Why We Circle

Teachers
- Relationships, relationships, relationships. Circles are a designated platform that serve as an avenue to proactively build and reaffirm relationships.
- Circle time is an investment, designated to cultivate relationships, and build a strong sense of community in the classroom.
- Circles allow teachers to become active listeners, while also increasing vulnerability and genuine empathetic moments.
- Circles can be used to teach “soft skills”. Listening, reflecting, and understanding are natural byproducts of a circle when implemented correctly, regularly, and with fidelity.
- Using a circle to check-in, checkup, and check out allows the teacher to have an in-depth understanding of the student perspective.
- Relationships built during circles and engaging lessons may result in better classroom management.
- Circles can create a safe, nonjudgmental space for teachers to value student perspective and create a sense of belonging.
- Circles can be used to connect quickly using the two-minute connection.
- Circles can be used to talk with students not to students.

Students
- Circles give every student the opportunity to share and have a voice.
- Circles allow students to build relationships with one another.
- Circles increase awareness of circumstances and provide opportunities to appreciate others.
- Circles are fun! Circles are a safe place for students to share their perspectives and learn from each other.
- Circles allow students to learn more about their teachers and administrators.
- Circles build strong bonds and trust.
- Circles may transition to friendships among participants.
- Circles can be used to help solve conflicts.
- Circles can be used for reintegrating a student who is coming back to campus (for a variety of reasons).
- Circles help students talk with adults.
What a Circle is NOT

Teachers

- Circles do not substitute for classroom management. If anything, a circle will either confirm or expose whether a teacher can suitably manage their classes.
- Circles are not therapy. Although it can be therapeutic at times, it is not designed to get at student's deep, dark secrets.
- Circles are not counseling. A circle only becomes counseling when the teacher wears the hat of a counselor rather than a facilitator.
- Circles are not the time to evaluate a student's response to an answer or coach a student through a question.
- Circles are not conducted to make students cry. The success of a circle cannot be determined by its depth or brevity.
- A circle is not a quick fix. Circles are a process that may require more time in certain situations.
- Circles are not a substitute for being unprepared. Teachers must treat a circle like a lesson and have a place for facilitating the circle.
- Circles should not be used only as a reactive measure.
- Circles do not have a formulated outcome because each circle is unique and takes its own shape.
- Circles are not an expenditure of time—it is an investment.

Students

- Circles are not a time to be on stage or be silly.
- Circles are not mandatory—a student can opt out or not want to participate.
- Circles may not be a time to share things that are confidential or serious in nature.
- Circles are not all about solving problems.
- Circles are not a time to judge other students' responses.
- Circles are not an excuse to miss class.
- Circles are not always teacher-led.
- Circles should not be a scary process—students get to choose what questions or topics they would like to answer depending on their own level of comfort trusting the process.
- Circles are not always for students that are in trouble.
- Circles are not an assignment—teachers should not be judging or grading responses / reluctance to participate.