

Distance  
Learning  
Edition

# SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

SOLANA BEACH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
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*Photo (right): Solana Pacific students create kindness rocks in the school's MakerSpace prior to school closures.*

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**It's a time to talk to friends, laugh, and have fun playing games inside. I like playing games with the teachers who come to the club.”**

**Peter, 6th grade student**



*Photo (left): Solana Pacific students enjoy the school's Game Club, along with teachers and staff prior to school closures.*

## Social-Emotional Learning and Academics Go Hand in Hand at Solana Pacific

BY PRINCIPAL ELISA FREGOSO

*Until our Solana Pacific team can welcome all Sandpipers back to campus, we encourage our students and families to find fun and creative ways to explore your passions and to learn new things! This article shows you how academics and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) flourished prior to the COVID-19 school closures and how we can continue to do this during distance learning.*

As we foster academic success in each of our Sandpipers, we know it is equally important to support social and emotional growth. SEL is the process of developing self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills which are vital for well-being throughout school, work, and life. Our students learn and develop trusting relationships, social skills, and collaboration through both academic and SEL experiences. With school closures in place, we are creating new ways to do this and to stay connected. The Solana Beach School District provides SEL resources to support families in this process on its website, [www.sbsd.net](http://www.sbsd.net).

Earlier this year, students practiced SEL skills by exploring their passions during recess and lunch-time activities. These included research projects, blogs, “Genius Hour”, service projects, sports, MakerSpace projects, and a variety of clubs.

For example, in our MakerSpace, students used creativity, freedom, and innovative practices in a constructive, positive way to build a variety of projects ranging from cars to marble runs to cardboard arcades. They accessed clay, paint, construction supplies, wood-working materials, and many other repurposed or recycled materials. Even more importantly, they developed friendships and worked collaboratively on projects by freely sharing materials, discussing their ideas with one another, and testing each others’ inventions.

# SEL and Academics Go Hand in Hand (cont.)



Students loved frequenting our Game Club to play a variety of board and card games with old and new friends. The relaxed atmosphere in our Game Club enabled students could refine their social skills in taking turns and practicing good sportsmanship, while providing a chance for kids to have fun and play games. Teaching others how to play games meant students gained self-confidence and stronger relationships. This activity is something families can recreate at home.

Our Garden Club offered students a place to discover the wonders of nature, sample healthy foods, learn about organic gardening in a hands-on environment, and do crafts. Most importantly, our garden provided a place to meet new friends, spend time with established friends, and be part of nature. We would see bees pollinating, hummingbirds buzzing, butterflies laying eggs in our butterfly garden, and aphids attacking plants alongside the ladybugs who eat them. We taught students about natural pest control, as well.

Solana Pacific students especially loved 'tasting' days after a harvest of fresh veggies and herbs! We hosted a Garden Club Farmers Market where student projects and fresh vegetables were displayed for sale. Our students would create the items, price them, and volunteer as salespeople at the market. These opportunities helped students learn interpersonal skills through business interactions with their peers and adults.

Sixth graders were working on food waste and alternative ways to handle unwanted food. We collected food waste from the 6th grade lunch for our compost bin, and staff joined in, too, saving over 80 pounds of coffee grounds for our compost. By March, we had collected over 300 pounds!

While we are distance learning, our teachers are checking-in weekly, sometimes daily, with their students through our distance learning platforms: Google Classroom, SeeSaw and Zoom. School counselors are supporting class Zoom sessions, meeting with our Student Leadership Council weekly, curating resources for kids and parents, and even hosting live "coffee chats" with parents on Thursdays.

In addition, our Discovery Lab team continues to provide engaging activities through SEL, art, music, science/engineering, technology, research, and physical education. Be sure to check out the Discovery Lab Google Classroom at each grade level for weekly activities. Many of the activities described above are being incorporated into these online lessons in the home environment.

There is so much creativity being expressed by our families and staff during this unprecedented time, and we know that academic and social-emotional learning continue to go hand-in-hand while we are away from our beloved campus.

**I love the Garden Club, because it's my two favorite things to do, gardening and cooking. It's a great opportunity to make friends and have something to do if you're like me and don't love the playground."**

**Kenna, 4th grade student**

