



not belonging, with the sense of not being understood,” Reddam said.

The \$15 million state-funded project to improve school climates and keep students in school will design programs to prepare teachers and administrators in restorative justice, social emotional learning and other supports that emphasize mediating conflicts and building healthy relationships in schools. If done right, the programs will lead to schools where the bullying Annie fears rarely happens.

If there are any positives coming out of the fire that swept through Butte County last November, it is that resources, including from many mental health professionals, have poured into the region to help with the recovery.

Yet, those in the trenches acknowledge that nothing happens unless they meet their students where they are.

Over the years, Kaylee got used to the eye rolls and brush-offs from some of her teachers when she'd come back from long absences. But things were different at Las Plumas.

Dan Ramos, the school's principal, wanted to help her. And so did her guidance counselor, who she said was always checking in to see how things were going. Kaylee benefited from the kindness of

Sheri Hanni, the school attendance review boards coordinator for the Butte County Office of Education, in front of one of the agency's locations.

teachers like Bethany Dorin, who had Kaylee for anatomy and biology.

“I would struggle sometimes in her classes, but she'd always take extra time to help as much as she could,” Kaylee said.

Dorin said she mentors anywhere from three to five students like Kaylee each year. She admits that it can “feel a little impossible to know how to move forward” with these students.

“It's hard not to feel resentful of the situation,” Dorin said. “And it's hard not to immediately judge that student and immediately judge that family.”

But Dorin stuck with Kaylee, mainly because she admired her honesty and her grit.

“She didn't have a lot of shame, you know,” Dorin said. “Kaylee would come up and just blurt it all out. But then she would listen and ask questions until she realized, ‘my gosh, I can get a good grade.’”

Kaylee graduated last June. And now is enrolled in Butte College with hopes of becoming a dental hygienist.

“My mom would be proud of me,” she said. □

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