

# Custom Programs



**2026-2027**

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**“After investing significant resources in civil discourse trainings, we realized the challenge wasn’t incivility, it was discussion skills.**

**R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> met us where we were, and our custom program has been transformational—for students and faculty alike.”**



## **Bre Stricklin**

HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
UMS-WRIGHT PREPARATORY  
SCHOOL (AL)



**At most schools, discussion is mission-critical: It's *how* academics, relationships, leadership, and community all come to life. Yet, most schools do not have an intentional whole-school program for teaching discussion skills.**

We partner with schools to design exactly that. We blend your school's mission, priorities, and existing practices with our research-informed K-12 discussion skills program. Ultimately, we create shared language, benchmarks, and metrics for your community.

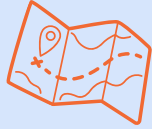
R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> Discussion Custom Programs are multi-year engagements—**our work across 100+ schools has taught us that thoughtful change takes time!** Our best partners are visionary academic leaders who aren't afraid of change management and see long-term strategic value in explicitly teaching face-to-face communication skills as part of the core academic experience.

→ Custom programs look different at different schools—by design! That said, they generally include the following:

- > Vision Development
- > Professional Learning
- > Customized Curriculum
- > Impact Assessment
- > Leadership Support

**After two years of running their custom R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> Discussion program, schools may be invited to join the R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> Discussion Network.** That's our national community of schools leading the way in teaching and assessing these deeply human skills in our tech-centric world. R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> Network Schools have opportunities for advanced-level PL, further customized curriculum, and recognition as a demonstration site.

## Year 1: Pilot



- Develop + Articulate Vision
- Pilot R.E.A.L.® Program
- Initial PD (Humanities Teachers)
- Customized Curriculum
- Impact Assessment

## Year 2: Solidify



- Strategic Program Roll-Out
- Customized Curriculum
- Targeted Impact Assessment
- Additional PD (Full Faculty)
- Key Leader Identification

## Year 3+: Celebrate



- R.E.A.L.® Network Eligibility
- Design Sustainability Plan
- Execute Share-ability Strategy
- Further Customized Curriculum
- Continue Impact Assessment
- Master-Level PD for Key Leaders

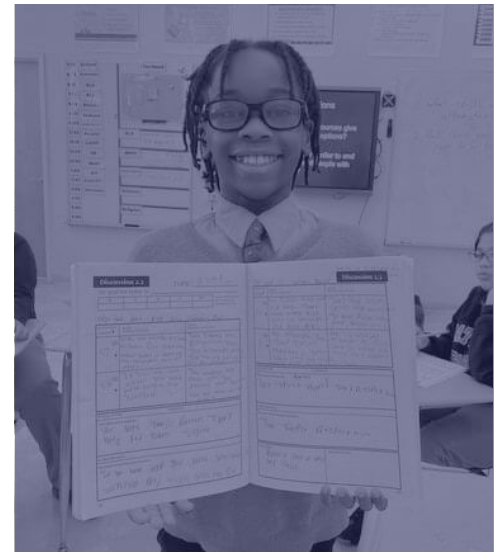
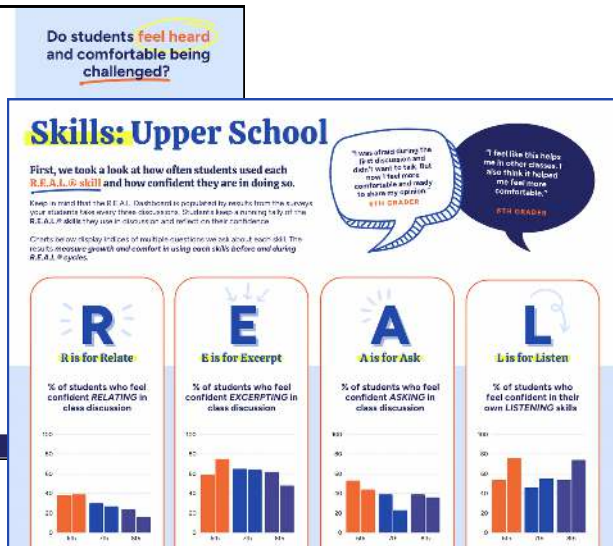
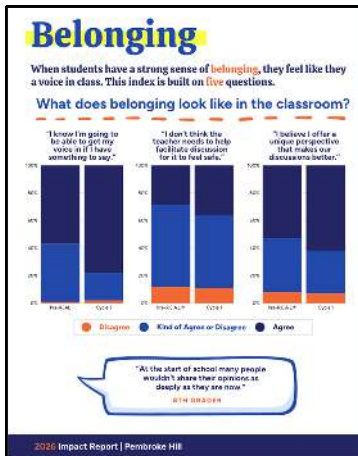
## Years One and Two:

### *Develop Vision, Pilot Program, Measure Results*

In our first and second years of Custom Program partnership, the goal is to develop your school's unique *why* for teaching discussion skills—and figure out *how* the R.E.A.L.® Discussion method nestles best *within your existing program*. We live by the mantra “*go slow to go fast*” and advise building authentic buy-in with a pilot phase (Year 1) before any program-wide roll-out (Year 2).

