



LEADER & LEARNER PROFILE

Alesha Bates

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING EXPERT

- Reflect.
- Connect.
- Grow.



“

We can be hopeful and still tell the truth about what is hard.

ALESHA BATES

ABOUT ALESHA

Alesha Bates is a Minnesota educator focused on social and emotional learning, relationships, and the conditions that help students and adults grow.

Her work centers on usable resources, shared language across a school community, and listening before solving, so every adult in a student's day can help that student succeed.

THE VALUES THAT DRIVE HER WORK

- **CONNECTION**
Relationships change what people see as possible.
- **IDENTITY**
The experiences we carry shape what we notice.
- **GROUNDING**
Listen first, then take one manageable step.

Moments That Shape. Values That Guide. Impact That Lasts.

Alesha didn't always picture herself becoming a teacher. She received special education services in elementary, middle, and high school, and those years shaped how she saw her own abilities. A third-grade teacher connected with her and helped school feel different. Later, when she was struggling to attend, her principal came to her house, picked her up, and helped her understand that showing up mattered.

For ten years she worked as a hairstylist. She loved the relationships she built with her clients and kept feeling pulled toward something else. Her husband encouraged her to apply for a paraprofessional position supporting students with developmental disabilities. She took that step, and it changed the direction of her life.

Early in her teaching career, Alesha worked in an elementary school where many families were navigating significant challenges. The staff set out to make sure every student was known by name throughout the building. Getting there took shared language, shared expectations, and adults willing to keep learning together. It showed her what a team looks like when its values are visible in everyday moments.

One student taught her to listen differently. After a year of checking in and asking questions, Alesha wrote her a note offering support and promising to stop asking her to explain. The student wrote back, and soon they were trading two or three notes a day. Alesha had cared about her all along. What changed was her idea of what connection was supposed to look like.

She also remembers being the teacher who needed a social skills lesson that morning, with no time to search for one and make it usable. That experience helped shape SEL Blueprint: practical resources educators can find when they need them, adapt to their own setting, and share with every adult who is part of a student's day.

For several years, Alesha has taught educators in graduate courses. Teachers arrive from across Minnesota carrying a lot. By the end, they are trading ideas, listening to one another, and reconnecting with why they chose this work. Her grounding belief is simple: everybody needs somebody.

Today, Alesha leads by listening first. She has learned to slow down, hear what a person is actually telling her, and ask what they need before offering a solution. Her story reminds leaders that belief grows when people can see the support around them and the progress they are making together.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF LASTING CHANGE



CONDITIONS



RELATIONSHIPS



PRACTICES



CAPACITY



SUSTAINABILITY