

# NEWS BREAK

**Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, December 11, 2016** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions. **Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

**Article: Schools creating calm to help stressed students (MAIN, A1)**

## Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

- What is mindfulness? Do you learn about this technique in your school?
- What kinds of stressors affect you the most?
- How do you de-stress?

**Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.**

A. anxiety	1. distracted with fear, pain, joy, etc...
B. apathy	2. a technique in which one focuses one's full attention only on the present, experiencing thoughts, feelings, and sensations but not judging them
C. frantic	3. serving as an experimental or trial undertaking prior to full-scale operation or use
D. mindfulness	4. a state of uneasiness or tension caused by apprehension of possible future misfortune, danger or worry
E. pilot	5. mental, emotional, or physical strain or tension
F. stress	6. absence of interest in or enthusiasm for things generally considered interesting or moving

## Comprehension:

1. Describe "Rider Time" at Roosevelt High School.
2. How did this special "down time" begin?
3. How did the staff carve out time in their busy, daily schedule?
4. Erin Bailey, one of the school's academic intervention specialists, said students face what challenges?

5. Most days of the week, students can use the 20 minutes of Rider Time as they choose. What do they normally do?
6. What happens on Thursdays?
7. Other Seattle-area schools also are incorporating mindfulness and stress management into the school day, part of a push to focus on students' what?
8. But Roosevelt is the first school in Seattle to pilot what?
9. Already, teachers and students say, Roosevelt is calmer. What changes are being seen?
10. Next year, the school's schedule may be changing, so teachers aren't sure whether Rider Time can continue. But they hope the focus on what will stay?

**Group Discussion Questions or Extension Essay Questions:**

***National statistics back up teachers' and students' concerns about stress. Suicide, for example, is the second leading cause of death among people aged 15-34, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A CDC report released last month showed that kids ages 10-14 were more likely to die by suicide than in a car accident.***

- Have you had any suicides in your school? Community?
- Why do you think suicide is such a big problem for young people?
- What can be done to help kids that are overstressed or struggling in other areas of their life?
- Do you think mindfulness programs at school would help kids de-stress and learn to calm down? Why or why not?

***Hollar also attributes the interest in mindfulness as a response to the era of high stakes testing. After a period that focused so much on test scores, she said, more schools are realizing they can't neglect students' emotional health.***

***"If you're not present, then you're not open to learning," she said.***

- Do you feel that school is too test-focused? Why or why not?
- Do you agree that more emphasis needs to be placed on students' emotional health? Why or why not?
- Do you have to be mentally present to learn? Why or why not?
- What other things can cause kids to be distracted at school?

***"It's not worship in any sense of the word," he said. "It's really just kids getting to know themselves better, including how their brain works."***

- Do you think it's important to get to know yourself better and learn how your brain and body works? Why or why not?

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday and Wednesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

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## Newsbreak Answer Key: December 11, 2016

### Vocabulary

- A. 4
- B. 6
- C. 1
- D. 2
- E. 3
- F. 5

### Comprehension Questions

1. For 20 minutes each day at Roosevelt High — part of a break the school instituted for all students this fall — she has time to breathe. With her feet on the floor and hands in her lap shortly after her U.S. history class ended, she took three deep breaths and a long, slow exhale out.
2. Started by teachers who'd grown alarmed at the rising stress level among their students, this daily break — known as "Rider Time," after the school's Roughrider mascot — is aimed at helping students slow down, at least for a few minutes. Last year, teachers said, the stress and anxiety at the school had reached a crisis level.
3. So a team of teachers, counselors and school nurses met to figure out what. They quickly settled on carving out a 20-minute period in the school day — accomplished by shortening each class to 50 minutes instead of 55. And because they now make any announcements during Rider Time (and don't hold Rider Time on assembly days), they say the amount of instructional time isn't reduced by much, if at all.
4. Tougher academics than in the past, and take more advanced classes in their effort to get into college.

"There's just a lack of free time to be themselves," she said. "And with the internet, you always feel like you have to be connected to something. You're always missing something."

5. To relax on their own, check on grades or catch up on school work.
6. But on Thursdays, teachers in every class lead a lesson on mindfulness, a practice loosely defined as being present and aware of one's thoughts, feelings and sensations — and the impact each has.
7. Emotional well-being, rather than just academic success.
8. A year-long program with weekly mindfulness lessons built into the daily schedule.
9. Teachers report seeing fewer students speed walking down the halls with frantic looks on their faces. Students say the overall pace feels slower.
10. Emotional health