- **Professional Learning:** Year 1 prioritizes R.E.A.L.® Discussion Certification for Humanities Teachers (differentiated for elementary, middle, and high school teachers). This is a virtual, live professional learning experience led by a R.E.A.L.® facilitator who *actually uses* the program in their own classroom. (We have heard “*it’s the best PD ever!*” more times than we can count!). Year 2 usually includes full-faculty training, teacher coaching, and deep-dive workshops for practitioners – all of which can be done virtually or in person.
- **Customized Curriculum:** Research shows that attention, anxiety, and executive function are three big (unspoken) challenges students face in live discussion. Our printed and school-branded *Discussion Portfolios* support students as they engage in screen-free R.E.A.L.® Discussions. After two years of sustained use, hyper-customization options are available for teachers.
- **Impact Assessment:** Discussion can be famously hard to assess, so our student surveys make student growth visible, measuring discussion skills, belonging, and sense of purpose all year long! Teachers have ongoing access to dashboards with quantitative and qualitative data from their students. Administrators receive impact reports that make school-wide trends digestible and shareable.
- **Leadership Support:** We partner with academic leaders on initial vision development and the ins and outs of pedagogical change management. Whether it's aligning language to your strategic plan, designing a department meeting, developing materials for Parents’ Night, or giving teachers feedback, we are in your corner as your coach.

# R.E.A.L.® Discussion Custom Programs



“R.E.A.L.® makes it so I can talk to people in the real world, instead of standing there with my head down when someone is talking to me.”

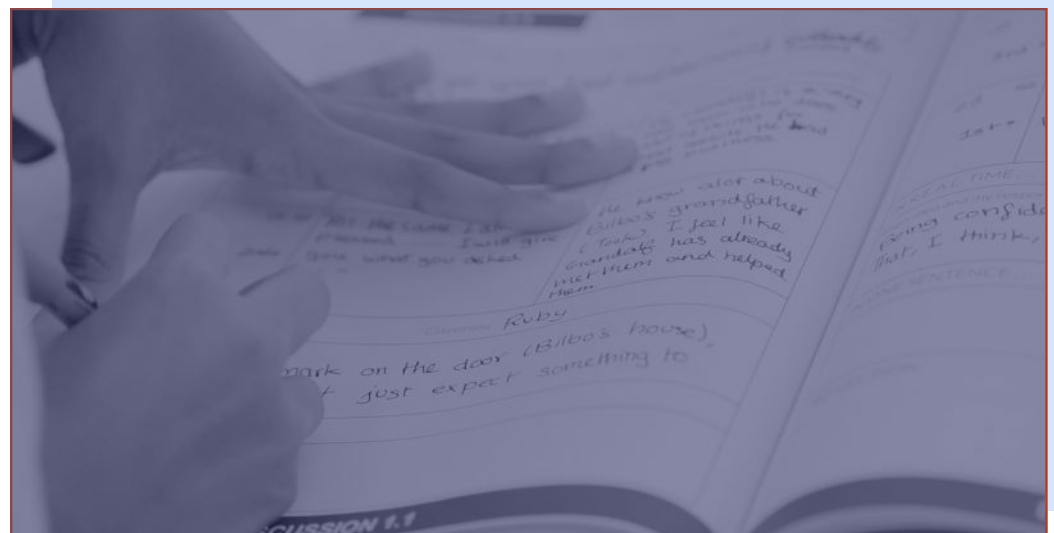
6th grader

“With R.E.A.L.®, I have learned it’s possible to disagree with someone’s idea, not their whole entire identity.”

9th grader

“My teachers said to me, I wish all of our PD was like R.E.A.L.® Discussion.”

History Department Chair



“Through R.E.A.L.®, our 9th and 10th grade English teachers track their students' improvement in their communication skills and ability to confront challenges in the classroom. The method creates space for all voices and perspectives to be heard. And it works! As a parent, I saw my own kids' discussion skills take off thanks to this program.

More broadly, **R.E.A.L.® Discussion fits into who we are and where we are going as a school.** It builds on our signature public speaking program, lays the groundwork for success in the 11th and 12th grade advanced curriculum, and ensures a human-centered classroom experience in today's world.”



**Peter Curran**

HEAD OF SCHOOL  
BLAIR ACADEMY (NJ)



# Years Three And Beyond: Sustain, Share, Celebrate!

Year three of partnership is where our Custom Programs *really* get interesting.

At this point, partner schools have already articulated the mission-alignment of discussion skills. They have proven that R.E.A.L.® Discussion is a fit for their students, faculty, and families. And they seen measurable results: growth in discussion skills, purpose, and sense of belonging.

Now, schools are eligible to join the R.E.A.L.® Network, and it's time to think about **sustainability** and what we call "**share-ability**."

