



**We are Aavidum.**

**We are Aavidum.**

**We create differently. We think differently.  
We do differently.**

**We are Aavidum.**

**Our mentors expect the unexpected.**

**We are young. We are fearless.  
We are catalysts for positive change.**

**We shatter. We transform.  
We make it alright to make it all right.**

**We are Aavidum.**

**Our message is loud.  
Our voices are louder  
Our impact is loudest.**

**We are Aavidum, and “We’ve got your back.”**



A group of hands of various skin tones are stacked together in a circle. Overlaid on the image are four large, colorful hand-shaped callouts: a yellow one at the top left, a light green one at the top right, a light red one at the bottom left, and an orange one at the bottom right. Each callout contains a different message. A small yellow hand icon with the number 3 is located in the bottom right corner.

Welcome!

I'm glad  
you're with  
us today.

Hey, everyone.  
Look who's  
here!

I've got  
your back.

# Why Aavidum matters.

The school checks our hearing...The school checks our vision... It even checks our height and weight. The school cares about our health.

Let's return the favor.

Where's your nurse's stethoscope? Let's see if this place has a pulse.

We went searching for answers about healthy schools. We met with mental health expert and Aavidum advocate Dr. Matthew Wintersteen, Assistant Professor and Director of Research in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson University/Jefferson Medical College.

"What are the characteristics of a healthy school?" we asked.

He paused for a second. Then, he reached into his top desk drawer and pulled out a tiny index card.

"Here," he said. "A healthy community."

We stared at the card. It seemed simple, especially from someone with such a long job title.

"You mean this is all we have to do?"

"Yep."

"Ummmm, alright," we said. "Do you mind if we share this with our friends?"

"Aavidum," he said with a smile.

So we took the card, left his office, and developed a



campaign around it.

We wanted to kick it off in a big way... so we searched for administrators from across Pennsylvania who shared Aavidum's vision for creating healthy schools. The administrators who care.

We found them — lots of them.

Once we found them, we asked them to select students from their schools to serve as Aavidum Catalysts... students who would embrace our message and have the skills to take it back and introduce it to their peers.

They found you.

That's why you're holding this book. They selected you because they believe in you.

Today, you're going to learn about the characteristics of a healthy school and work with others to see how we can share and implement this message with friends, teachers, and others throughout your schools.

Don't worry. You have plenty of people here to help.

The experts say that a student can't learn if that student isn't healthy.

We say that a school can't teach if that school isn't healthy.

Creating a positive mental health community begins with a healthy school, and it begins with people who believe and who care.

And you don't even need a stethoscope.

Ready for **The Talk**?



# What is a healthy school?

A healthy school is a place where students feel accepted, appreciated, acknowledged, and cared for. A place where teachers, students and staff embrace Aavidum and “Have each others’ backs.” Not just one day. **Every day.**

accept

appreciate

acknowledge

care

aavidum

**A school is people.** Your school is comprised of many people who are there for you. Are you there for them?

**List the various staff, departments, teams, clubs, and groups in your school...**

A large white rounded rectangle with a thin black border, containing 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the rectangle.

Now that you've identified the people in your school, turn the page and let's get to work and **break each trait down...**

# ACCEPT = to WELCOME

**TODAY**

What does your school do now?

A large white rounded rectangle containing ten horizontal dotted lines for writing.





# ACCEPT = to WELCOME

## TOMORROW

How can you promote this trait in your school?

**Examples:** Hands Across the School, Morning Welcome, Activity Swap, Class Act, A Smile A Day, and More (see page 22).

A large white rounded rectangular area containing ten horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# APPRECIATE = to VALUE

**TODAY**

What does your school do now?

A large white rounded rectangular area with horizontal dotted lines for writing.



# APPRECIATE = to VALUE

## TOMORROW

How can you promote this trait in your school?

**Examples:** My Friend is Good At, Custodian Care, Thank You Notes, #VirtualHi, Empowerment Posters, and More (see page 25).

A large white rounded rectangular area with horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# ACKNOWLEDGE = to RECOGNIZE

**TODAY**

What does your school do now?

A large white rounded rectangular area with horizontal dashed lines for writing.

# ACKNOWLEDGE = to RECOGNIZE

## TOMORROW

How can you promote this trait in your school?

**Examples:** Cheers, Lip Dub, I “Am” Wall, Talent Show, Compliments, and More (see page 26).

A large white rounded rectangular area with horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# CARE = to HELP

## TODAY

What does your school do now?

