, where can you find it?
Lunch To-Do List	We all love a good to-do list. Every morning when you write your to-do list for the day make sure you add lunch on the list. This is a visual reminder to take some time to restore and rejuvenate.	15-30 minutes	Making lunch a priority on a to-do list increases your chance of having a lunch, especially for those who do not typically get a lunch each day.	N/A
Aromatherapy	Find an inexpensive diffuser and fill with water and a few drops of lavender essential oil. Place next to your desk, and slowly breathe in and out 8-10 times.	Enjoy as long s you’d like.	Lavender is proven to reduce stress, improve concentration and calm agitation.	Amazon or any supermarket that carries essential oils.
SIT and eat lunch with someone you enjoy	Make time for lunch. Nourish your body. Even if it’s not every day, find time in your week to connect with someone you enjoy spending time with.	Length of your planning period.	Eating lunch and having a conversation with another person can be restorative. You can set no-school-talk rules if that’s what you need or you can use this time to	N/A

			process with a team member. Lunch with friends/colleagues allows you to form connections that can help build trust.	
"Dealing with Stress: Ideas for Teacher Rejuvenation" - Blogpost on the Origins Program: Education for Equity website	Read and refer to the article	5-10 mins.	Provides activities that help teachers rejuvenate	N/A
IMAGINE journal - Writing for Positive Change	Imagine Project is a 501(c)3 organization that gives kids and teens (and adults) the opportunity to work through difficult life circumstances through expressive writing. The Imagine Journaling is a simple, yet powerful 7-step process that can be used as part of a literacy curriculum in schools, or by youth leaders, counselors, parents, or even by kids on their own.	30+ mins. (could also be a post-school day practice)	Everyone has trauma, and the IMAGINE Project helps individuals process trauma.	N/A
Stretch it out	Take a moment to scan your body. Where are you holding tension?	10-15 minutes	This can be a way to release some of the tension that has built up during the day.	N/A
Desk-er-cise	Create a moment during the day to be active.	10-15 minutes	Take a moment to get your heart rate up in a healthy way throughout the day.	N/A
Adult Coloring	Grab a coloring book Grab markers, crayons, colored pencils Start Coloring	You decide! (could also be a post-school day practice)	Coloring takes little mental effort and taps into your creative side. It is something that is easy to start and stop. You can do it alone or with somebody	N/A
zentangles: Website that helps you doodle/draw with a purpose 	Inside the border, draw a light pencil line or lines to make what we call a "string." The string separates your tile into sections, in which you draw your tangles. A string can be any shape. It may be a curvy line that touches the edges of the border now and then, or a series of straight lines that go from one side of the border to the next. A tangle is a predefined sequence of simple strokes that make up a pattern. Draw your tangles in pen inside (usually) the pencil strings and borders. Tangle is both noun and verb. Just as you dance a dance, you tangle your tangles. Draw your tangles with deliberate strokes. Don't worry about what it's going to look like. Just focus on each stroke of the pen as you make it. Trust that you'll know what to do next when the time to do it comes. There is no up or down to Zentangle art, so feel free to rotate your tile in any direction that is most comfortable for your hand as you draw.	A few minutes to hours depending on how complicated the doodle is	This is meant as a way to relax, focus, and increase your awareness. It has been shown to reduce stress.	N/A

Create a playlist of theme songs, fight songs, and/or get-you-through-the-hard-times songs.	Create a new playlist of songs that create a positive emotion for you to help you recharge for the remainder of the day.	20 mins. or more	Music enriches every part of our lives--physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.	Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music, Amazon Music
Deepak Chopra 21 Day Free Meditation	This is a free 21Day Guided Meditation that Oprah and Deepak offer at various times throughout the year. There is a journal practice that is optional. The app makes it very easy.	20 mins.	Great resource to change thinking patterns and to simply empty your mind.	N/A
Read Shel Silverstein	When feeling stressed with students, take time to read poetry	15 mins. or less	Great way to calm yourself when frustrated with students	Your favorite bookstore
"The Three Components of Self-Compassion" video	Kristin Neff is the foremost researcher on self-compassion. This quick video provides a good intro. to the concept.	6 mins.	When life is beating you up and/or you need to quiet the negative self-talk in your head	N/A
Happiness Calendar from the Greater Good Science Center	These monthly calendars provide ideas for increasing your own happiness and the happiness of others. Each day has a clickable link that takes you to a resource on the Greater Good Science Center website.	varies	The daily suggestions are doable and concrete.	N/A
Greater Good in Education website	This website offers "science-based practices for kinder, happier schools." It has an entire section called "My Well-Being" that has resources for teachers on topics such as empathy, gratitude, mindfulness, self-compassion, and so forth. It offers practices for each category, the time duration for each practice, and gives the science behind them.	varies	There are so many resources on this website that are personally useful and relevant for your classroom, too. You can spend as much or as little time on it as you want!	N/A

POST-SCHOOL DAY PRACTICES can be completed in varied time frames, including MORE than 30 mins.

What's the name of the PRACTICE? (Sources are linked to URLs if they are online.)	What does it entail? (Briefly describe the practice)	How long does it really take?	Why is it worth the effort?	If this isn't an online resource, where can you find it?
Podcast on the importance of sleep	The download for the podcast is linked in the article.	17 mins.	This podcast will raise your awareness about the role sleep plays in our own healing and well-being. Dr. Peter Attia interviews Matthew Walker PhD in a 3 part series (just one of the three parts is worth your time) on his series called "The Drive."	N/A

Science of Well Being	This is a free course that will teach you about mindfulness, taught by Dr. Lori Santos, a professor at Yale University. (It can also be taken for credit.)	Time varies	Designed to increase your own happiness and build more productive habits.	N/A
Rainbow Walk	<p>Take a walk, and look for something red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Keep going through the colors in order, until the end of your walk.</p> <p>Suggestions for the walk, depending on time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bring a camera and take a photo of at least 1 image with each color ● Bring a sketchbook-- even if you're not an artist. This will really help you focus on what you're looking at. ● Write in your journal about the things you noticed and how they made you feel. 	Time varies	This mindfulness practice will get you up and away from your desk in order to calm any racing thoughts in your brain brought on by your to-do list or the events of the day.	N/A
"The Space Between Self-Esteem and Self Compassion"	Kristin Neff is the foremost researcher on self-compassion. This is her classic TED talk on self-compassion. It has over 1.7 million views!	19 mins.		N/A
Greater Good Magazine website	This website out of Berkeley offers "science-based insights for a meaningful life." There are lots of resources on every aspect of life. The research-based quizzes are really fun, too, and they're linked to applicable resources.	Time varies	What do you need help with? Mind and body? Workplace? Relationships? Politics? Community? Big ideas? This website has something for everyone and everything.	