

## **Project Brief: Creating connections between teachers and students**

### **Profile of Organization**

Delasalle education center is committed to serving their students, who traditionally are made up of mostly African American and Latinx students. The school supports a wide range of students, from the traditional to those older and farther away from graduating, most which sit at or below the poverty line. To its students, Delasalle is a place where students feel welcomed and at home, it's kinda like where all just one family. The school is a wonderful learning environment where students are able to learn at their own pace. Our previous experiences at our former schools were totally different. They didn't take the time to understand that not all students learn at the same rate and did not engage with students but kinda just pushed to the side and kept going. Delasalle is a totally different scene.

## Project Overview

Student teacher connections are really significant in today's learning world. With the introduction of virtual learning, there have been drastic changes in education. Students don't always use their cameras and their Zoom calls. So there's a really big block between students and teachers. We noticed that we have issues with fatigue going through virtual learning, and identified it as one of our challenges to overcome.

We also noticed that some students are having a hard time balancing work and school. Sometimes, a job in high school is essential to saving up for college or to help out your family. This can lead to students going to work instead of school. Even without a job, some students have to take care of their little siblings and babysit, which can cause them to miss classes.

Our last challenge that we identified was the lack of mental health support and education in schools. Often class is very focused on learning the content, so you can go through your whole day without really learning anything except what is going to be tested on. This means that there is little time or support for teachers to teach about mental health in their classrooms.

## **Project Objectives**

Some of the challenges we face during virtual learning is Fatigue students disengage over video calls students don't like coming to class. It's also challenging to balance school and work; many students need to work so they choose work over classes. Lack of mental health, support and education strong connections are needed to see changes in behavior over time.

Some solutions to these challenges are less lecture, more group work time, more asynchronous work, and built in time for learning more about students even in person. We also want to encourage teachers to build time into their lesson plans to get to know their students better, to record their lessons, and to find multiple ways and times to provide support for students. This could include more flexible work deadlines and work for those with jobs and those struggling with balance.

To address the mental health challenges, we would like social emotional learning lessons during advisory and to provide training and support to teach students how to support other students and advocate for themselves and their peers. With that, we also would like teachers to get training in mental health support.

## Target Audience

Our target audience is the teachers and administrators who normally run schools and teach in the classroom, as well as other students who may not know that their voice means something. Teachers should take a moment to listen to what their students are trying to tell them on an everyday basis not only to get a better understanding but to gain a better connection which would make their job so much easier and would make students feel safe and welcomed. Administrators as well are the stepping stone to getting our voice out there and making the change we want to see. They will soon see a major difference in the behavior in their students' more positive attitude and better grade because students will appreciate that their voices were being heard. Peers this out time speak up, speak out, and be heard, we can get them to listen to everything we have to say.

**Milestones**

In the following table, we outline an overview of our challenges, suggested solutions, a working timeline, and the milestones:

Challenge	Solution	Timeline	Milestones
Zoom Fatigue/ Disengagement	More Asynchronous, dedicated times to build community	Immediate (A few weeks)	Schedule a meeting with administration and teachers.
Work/Life/School Balance	Recorded lessons, flexible assignments and deadlines	Immediate (A few weeks)	Schedule a meeting with administration and teachers.
Mental Health Support	Social emotional lessons built into the curriculum, teacher training for mental health support	2-3 months	Schedule a meeting with administration and teachers.  Acquire funds from budgets saved from virtual learning (bussing, security, etc).  Use funds to purchase/build a mental health curriculum and train staff.

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