A large white rounded rectangle containing 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# CARE = to HELP

## TOMORROW

How can you promote this trait in your school?

**Example:** It's in my Cell, Stress Less, Positive Post-It, Aavidum Glove Drive, Awareness Games, and more (see page 28).

A large white rounded rectangular area with horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# A quick recap...

**In a healthy school, people are:**

- a) accepted
- b) appreciated
- c) acknowledged
- d) cared for
- e) Aavidum

**The answer is...**





**All of the above.**

# So now what?

You, the catalysts, will return to school and, working with adult mentors, will identify a larger group of students who will make these ideas a reality, spread this message, and strengthen the health of the school.

In addition to focusing on the groups and areas of the school, a major component of The Talk is for your team to disperse and have peer-to-peer interactions with other students. The larger group that you select will work as a team to have an authentic and peer-to-peer talk with every student in your school. Having a peer-to-peer talk isn't easy. If it's too scripted, it comes off as fake, but if it isn't scripted enough, it can lose its structure. Working with a mentor, and using the healthy school traits as a guide, this larger group will decide the school-specific messages that should be relayed in The Talk.

If embraced, the ideas that you generated in this workbook will transform your school and create a healthy environment where your peers will thrive. You are creating an "I've got your back" community one student at a time. So...

**Go accept.**

**Go appreciate.**

**Go acknowledge.**

**Go care.**

**Go Aavidum.**



**Go.**

# Keep talking...





To create true positive mental health in your school, we must keep our message in the forefront. This is not a one and done Talk. It is an every day conversation. Our messages must be constantly seen because students are constantly changing.

To continue the conversation, we will be sending monthly email blasts to students and advisors. The blasts will contain additional information, resources, announcements and support to help you create a healthy community in your school. Please register for the emails using the link on our website [aevidum.org](http://aevidum.org).

# And **talk back...** to us!

We need to share the energy of Aavidum to inspire others with our message. By sharing your photos, stories, and successes, we can continue to spread our message and show that we are together.

For regular updates, ideas, and info, **connect with us** on...

-  **Facebook** Aavidum (Official)
-  **Twitter** @aavidum
-  **Instagram** @aavidum
-  **Snapchat** @aavidum

For information or questions about clubs, please email us at [clubs@aavidum.org](mailto:clubs@aavidum.org).

# Aavidum ideas.

*This list contains ideas that can be adapted to help you introduce the characteristics of a healthy community in an authentic, student-driven, exciting way. Additional details and resources for many of these campaigns are available on our website [aavidum.org](http://aavidum.org).*

## ACCEPT

### A Smile A Day

Challenge yourself to smile and/or say hi to everyone you pass in the halls at school. Everyone deserves to feel welcomed as they walk through the school hallways. Your kindness will be contagious.

### Activity Swap

Find a way for student groups with different interests to celebrate each other. For example, encourage a group of athletes to attend your school's spring musical. Then have the athletes invite the students who starred in the musical to attend one of their games.

### Aavidum Lock-In

Hold an Aavidum lock-in to celebrate Aavidum's "I've got your back" message with all members of your school community. Include fun activities where students can socialize and enjoy themselves.

### Class Act

Instead of creating divisions between older and younger grades, create a welcoming and accepting environment. For example, have a group of seniors join a group of freshmen for lunch or gather a group of sophomores to attend one of the junior class' fundraisers.

## **Empowerment Posters**

Aavidum is only as strong as those it represents so highlight people from a variety of social circles demonstrating what Aavidum inspires them to do. Select students with diverse talents who represent a variety of social circles, cover a range of activities, and positively represent “I’ve got your back.” This will show your school community that everyone is accepted, appreciated, acknowledged, and cared for. Recruit student photographers and designers to photograph the students in action and create the posters. Print the posters and display them throughout your school and community.

## **Hands Across the School**

Cut out a paper handprint representing each student in your school. Write the name of a student on each one to show that everyone matters and display them throughout the school.

## **Just 23s**

Just 23 words, a chance, an opportunity, a possibility to change someone’s life. It knocks. Will you answer? It’s as easy as 23. Just23s are 23 word stories. As a club, write Just23s that center around acceptance, appreciation, acknowledgement, or caring and then present the stories to your school through a display, at an assembly, or in another creative way. During one school year, the Cocalico High School Aavidum club lined their hallways with the stories.

