

EG Mental Health Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
EGHS Guidance Conference Room
September 29, 2015

In attendance: Amanda Barnes, Peggy Bonk, Lindsay Daskalopoulos, Sharon Foley, Shawna Iannotti, Nina Mackta, Carolyn Mark, Michael Podraza, Brianna Burche, Jazmine Wilding, Mikayla Hutchinson

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions

Carolyn Mark (CM) welcomed everyone back to the new school year. Provided some background on the work of the subcommittee (see summary doc: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dxjezO7qBq-8ljEHOWpLwMF8YMyMb23LvugNw95kuZo/edit?usp=sharing>), and facilitated introductions around the table. We welcomed three students to the group who are interested in working with us as student representatives during the year.

II. Update on EG Strategic Plan

CM provided everyone with an update on the District's strategic planning process. The draft plan presented at the 9/15 school committee meeting can be found here:

<http://egsd.net/files/news/strategicplanreport2015%20%281%29%2Epdf>

Feedback can be sent to carolynmark@mac.com, but needs to be received within the week in order to be considered for the second (and possibly final) draft. CM pointed out that Strategic Priority #4 specifically addresses the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of our students, and thanked the group for their work in raising visibility in this area.

III. Review Program Assessment from 2014/15 School Year - Determine Next Steps

The group reviewed the internal program assessment that was conducted at the end of last year. CM thanked members of the MH subcommittee who facilitated this process, including Rachel Silverman, Mandy Barnes, Lindsay Daskalopoulos, and Ann Hogan. The idea is to use the information gathered to inform our work in the coming year. This document is intended for internal use only at this point, and is not to be shared or distributed:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h7yfdx6PliUOSt39doqiamyZATtIqrMQz7kl87uX6nl/edit?usp=sharing>

Observations from reviewing the document included:

- It's challenging for our MH professionals to find the time to conduct clinical case work. A lot of time is taken up in team meetings which are necessary and important (and oftentimes mandated by law), but it is a constant balancing act. Shawna Iannotti expressed appreciation to the high school guidance staff for the support she gets in managing student needs. Other schools may not have that support.
- We need to more creatively deploy our existing staff or consider adding staff to better meet student needs.
- Need for early intervention in lower grades. Would really help if younger students could develop a common language around mental health much as they have with PBIS so that, as they get older, they are better able to articulate their needs and seek help.
- Students indicated that there needs to be MUCH more visibility of MH professionals in our buildings. Students don't know they exist and wouldn't know who to go to. And, wouldn't feel comfortable going to them because they have no relationship. Ideas include having MH professionals participate in beginning of year assemblies and go around to classrooms to introduce themselves and say what they do and how they can be reached. They also need to be "out and about" more, in the hallways and the cafeteria, building relationships with students.

IV. Other updates

- CM shared that the parent who was going to drive digital updates on the District website has moved out of state. Will need to find other volunteers willing to review and upgrade the online presence of mental health resources in the district.
- Sharon Foley noted that efforts were made to pilot ways of tracking incident rates in schools, but it's become overly complicated. Need to find a simpler way to collect data.

V. Set Goals for 2015/16 School Year

The group brainstormed some ideas for the coming year:

- Upgrade online resources and use district list serve to drive people to the web page. Ensure that the Washington County mental health database is accessible to our community now that it has been updated to include our provider list.
- Ramp up student engagement this year in all aspects of our work.
- Start much earlier planning for Mental Health Awareness Month in May.
- Support school-based efforts to reduce stigma and increase visibility of mental health supports by providing school leadership with some creative ideas/practical tips and sharing best practices across schools.
- ID ways to effectively utilize Mrs. Mackta's 5 student interns in our MH efforts.

- Facilitate a series of community conversations about mental health for students, parents, etc.

VI. Set meeting dates

It was agreed that Tuesdays at 10am were good for most, but that we should send out a doodle poll one more time to pick a different day in the event that it makes sense to alternate.

Additional resources that were shared by members of the Mental Health Subcommittee:

From Cheri Cruz: the release of the Truven Report which includes spending, supply and demand issues in the behavioral health system in RI, as well as recommendations, including school based interventions. Available at: <http://www.eohhs.ri.gov>

Harvard Medical School Mental Health and Education Conference November 6-7, 2015
<http://mentalhealthandeducation.hmscme.com>

Netwalking with Wendy Fachon: www.netwalking.com

RI Natural Awakenings for great articles on healthy living, connecting with nature, and creative ideas to get kids moving by Wendy Fachon in Feb 2014, March 2014, Nov 2014, March 2015, April 2015 and more!: <http://www.rinaturalawakenings.com/natural/>