- **Sustainability:** After working with 100+ schools, we've learned that designing a strategic initiative to be truly sustainable takes a strategy in and of itself! **We partner with you to make a roadmap for building the internal capacity and authentic ownership you need for long-term success.** Ideally, doing this well will free you up to move on to the next big priority.
- **Share-ability:** At R.E.A.L.®, we believe you get what you celebrate—and at schools, public sharing is a key form of celebration. Yet so often, academic storytelling feels inauthentic, buzzword-y, or just plain flat. **We partner with you to design strategies for effectively sharing what it means to commit to the human art of great discussion** with audiences, including parents, prospective parents, alums, community members, and the edu-sphere.



“In today’s tech-centric world, we must intentionally equip students to actively engage. At Woodward Academy, a partnership with R.E.A.L.® Discussion has been at the heart of that work.

**Over the last three years, we’ve seen our students grow in confidence and connection.** Ultimately, the skills-based approach aligns with who we are as an Academy because it balances rigor and relationships; it teaches our students to think critically and connect compassionately.

That’s the kind of education we believe in, and that’s the future we are helping to build thanks to R.E.A.L.® Discussion.”



**Dr. Nigel Traylor**

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT LIFE  
WOODWARD ACADEMY (GA)



Learn more about Woodward Academy’s  
experience building a R.E.A.L.® Discussion  
Custom Program!



# Sustainability

## *Build Capacity + Community Engagement*

Sustainability strategies look different for different schools, but generally include some of these methods to build internal capacity, alignment, and ownership:

- **R.E.A.L.® Master Practitioner Certification:** Designed for extraordinary teacher-leaders, this is a year-long PD experience that kicks off with a virtual summer training and then includes three cohort meetings and ongoing one-on-one support from R.E.A.L.® Staff. Master Practitioners complete an action research project, engage in peer observation, and develop a presentation for internal or external use.
- **R.E.A.L.® Coach Certification:** In order to effectively support teachers, faculty supervisors need to not just understand R.E.A.L.® – they need to be experts in pedagogical change management! This full-year program kicks off with a virtual summer training, includes three meetings a year with a cohort from peer schools, and quarterly “Thought Partner” sessions with R.E.A.L.® Leadership. Topics covered include: adult learning models, pedagogical change management, discussion observation practices, and scope /sequence development.
- **Hyper-Customized Student Curriculum:** Teacher ownership is a must-have for authentic sustainability – and having teacher voices reflected in curriculum design is a win-win. Our designers work with your instructional leadership to align R.E.A.L.® Discussion Portfolios to your school’s systems and preferences. In our experience, teachers delight in this level of formalization and customization.
- **Stakeholder Education:** A common language is only as good as the number of constituencies who understand it! So, it’s critical that you bring community members beyond just teachers and students up-to-speed. We will work with you to design—and if desired, deliver—educational opportunities for parents, boards, or alumni.
- **20% Off Ongoing Core Program Costs:** as a R.E.A.L.® Network School, you’ll receive discounted pricing for Portfolios and new hire Certifications (so you can ensure your new teachers are trained before they even start teaching!).

“As an Academic Leader, R.E.A.L.® Discussion has been an amazing opportunity to tie the daily work of English teachers to our school mission – but also to the defining challenges of today’s world.

**My cross-divisional team now has a common language and shared vision in using the English classroom to cultivate the skills and habits students need to thrive as citizens in a democracy and humans in a tech-centered world.** They have received positive feedback from fellow faculty, parents, and most importantly, students.

An added bonus is that this shared vision and practice also supports the quick onboarding and integration of new faculty members.”



**Nora Landon**

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIR  
WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL (PA)





## Share-Ability:

### *Share and Claim Your Discussion Expertise*

Each school makes unique decisions about how, where, when, and to whom they want to tell “the story” of their whole-school commitment to teaching conversation skills. Our team includes seasoned Advancement professionals ready to help you do that, authentically and efficiently!

- **Storytelling Packages:** Partner schools can purchase a bank of consulting hours or choose specific deliverables. Some things clients have loved are:
  - > PDF Case Study on school’s discussion practice and impact or features of your faculty on the R.E.A.L.® Discussion website, all co-written to align with your school’s current messaging
  - > Draft articles for school magazine, or other publication, featuring your school’s discussion data and student, teacher, leader, and industry-expert perspectives
  - > Design/review of materials for publicly-facing programs about discussion for Parents, Prospective Parents, Trustees, or Community
  - > Fundraising support, including assistance on grants or stewardship materials, or even live support in a virtual visit with a “difference-maker” donor
  - > Support on the full process of producing an in-house video about Discussion
  
- **Demo Site Recognition:** Claim your School’s unique expertise in teaching face-to-face communication skills within your local market by becoming a R.E.A.L.® Demo Site. Demo Sites are part of a national group of leading schools – limited to one per major city – who not only showcase their own success, but commit to inspiring others with their work.
  - > To be considered for Demo Site status, R.E.A.L.® Network schools should have: certified One Coach and two Master Practitioners; demonstrated three years of using R.E.A.L.® model with fidelity and innovation across grades or subject areas; engaged with R.E.A.L.® impact reporting for two years; used some of the strategic storytelling activities above; partnered to present at a regional or national conference; and be open to hosting discussion-related PD events for educators and community members.

# Let's Talk!

Design a R.E.A.L.® Discussion  
Custom Program For Your School



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