

Wellness Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 19th, 2025

8:30 am

NRHEG Board Room, New Richland or remote

Members: Carrie Petsinger, Beth Schoenrock, Onika Peterson, Sara Meihak, Brooke Krohn, Grant Berg, Kimberly Meyer, Dan Sorum, Karen Flatness, Samantha Joecks, Ethan Rindfleisch, Emma Johnson, Clara Buendorf, Kylie Olson, Wendy Schultz, Ashley Killday, Elizabeth Viktora, Melissa Karl, Aaron Phillips, and Mike Meihak

Members Present: Carrie Petsinger, Aaron Phillips, Mike Meihak, Sara Meihak, Emma Johnson, and Ashley Killday

Meeting Purpose: Discuss the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy (533: Wellness).

1. Review meeting minutes from 3/18/2025. These were reviewed and approved. They will be posted on the wellness website.
2. Current wellness concerns
 - a. Staff
 - i. Wellness activities
 1. December - Gratitude Tree
 2. January - Wellness Bingo
 3. February - Hydration Challenge
 4. March/April - Healthy Snack Spread
 - ii. Staff Mental Health
 1. SHIP offerings - Carrie Petsinger did apply for the grant in Steele County for the SHIP grant for the calming area/space. NRHEG did receive the grant and was awarded money towards that. This included adult coloring books & pencils, a salt lamp, noise cancelling headphones, mindfulness cards, a yoga mat, foam rollers, a bean bag chair and a zen garden. Carrie worked on this over the summer and early fall and the space is now complete. Staff have been notified via email about the location. Waseca County Public Health also noted that SHIP funding is available through them; however, the grant ideas are open - but typically should focus on mental health and substance use.
 2. Waseca Public Health has been working with United Way to get mental health training in schools. This includes trauma recovery, substance use, suicide awareness prevention, and Youth Mental Health First Aid (which includes Teen Mental Health First Aid (8 hours). Youth Mental Health First Aid Training is available to staff and/or public.
 3. Steele County Public Health was given money to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid. This has not yet been offered to Ellendale paraprofessionals. Ellendale paraprofessionals do have a staff development day available to fill with the mental health first aid. Ashley and

Emma will reach out to determine if the training can be divided into two 4 hour sessions. Or other ways the training can be offered. If NRHEG is able to accommodate the training options, Carrie will fill out the grant application(s).

4. If we would like, the 2 counties can divide the cost to cover the training. United Way in Steele County has a grant but that would only include Ellendale site.
5. Emily Benoit will be coming again in April to talk about surviving a suicide attempt. She has presented in the past.

b. Student

i. Student mental health

1. Teen Mental Health First Aid through public health - This could be offered to Student Council or Reach students so they could be supportive of other students - more of a peer to peer.
2. YOLO group in New Richland has met twice this year. They are currently doing a mental health poster contest. Students will vote on their favorite. Top 3 winners will get a reward. The winner will have the poster professionally printed and displayed in the school with a QR code for mental health resources. There are about 10 students in the group.
3. United Way in Mankato has a HUB which has a lot of resources for families.
4. The YOLO group is looking at presenting to students in grade 4, 6, 8, and 10 on mental health, stress, and vaping.
5. They would also like to do some sort of Mental Health awareness event likely in May during Mental Health Awareness Month.
6. Waseca County offered a calming cart - this would be available for students. It could be a cart or bin that has calming cards, coloring pages, yoga mats, fidgets, etc. It could be stored in the office and checked out when needed in a classroom. Yoga equipment could also be purchased for PE classes.
7. There has been no further discussion about the YOLO group offering training for the 3rd graders on social media. We will continue to discuss that.
8. It was determined that the presentation to the 5th grade would be moved to the 6th grade in the fall.
9. The parent handbook has been made available to both elementary parents and secondary school parents during conferences and open houses.
10. Student Survey Results - The 2025 student survey results have started releasing results and this is the first year every school district in Waseca County has participated in the survey. There were 609 students who took the survey in Waseca County.
11. CADA - presented in the spring.
12. School Board Presentation - regarding student mental health support. YOLO group is considering this but is still in the discussion stages of

planning. Carrie will also discuss the calming room at the school board meeting.

13. [Aaron Phillips](#) mentioned that he feels having an engaging, energetic speaker to talk to the students. Emma mentioned that she will look into this option. Emma Boniet will be talking with students, the YOLO group will look at bringing in a speaker in May. He feels that this needs to be a speaker.
 14. Ashley stated that there is a speaker named Sam that talks to students about mental health.
 15. Carrie mentioned that it might be beneficial to have a monthly speaker - to come and talk with students about mental health monthly. This could be covered by a grant. Carrie will reach out to Mr. Berg about possibly having an hour or 2 each month for a speaker. Emma mentioned that we could also have someone talk about substance use during this time as well. This could be presented to all 6-12th graders or could be divided into middle school/high school to offer different topics in discussions.
3. Roundtable/concerns/questions - Steele County funding is at a pause for SHIP as they are in an assessment phase to determine uses of funds. Steele County SHIP funded the inclusive playground swing. Waseca County SHIP is restructuring and working on the application process. Coming in the 2026-2027 school year there are several new bills/statutes that the school will need to implement. This includes a cardiac emergency policy, mental health policy, and substance use policy. The SHIP grants can be used to pay for signs that help implement these policies. There is some curriculum around biking and Steele County is looking at providing a bike fleet to help implement this training. If all 3 schools are interested in utilizing this curriculum, Steele County would have the bikes and trailer available. Farm to school - Blooming Prairie has shown interest in farm-to-school. They are looking at funding for the greenhouse and purchasing from local farmers. NRHEG school utilizes farm-to-school and receives a grant of approximately \$25,000 for meat, cheese, butter, fruits, and veggies. The grant is from the Department of Agriculture. NRHEG has also gotten grants for equipment. NRHEG greenhouse provides tomatoes and lettuce infrequently. Mrs. Meihak in the past has had a hydroponic garden which worked well for her there.
 4. Next Meeting Date (Must meet 4 times annually)
 - a. March 2026
 - b. May 2026
 5. Meeting Adjourned