

Student Well-being: A Collective Responsibility

Stephanie Fearon

Inquiry: Solving A Puzzle

STEPHANIE FEARON: For a collaborative inquiry, it's really starting off with that puzzling moment, that moment where you're trying everything to reach your child, everything to support a child, and you're just not getting it. And this puzzling moment becomes part of your inquiry question.

So you work with other educators. You find that teacher friend, which we all do. Or you connect with a learning coach, which a lot of school boards do have. Then together, you delve in deeper into that inquiry question, into that puzzling moment, and you connect with resources, connect with others to really, really support the child. And you track it; you use data, you use research. You try things out, see if it works, see if it doesn't. But we always say that in order to really start this work is that as educators, we have to look at who we are, the biases that we hold. The ideas that we believe about how a child lives, about what well-being is. And then only when we critically look about at who we are and the impact about who we are in our own experiences have on how we teach, how we form relationships, only then we say that you could really truly begin the deep work that needs to happen.

I start by asking teacher, who's that educator in your life that impacted you the most? We talk about educators in our lives such as our grandmothers. Maybe it's that kindergarten teacher, or that grade four French teacher that you had. We talk about the ways that, what made them special to us. A lot of times the educators talk about how it was just a smile, how, oh, that grade four teacher that I had, she asked me what was going on in my life. She asked me how I was doing. When we start by talking about who inspires us, who's impacted us in our lives as educators, and understanding that an educator is not just a formal teacher in the school building, but it could be the community member. It could be the YMCA swimming instructor. When we start from there, we really begin to form that personal connection, that relationship, and to think about, what are the important parts of schooling and education that have impacted our lives? And what can we do so that hopefully, one day, the children that we work with say that, you know what, you were my favourite educator.