

Wellness Committee Meeting Minutes
PSMS Library
April 4, 2018

Attendees: see sign in sheet

The meeting opened at 3:35 PM.

1) Welcome & Introductions

2) Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation: Brief presentation by Emily Beulieu. Mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one's attention to experiences occurring in the present moment which can be developed through the practice of medication and training.

- a. Emily Beulieu teaches mindfulness at NMES, K grade. Ideally session are twice/week, but occur mostly once / week. Focus is on mindful breathing where students learn how to focus, how to pay attention when they are acting in a way that others are appreciate so the behavior can be repeated. Students learn to pay attention to their emotions, which helps them self-regulate. Medications that strengthen the front part of the brain. (cognitive responses as opposed to "Lizard Brain" (flight or fight)) are also used.
- b. The work continues in the classroom where teachers implement the practice at the start of the day. Students sit and focus on breathing. Tactile support is provided. Students gain the ability to recognize where emotions are not where they them to be, such as acting out. Teacher have noted a big improvement in the classroom overall.
 - i. One student who could not sit still, could not pay attention will now adjust when he needs to focus.
 - ii. Another student was taught how to manage things that are upsetting and seems to be able to go through lessons and participate more.
- c. Ann Powers commented on the professional learning community at PSHS. Staff groups meet 4 times/year. Half the groups were sharing on emotional issues, mindfulness issues, and interacting with students.

3) School Gardens: Healthy Garden/Heathy ME

- a) Jackie Miller is currently working on a grant for a mobile farmer's market, and provided updates on the garden projects in Plymouth.
 - i) PSHS garden will start in May, a new garden is planned for PSMS.
 - ii) Gardens will be at all 8 elementary schools, each garden has a "Book" that functions as a guide to the garden, its plants, etc.
 - iii) The garden program will continue after school through the Y program
 - iv) Green houses will also be available again this year.
 - v) Plant selection is based on square footage available and gardening principles
 - vi) K cups are recycled and used to start seeds
 - vii) Volunteers are needed to maintain the gardens over summer

4) District Wellness Survey

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- 5) Water Bottle filling Stations
 - a) A request was made by a parent for water bottle filling stations. The PTAs are looking into this; Manomet and South Elementary have already installed one at a cost of ~\$1100. Schools paid for installation and were reimbursed by the PTA. Patrick Van Cott of Food Services noted that all equipment in any of the **new** buildings have filter stations. Water comes from the wells, and is tested on regular basis with good quality. It was noted that per regulations filling stations have to be near a public area: such as the cafeteria.
 - b) Discussion indicate that in Massachusetts, 50% of the cities do not have fluoridated water. Plymouth does not have fluoridated water due to the fact that there are several wells that the town uses, as along with private wells. Since the town cannot fluoridate all the wells, fluoride is not added to any wells which levels the playing field; no one has fluoride in their water.
 - c) Water is not given out at lunch per regulations, since it has no nutritional value. Water at lunch is an additional purchase. It was generally noted that there is a water inequity across district: who allows/doesn't allow water in gym, classroom, etc.

- 6) Allergy-safe lunches at PNHS
 - a) Patrick Van Cott noted that at PNHS, there were allergy-safe lunches. This was a program that ran as a partnership with a DECA team. The program ran from December thru June and sold a minimal number of meals on a daily basis. The program lost money and is no longer in use. For safety concerns, there is still a point of service alert at the check-out register.
 - b) Another DECA project that address life threatening allergies was a book developed by 2 student. The book is now being read at NMES. It was presented to the nurses at a PD session, and a request was made to have a copy in each health office.

- 7) Summer Eats, Summer Meals:
 - a) Angela Brown of Project Bread noted that Project Bread is working on stopping hunger in Massachusetts, and provided some interesting statistics. 1 out of 10 deals with food issues and paying for food. 1 out of 7 of these are children. During the summer, food insecurity rises to 1 out of 3. To address this, there is a focus on increasing the number of students that participate in school breakfast.
 - b) Summer Eats is a summer food service program. There are 4 different sites which children can go and get meals for free. There is no requirement for verification of income. Posters were viewed by the group announcing the program. It was noted that Summer Eats is most successful when accompanied by a program.
 - c) Access to Summer Eats (getting to the food) is issue. A grant is available for innovative materials that capture the audience, making sure parents know where these programs are, with multiple points of contact that can provide information on the closest sites to individuals. Information also goes out to students kids at end of school year. Food Services supplies all the schools with flyers, etc. Various suggestions to increase access included: a food truck, development of meet-up sites with distribution of a brown bag lunch, a shuttle bus, a site at Manomet Elementary and/or the library. Hedge school is an open summer site. Anyone can go there and eat.

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Patrick Van Cott noted that 34% of the district is on free or reduced meals. ~20% of those take advantage of Summer Eats.

- 8) Vaping, BOH regulations around vaping:
- a) Barry Potvin raised the issue of vaping and the negative aspects of vaping. It was recently noted that there are noxious metals in vaping, including arsenic. Vaping is currently a problem in schools; most students use in the bathrooms. However, given that the jules are innocuous in appearance vaping can be done almost anywhere.
 - b) There is a bill before the Massachusetts Senate, filed in January 2017 with a strong recommendation from the Public Health Committee to raise the purchasing age to 21 years. However, Ways & Means expressed concerns regarding the loss of revenue from tobacco product purchases. Of note, all the towns surrounding Plymouth have a purchase age of 21; Plymouth does not. It was suggested to pressure the Plymouth Board of Health, whose members are appointed by the Selectmen, to moved forward and address the problem
 - c) An extended discussion on vaping and the effects on community followed. Various suggestions offered to promote non-use.
 - i) Since tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana are the biggest gateway drugs, offer one week where all the school across the district conduct programs on drug use/abuse, using the same materials/programs and provide the programs at the same time for a consistent message.
 - ii) Conduct supplemental program for grades K thru 5 on drugs use/abuse.
 - iii) 3% tax on marijuana, to be proposed at the Town Meeting
- 9) Miscellaneous: PE and ME poster contest from AHA
- 10) Next Meeting: June 6, 2018, last meeting of the year

The meeting adjourned: 5:07

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia M. Curcio