

Parkland Community Advisory Council

December 17, 2020

CO-PRESIDENTS

Melanie St. Hill
Michelle Wahlmark

SECRETARY

Andrea Scott

ATTENDEES: Diane Foley, Benjamin Gullede, Nicole Mandry, Mary Ost, Lisa Petrocilli, Jay Rohatgi, Melanie St. Hill, Andrea Scott, Michelle Wahlmark, Doreen Wynn

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Sydney Esquieres, Valeria Quintanilla, Lauren Wahlmark

SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Linda Perlman-McKenna

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Rodney Troutman

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Melanie St. Hill at 7:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve the minutes from November 19, 2020 was made by Linda Perlman-McKenna and Seconded by Ben Gullede.

PRESENTATION:

“Using Mindfulness to Manage Stress and Anxiety” presented by Matthew A. Carlson, PSY.D., ABPP.

The mindfulness presentation had three main objectives. One, identify the signs of stress and anxiety. Two, to describe what mindfulness is and its benefits. Three, to complete a mindfulness activity.

In an October 2020 survey it was revealed that nearly 1 in 5 adults say their mental health is worse now compared to the same time last year. 50% of teens say the pandemic has severely disrupted their plans for the future and 51% have said that planning for their future feels impossible. 63% of parents agree the pandemic has made the 2019-2020 school year extremely stressful for them. 21% of Americans say they have no one to rely on for emotional support.

People without social support have higher stress levels, difficulty making healthy lifestyle changes and are more likely to experience depression and anxiety. Stress affects people in different ways including: difficulty concentrating, indecisiveness and pessimism. One can feel overwhelmed, fatigued and irritable. People can experience a loss of motivation or interest in activities, social withdrawal, and procrastination. Stress causes headaches, digestive symptoms and difficulty sleeping. People are more prone to viral infections, increased blood pressure and other cardiovascular problems, inflammation in the circulatory system and fatigue. Stress also negatively affects brain function. When stress is present, cortisol levels stay high, inhibiting learning.

Even with the stress that people are feeling today, 71% of Americans say they feel hopeful about their future. The more we pay attention to the present, the happier we are. A wandering mind, e.g. thinking of all of the things we need to do or should have done, is not a happy mind.

Mindfulness is purposefully paying attention to the present moment with a nonjudgmental attitude while observing one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors and physical sensations. It's the ability to know what's happening in your head at any given moment without getting carried away by it. The great thing about mindfulness is that anyone can learn it. It is simple to understand but difficult to cultivate. With practice, the mindfulness skill can be developed.

Elementary schools are using the MindUP program developed by the Goldie Hawn Foundation. Emotional support programs are using the AIM program. The Calm app is used by SMS and OMS. The counselors at PHS run mindfulness groups.

In children, noticing, not judging, calm, and kindness to self and others is taught as attitudinal foundations of mindfulness. MRI's have shown, after continued practice of mindfulness, an increase in gray matter concentration in regions involved in learning and memory, emotional regulation and perspective taking. Mindfulness will help reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and perception of chronic pain while improving quality of life, emotion regulation, immune response and attention.

Want to start on the mindfulness journey? Some apps to help include: Headspace, Calm and 10% Happier. Fitbit and Apple watch also have mindfulness apps.

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT: Linda Perlman-McKenna, School Director and Board Liaison to the CAC, presented a report highlighting the topics discussed during the School Board meeting on Dec. 1st and 15th, and committee meetings on Dec. 7th.

Board Reorganization:

- At the Board Reorganization meeting on Dec. 1st, the Board elected David Hein as new Board President and Carol Facchiano as Vice President.
- New Board Committee Assignments were made subsequently by President David Hein as follows:
 - Personnel & Finance—Lisa Roth (Chair), Carol Facchiano, David Kennedy.
 - Building & Grounds—Rob Cohen (Chair), Patrick Foose, David Hein.
 - AAA Committee—Marie Maritch (Chair), Marisa Zeigler, Linda Perlman-McKenna.
- As a general rule, all committee meetings will be held on the 2nd Monday of each month.
- First meeting of “new” committees will be January 11, 2021, starting with P&F @ 5pm, B&G @ 6pm, and AAA @ 7pm.

During the Regular Business Meetings on Dec 1st and Dec 15th:

- Board approved personnel Items such as leaves of absence, changes of status, new hires, resignations and retirements, including the retirement of Tracy Smith, Assistant to the Superintendent of Operations. Tracy will be retiring after 30 years of service in education, effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
- Carol Facchiano was appointed to the Joint Operating Committee (JOC) of the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute (LCTI) for a three (3) year term beginning December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2023. David Hein will now serve as the Vice Chair of the JOC at LCTI.
- Several construction change orders were approved in association with summer roofing projects, the Schnecksville Elementary renovation, and Veterans Memorial Elementary. Some of these change orders resulted in additional costs, but were offset in part by credits for unused contract allowances.

- A proposal to purchase replacement security cameras on an accelerated time table was approved in order to take advantage of significant cost savings offered by the vendor for buying the cameras before the end of this year.
- The Schnecksville Renovation Project is moving along. Board approved a proposal from Cowan Associates for professional services for designing and obtaining a Highway Occupancy Permit from PennDOT in connection with the site plan for the new parent pick-up area.
- The BQ Basement Systems proposal to complete repair work under the swimming pool at PHS was approved. They will be injecting a polymer under the pool that will solidify in columns and provide additional structural support to the shell of the pool.

Dec. 15th Workshop

- Kelly Rosario, Brenda DeRenzo, Andrew Weber, and Nicole McGalla presented an update on the progress of the Equity and Inclusion Plan.

STUDENT REPORT:

Academics:

- NHS held their virtual inductions, as did French Honor Society.
- Spanish Honor Society induction is to be determined.
- December 7-13th was Computer Science Education Week.
- Leo Club is hosting volunteer opportunities in Historic Bethlehem and at ArtsQuest.
- Parkland FBLA had their testing competition December 16th and 17th.

Arts:

- Virtual Coffeehouse is still going on every Wednesday at 2:30.
- PMEA Districts results came in with 21 Parkland finalists.
- The Chorale virtual concert will be streamed on Youtube this Monday.

Athletics

- Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, strict limitations have been placed on athletics.
- Basketball delayed their season until January 2021.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ROUNDTABLE:

- The 2020 Parkland High School Chorale Winter Holiday concert was virtual this year. Here's the link in case you missed it:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcTnBmAWjzjQcHf5eG6rzJdEsZnEuuXBu>

- Diane Foley, Dr. Troutman's Executive Assistant, is retiring at the end of December. A big round of thanks was expressed by all in attendance for all of her work and support throughout the years!
- Next CAC meeting will occur on Thursday, January 21st. Mrs. Tracy Smith and the Technology Team will present Girls Who code/21st Century Classroom.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: At 8:10pm Michelle Wahlmark called for a motion to adjourn. Jay Rohatgi moved, with Linda Perlman-McKenna seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Scott