



Pelham Public Schools
Wellness Committee Minutes
Pelham Memorial High School- Library 105E
Tuesday, November 22, 2022

Focus: The Wellness Committee works as an oversight committee to maintain and/ or implement new programs and strategies through a perspective of best practices for the social and emotional wellness of our students K-12. This committee will be looking at ways to advance the district's efforts to support the whole child.

Present: Traci Holtz, Lindsey Ferris, Sarah Desoye, AnnaMarie Nardone, Paola Gogliomella, Kerri Weaver, Kim Asfendis, Elizabeth Belafante, Angela Snyder, Lila Zahed, Andrea Pellicane, Gene Farrel, Irene Basu, Bella Luangisa, Suany Aquino-Chudavala, Inga Dawe, Genevieve Mensah, Leah Caruso, Lauren Ribeiro, Greg Lau, Jim Hricay, Jackie Huezo, Michael Owen-Michaane, Jessica DeDomenico

1. Introductions
2. Norms
 - Everyone gets a chance to be heard
 - As much as possible, be present and mindful
 - Don't attack the person; give them time to express their idea
 - Confidentiality - keep it here in the room
 - Every idea counts, be respectful and validate others
 - Be respectful of the speaker and not talk over others
 - Open and honest communication
 - Assume positive intent
3. Historical work of the committee
 - Instrumental in working on many initiatives over the years (SEL, nutrition... etc)
 - Initiative is to advance the wellness of all students K-12 to support whole child
 - Things are different now than 5 years ago and need to assess
 - Post covid we are seeing increased instances of anxiety, school avoidance, depressed social skills and coping skills...
 - Sub groups of the high school that don't always feel connected
4. Identified Needs
 - Focus on the support of the staff - (Hutchinson mentioned specifically) feeling stretched thin in terms of getting staff engaged. Theme is: faculty has too much to do and experiencing burn out. Concern about supporting these teachers so that they can do their job well and continue to support the students
 - Different perspectives of kids - one able to navigate the effects of covid and others really struggling with learning loss. How can we bridge the gap? Kids are stressed with this idea of "catching up" and the demands being placed on them

- Concern with older kids in the district, the adults trying to get caught up and they aren't there emotionally. Before the pandemic, kids were stressed with academics and now worried about the overreaction of the stress level. Feeling "I have to get this in" and all the adults conversations about the catch up can influence the level of stress
- Deficit in learning loss with lack of social skills. This applies throughout all grades and is being seen in different ways. High school - more drinking and up tick in those behaviors to get out socially and be social.
- Junior year pressure of college, not having a proper two years and now starting to think about college seems overwhelming and feeling like they are behind and there is a gap. Socially and mentally covid has impacted their maturity. Expected to go back to how it used to be but they have never experienced this normal before. They haven't had a proper transition.
- Never had a talk about what to expect in the next few years since the emphasis was mostly on covid concerns. No virtual last year, went right back to writing on paper. Could have taken more time with the transition from virtual to in person. Having a slower pace to help students adjust.
- Being social with other people wasn't a big thing and stopped for a whole year. Social skills seem to be lacking and missing. Education online is much different than in person. Students were full in person, full virtual and a mixture of hybrid. Their schedules were off and the learning was different for each student. They aren't all on the same page.
- Students seeing how others are stressed as well. They feel unprepared for what is to come next.
- As a community and world, can we focus on transitions? We want to prepare our kids to go conquer the world after high school but if the transition piece isn't there, they will struggle and not be ready to move on. When there are weaknesses, they are really struggling. Where can we fortify these transitions, more than we have in the past?
- At the elementary level, children's attention level. Much more fidgety and might have become accustomed to more screen time. Having a much harder time focusing. Furniture in the classroom, sensory corners and opportunities for movement in their day.
- What does healthy mean? Getting appointments have not been easy across all fields. Symptoms, sickness... it's still around.

5. Future Goals

- a. What will be the focus of the work this year?
 - What does healthy mean?
 1. Physical well-being
 2. Being able to set boundaries - self care. Finding a balance
 3. Looks and feels different for every child (some kids thrived during isolation - some kids think they are fine and healthy being alone). What is the expectation from the adults in terms of socialization?
 4. Healthy is being self-aware and knowing yourself and what you need despite what others might expect.
 5. Students have access to uber eats and unhealthy options versus in the past - you ate lunch from home or school lunch. Making healthy decisions in terms of nutrition based on the accessibility.
- b. Define 2-3 goals for the committee to achieve by the end of 22-23 year
 - Where did we leave off and what needs to be worked on?
 1. Looking at the district wellness policy

2. Taking care of faculty and staff - comparing pre-pandemic to post-pandemic is apples and oranges. Well mill room example (plants, comfy chairs, zero gravity...) Working on morale and burn out
3. Data - new data from students and staff. Fresh needs assessment/survey. This data can drive what we do. Acting on where we are now. What are the 5 essential questions we are going to ask kids every year that works in conjunction with progress?
4. Elementary curriculum and sequencing from K-12.
5. Connectivity between students - kids can be left behind very easily. Does this tie into curriculum? Can we add peer mentor programs or themes to build a sense of belonging in all levels. Adding more events or whole-grade activities.

6. Subcommittee Formation

- Think about our overarching goals and which subcommittee would be best for you

7. Future meeting dates

- 12/13
- 1/17
- 3/7
- 5/9

8. Closure