## **Lead by Example**

The way you behave has a big impact on others. Serve as a model of acceptance. Let your words and actions show that you accept everyone for who and what they are. Turn your social media into a place where others feel welcomed, and greet others with approval.



## **New Students**

Coordinate an effort to authentically welcome new students transferring into your school. Create a welcome pack from your Aavidum club or make each new student a card that emphasizes how glad you are to have him or her in your school. Don't forget to check in on these students throughout the entire year to help them feel accepted and welcomed.

## **Morning Welcome**

Gather a group of students to welcome their peers as they arrive at school in the morning. Make sure every student knows you're glad he/she is there. You could even give out small snacks or encouraging notes to brighten everyone's day.

## **Safe Seating**

Created by Lampeter-Strasburg High School

Every student deserves to feel like the school cafeteria is a safe and welcoming place. Create "safe seating" - a clearly labeled table that welcome any student who may not have a comfortable place to sit during lunch. Have different club members sit at the table to welcome anyone who may feel alone so all students know that someone has their back.

## **Sign the Banner**

Ask all students and staff members to sign an Aavidum banner as a pledge to have each others' backs. Display the banner in a prominent location to remind everyone to be there for one another and to live the characteristics of a healthy community.

## **What Does It Mean?**

Show everyone in your school that they are accepted by creating a spot on the morning announcements or in the school newspaper where students and staff answer questions like "What does it mean to be a friend?" or "What does it mean to have someone's back?" or "What does Aavidum mean to you?"



# APPRECIATE

## Community Garden

Created by Conrad Weiser Elementary School

Plant a community garden where students, teachers, and community members can work together to grow food for the people of your community. The garden can serve as a reminder that we are all valuable and that great things happen when we use our gifts and talents to work together and help others.

## Custodian Care

Participate in Do Something's "Custodian Care" campaign. Show your custodians appreciation for improving your school's environment. Make a banner for them and collect student signatures. Then display the banner outside their offices as a big thank you for all they do.

## Feature a Friend

Use your social media as a way to show appreciation for your friends. Instead of a #tbt or a #mcm, devote one day of the week to featuring someone important in your life. Share a picture and tell everyone why you value and are grateful to have that friend in your life.

## My Friend is Good At

Created by Warwick High School

Ask students to fill out the following statement about their friends and sign it, or record themselves saying, "My friend \_\_\_ is good at \_\_\_."

Display the statements on a bulletin board or in a video. Some schools have even asked their shop class to help create a wooden display.

## Thank You Box

Create a box with notecards in the main office or guidance office where students can anonymously submit "thank yous" to highlight positive people and things happening in your school. Use your gifts and talents to share the "thank yous" with your student body. Create a video for the announcements, set up a bulletin board in a busy hallway, etc.

## **Thank You Notes**

Start sending thank you notes to individuals or groups that enhance your school. For example, send a note to the student council members who planned a great dance or to the teachers who arranged an impactful assembly. Or thank people who bring valuable qualities to your school

## **#VirtualHi**

Think of someone you know who has a characteristic you admire. Write a video and the person's name on your hand. Give the person a #VirtualHi by taking a video or picture of yourself with the person's name on your hand. Post the picture or video on social media and include the reason you admire the person in the caption. In your post, challenge the person to continue the compliment chain.

# **ACKNOWLEDGE**

## **Cheers**

Cheers and applause are traditional ways to recognize, but unexpected cheers can have a great impact. For example, acknowledge the students who broadcast the announcements by having a large number of students stand in front of the studio and applaud them as they leave.

## **Compliments**

Create a way for students to recognize one another's successes, such as a box in the Main Office or an online submission form. Gather all of the compliments and publish them in a creative way that allows students to receive recognition for the great things they do.

## **“I Am” Wall**

Created by Aavidum at Crystal Lake South High School

Create an “I Am” wall in a school hallway and invite students and staff to complete the sentence with positive traits or characteristics about themselves that make them proud. Display all of the words to recognize the positive attributes of the members of your school.

## **LipDub**

Created by Hollidaysburg Area High School

Create a lip-dub video that highlights the many different students and different interests within your school community. Coordinate and produce the video that recognizes and celebrates both your diversity and connectedness.

## **Positive Connection**

Take some time to identify the people in your life who encourage and support you. Text or meet up with people you may not have connected with recently. Remind them you have their backs.

## **Recognize Accomplishments**

Recognize an accomplishment within your school. Surprise a sports team with pizza after practice. Make and sign a banner thanking the students who participated in the spring musical. Be creative!

