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MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

On behalf of the Spring Branch ISD staff, welcome back to the 2024-2025 school year! In this edition of the Mental Health Matters Newsletter you will find helpful information to kick-off the school year. Back-to-School season is a perfect time for your child to set goals. This will be a great opportunity to help your child succeed academically and to teach critical life skills like independence and organization. Setting meaningful and actionable goals for school helps students to focus on the most essential priorities. Balancing mental health, organizational skills, and good grades is crucial for students to succeed academically and personally. Students often experience stress from managing the balance of school, friendships, and extra-curricular activities. High levels of stress can negatively impact a student's ability to focus, retain information, and perform well on exams. Mental health challenges like anxiety and depression can also affect sleep, energy levels, and overall motivation. Emotional well-being is vital! Positive mental health contributes to resilience, better coping strategies, and a more optimistic outlook, which can enhance academic performance. Having a great support system is important for a child's success. Access to counseling, peer support, and healthy relationships with family and friends can provide the emotional stability needed to excel in school. Let's partner to help your child reach his/her academic and personal goals for the school year. As we engage students in relevant experiences throughout the school year, our six Core Characteristics define our aspiration for who we want our students to become.

Back to School: Setting Goals for School This Year

It's back-to-school season, which means it's time to start thinking about helping your child set goals for the school year. A new school year is a fresh start for students. It's a time to make new friends, try new things, learn new skills, and set new goals. With some extra planning, your child can have a more successful school year; all students can improve in some areas of their lives.

For older students goal setting is especially important. Setting academic goals for high school and middle school can be difficult for parents and students, but with a little planning and support, you can easily create achievable goals that will help your child achieve success this school year.

Try something new. Encourage your child to embrace a new experience. Your child could try new foods at lunch, join a new after-school club, or even read a new genre of books.

Talk to someone different. Making new friends is fun, but it can be scary. Encourage your child to introduce themselves to three new friends (or teachers) each day until they've met everyone in their class. New friendships

take time, but the small goal of taking a risk and talking to someone new can have big rewards. This goes for parents too: Introduce yourself to your child's teacher, parents of your child's classmates, or even the principal. The principal's office doesn't have to be frightening!

Improve routines. Are mornings hectic in your home? Do evenings leave your family frazzled? Brainstorm together to find small ways to make school-day routines a little less stressful. Pack lunches the night before or come up with a bedtime routine to ensure that your child gets enough rest to take on each new school day.

Focus on progress. Help your child prepare for challenging times at school by creating a safe space for them to open up. Talk about what their triggers might be and how they can cope in a healthy way. Encourage them to take a moment to calm down when they feel frustrated or when things don't go as planned. Suggest activities that they enjoy, such as writing in a journal, drawing a picture, or engaging in another relaxing hobby. These activities can serve as an outlet for their emotions and help them regain a sense of calm and control.



How to Help Your Children Set Goals for the School Year

It's important for parents to start thinking about ways to help their children achieve success. While academics are a crucial aspect of this success, it's also important to instill goal-setting skills in children from an early age. Whether it's getting better grades, building better study habits, or learning a new skill, goal-setting can positively affect a child's confidence and motivation. We are providing you with valuable tips on how to support your child in setting realistic and attainable goals for this school year.

1. Use the SMART format for goals

One of the most effective methods for setting goals is the SMART format. This acronym stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. When setting goals with your child, make sure they are specific and not too broad. For example, "getting better grades" is too general. Instead, try "getting a B+ or higher in math this semester". The goal should also be measurable, meaning there should be a way to track progress and success. Additionally, the goal should be achievable and relevant to your child's interests and abilities. Finally, make sure the goal has a deadline or timeline.

2. Encourage your child to list challenging but achievable goals

Goals should be realistic, but challenging enough to push your child to their fullest potential. Encourage your child to set goals that will take effort to accomplish, but are still achievable with dedication and planning. Once your child has a list of their goals, work with them to create a plan of action with strategies to ensure they reach them.

3. Celebrate your child's accomplishments

Remember to celebrate your child's progress and accomplishments along the way. Simple things such as praising your child's efforts or celebrating them by doing something fun when they reach a milestone is essential. Celebrating small successes helps to keep your child motivated and engaged in their goal-setting process.

4. Discuss the purpose of their goals

It's important for your child to understand the purpose behind their goals. Talk to your child about how their goals relate to their interests and values. This can help them to stay motivated and invested in the process. Regularly discuss the progress your child has made and what they have learned along the way. These are life lessons!

5. Be a supportive role model

As a parent, it's important to lead by example. When working with your child to set goals, make sure you're also setting goals for yourself. This could be a personal goal or a goal related to your career. By showing your child how you set and achieve goals, you're helping them to develop important skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.



"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."

-Robert Collier

Help Your Child Make their New School Year's Resolutions Stick

We sometimes lose steam on our resolutions. Here are a few ideas you can keep in mind to help your child continue with their goals as the year goes on!

Measure up. When you and your child set a goal, keep in mind how you can keep track of how they can achieve it. When you set a goal make sure it is measurable and achievable!

Create visual reminders. Create a vision board! Write or draw pictures that help you remember your resolutions, and put them in places they can be seen easily like the refrigerator, the bathroom mirror or the front door. If your child's goal is to remember all of the things they're supposed to bring to school, put a checklist by the door that they'll see on their way out. If you're trying to stick to a new morning routine, create a schedule with pictures or words so your child knows what to do, and in what order, to get ready.

Goal set as a family. Show your children the importance of setting goals by doing it together. Share your own goals with your child. Consider some family goals, too! Maybe your family can resolve to take a walk after dinner three nights a week, or replace TV time with board games once a week. Figure out what works for your family and stick with it!

