



# Hawk Talks

**KELLY GARCIA, M.ED.**

Principal  
Freeman  
Elementary School  
Garland ISD



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2020, I was introduced to the principles of design thinking and how to implement projects that are in a constant state of prototyping, implementation, and feedback. Having the design thinking concept in mind, I knew campus systems implemented in past years would need an overhaul with COVID protocols.

After working with teacher leaders and responding to a survey about the new COVID protocols, I realized that the systems of a campus would not matter if a solid foundation to support the social and emotional well-being of staff members was not constructed.

The idea of providing adults the space to discuss their accomplishments and ways to support their personal growth, in turn, gave them the confidence to provide a safe learning environment for all students. After multiple rounds of adult focused empathy interviews, now called Hawk Talks, the staff is able to apply the concept of asking focused questions that are solely based on the well-being of peers and campus stakeholders.

Having Hawk Talks as a tool to support students in their social and emotional learning not only prepares our students for real-world application, it also increases students' confidence in their academics.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- All Staff Members
- 3rd-5th Grade Students

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS & IMPACT

Using the notes from the Hawk Talks, there were themes that developed throughout the school year that supported a positive change in the campus culture and work environment. Throughout the school year, the campus staff was unified in one goal: staff and student safety. The common themes that developed throughout the quarterly Hawk Talks were addressed in weekly principal communication.

- Common themes included:
- Unity of staff during campus challenges
  - Students and adults needing social and emotional tools to maintain a supportive and productive work/learning environment
  - The need for an organized space for staff members to support students' needs by implementing an SEL block in the master schedule
  - Hawk Talks sessions are organized when the campus is preparing for a new initiative, or when system changes are needed on the campus.