## **Support the Troops**

Show the brave men and women serving in the military and their families that their sacrifices do not go unrecognized. Visit [ourmilitary.mil/care-packages](http://ourmilitary.mil/care-packages) for a list of organizations that can help you get started or reach out to a local organization that can connect you to local troops and their families.

## **Talent Show**

Host an event where students are able to showcase their gifts and talents to the whole school. For those who don't want to perform, allow them to use their gifts and talents to coordinate the event (designing posters, scheduling performers, selling tickets). Remember to acknowledge everyone who contributed at the end of the event.

## **CARE**

### **Aavidum Banana**

The experts say, "Depression doesn't always stick out." One of our students created a campaign based on that idea. She reached for a banana costume and filmed a PSA that has been seen by thousands of people. Use the banana costume in your school and community to remind everyone that depression doesn't always stick out and empathize the importance of looking out for each other.

### **Awareness Games**

Aavidum recognizes the value of athletic teams in creating health environments. During Aavidum awareness games, student athletes wear Aavidum shirts while they warm up, place Aavidum decals on their helmets, wear yellow shoelaces, etc. Banners and posters are placed throughout the gymnasium or field. Students share their own public service announcements before the game and/or during halftime and provide printed resources to every individual who attends.

### **Cards for Hospitalized Kids**

Hospitalized kids often feel lonely, isolated, fearful, different from peers, and forgotten. An uplifting, handmade card truly helps with these challenges. Find all the details to make cards at Cards for Hospitalized Kids' website: [cardsforhospitalizedkids.com](http://cardsforhospitalizedkids.com).

## **Community Collaboration**

Find a group of organization in your community that shares some of your goals and work together on a project. Ask your township supervisors to pledge Aavidum for a story for the local paper or help a local shelter collect food for those in need.

## **Glove Drive**

Because the handprint is the symbol of Aavidum, many clubs have run glove and mitten drives within their schools. The gloves can then be donated to shelters, churches, and other organizations in your community.

## **It's in my Cell**

Get the Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and the Crisis Text Line, 741-741, saved as contacts in all students' phones. Get creative to get the numbers out with posters, announcements, etc. Any student who needs support for him/herself or for a friend can use these free, 24/7 resources.

## **Letter to the Editor**

With your advisor's help, write a letter to send to important newspapers and public figures about Aavidum and your school's efforts to create a healthy community. In the letter, encourage others to be kind and be there for one another. See if you can print the article in your school paper as well.

## **Love Letters**

Getting older can be pretty lonely. Help seniors in your community feel more connected by making handmade cards to spread some love. Work with your local senior center, Office of Aging, or Meals on Wheels group to have the cards delivered. Let the older adults in your community know that you care.

## **Positive Place**

For one week, turn all of your social media accounts into places of positivity. Only share inspirational quotes, positive messages, and hopeful pictures. Encourage friends to do the same.

## **Positive Post-Its**

Leave a note on every student's locker so he/she knows that someone cares. Or place notes on the mirrors in every school bathroom.

The notes can contain positive messages, inspirational quotes, or encouraging words. Make sure every single student knows he/she is important to the school community.

## **Public Service Announcements**

School assembly, posters in the hallways, morning announcements - how will you get your message out? Create PSAs to help raise awareness about issues affecting students.

## **Stress Less**

During a stressful time of the year (such as exam week), coordinate activities to help everyone in your school stress less. Give out postcards with tips for stress reduction on one side and handwritten notes of encouragement on the other. Postcards are available to download off the Aavidum website.

## **Write a Song**

Write an original Aavidum song, perform it, and share it.

# Resources

If you are someone you know is in crisis, please call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at **1-800-273-8255 (TALK)**. Your call will be answered by a trained counselor at your local center. The Lifeline is free, confidential, and open 24/7/365. You can call about an issue you're facing or if you're concerned about a friend or family member. If you're struggling or concerned, please call. No call is too small or unimportant. If you find yourself or a friend in an immediate crisis, you can also call **9-1-1** for help.

The **Crisis Text Line** also offers support for teens 24/7. Text LISTEN to 741-741 to text with a live, trained specialist about any issue.

For the most up-to-date and accurate list of warning signs and risk factors for suicide, please go to the **National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide** at <http://www.suicidology.org/ncpys>.

Today I learned what a healthy community is, and I worked with peers from other schools to generate ideas to achieve it.