Celebrate the small things. Pick a time to revisit your resolutions and discuss your progress on individual and family goals. Do your goals need to be tweaked? Will a family discussion get you back on track? Praise your child as they are achieving small goals. Your praise and the feeling of accomplishment is a tremendous reward.

Happy New School Year! Here's to embracing the excitement with resolutions that uplift your family. We look forward to seeing all of our parents at their child's Back-to-School Open House! Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's school for more information.

Citations

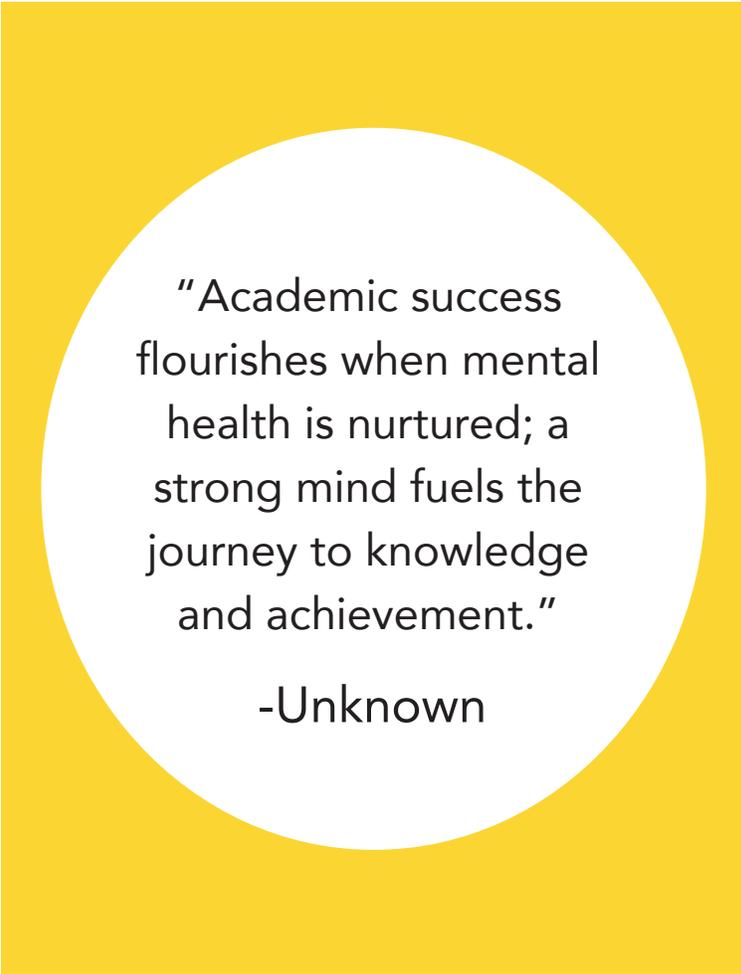
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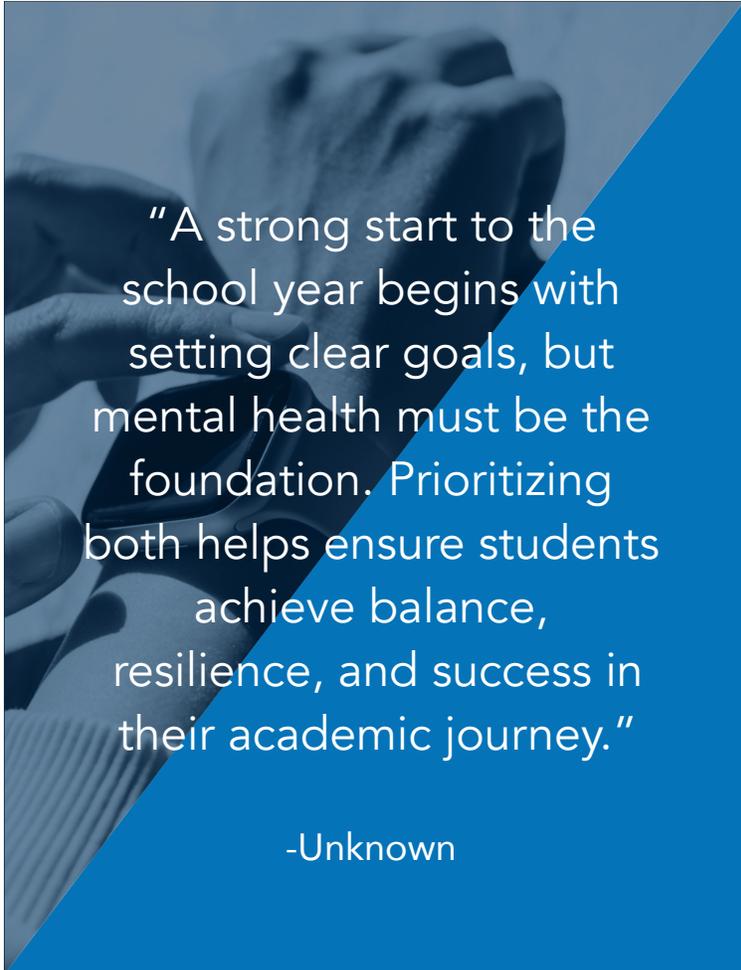
Source: World Health Organization
<http://www.who.int/>

Contact Us | January Davis | january.davis@springbranchisd.com



"Academic success flourishes when mental health is nurtured; a strong mind fuels the journey to knowledge and achievement."

-Unknown



"A strong start to the school year begins with setting clear goals, but mental health must be the foundation. Prioritizing both helps ensure students achieve balance, resilience, and success in their academic journey."

-Unknown