

BOE Social Emotional Health & Wellness Committee Minutes

Friday, January 28, 2022, 9:30am

BOE Conference Room

3 Primrose St., Newtown, CT 06470

Present: Janet Kuzma (chair), Jennifer Larkin (member), Deborra Zukowski (member), Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue (superintendent), and one member of the public.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by Ms. Kuzma.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review Committee Description & Purpose

All agreed with the language as presented at the regular BoE meeting on 12/21/22 and approve on 01/04/22.

2. Set Committee Goals for 2022

The committee agreed to the following goals:

- Acclimate the new Health and Wellness Coordinator to the committees
- Understand and support the coordinator's efforts including district-level services as well as partnerships with town and community service providers.
- Understand the current status of the social-emotional health of students and staff within the context of school programming and how that status is ascertained.
- Better define what "social-emotional" entails and how it is symbiotic with the district's Social Emotional Learning efforts.
- Audit current programming related to social-emotional health and wellness
- Listen, support, and communicate related programming, resources, and impact.

3. Mental Health & Wellness Days

A document dated Jan 24, 2022 from the CT State Department of Education about Mental Health Wellness Days was shared by Dr. Rodrigue. It states, in part:

"For the school year commencing July 1, 2021, and each school thereafter, a local or regional board of education shall permit any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, to take two mental health wellness days during the school year, during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school days."

4. Meeting Calendar for 2022

All members and Dr. Rodrigue agreed to meeting at 9:30 am on the fourth Friday of every month excepting July. If a meeting coincided with a holiday, the meeting would be moved to the fifth Friday of the month, if available, or could be replaced with a special meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Dr Rodrigue said that the Health and Wellness Coordinator will be considered a part of the Administrative Team (aka the A-Team).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jennifer Padilla, 32 Glen Road loves the committee and supports that the Health and Wellness Coordinator will be a part of the committee. She offered that the committee keep open the possibility of the use of an outside audit source, that could supply professionals to assist when problems arise. She also questioned if the information from the Anonymous Alerts App would be represented in EduClimber. Finally, she expressed concerns about current student behaviors and hopes the team might help uncover their roots.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms Zukowski moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 am, seconded by Ms. Larkin. Motion passed unanimously.

Social Emotional Health & Wellness Committee

Newtown public schools recognize that there are beneficial long term and short term outcomes from implementing Social Emotional Health & Wellness programs within our district. Research has shown benefits that include improved academic performance, college readiness, career readiness, positive mental health, positive social behaviors, and healthy adult relationships. The district's social emotional framework outlines 5 competencies that are monitored and measured throughout the school year - self awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self management, and responsible decision making. School leadership teams analyze data at the school level to determine areas in need of improvement and develop action plans. School counselors also review data to inform decisions regarding types of lessons to offer in the classroom and types of support they can offer to students throughout the year.

1. Work with the Superintendent and Health and Wellness Coordinator to prioritize social-emotional programs and practices that impact students' well being.
2. Establish and sustain a culture that supports mental health services for all staff, students, and families.
3. Assess district and community resources to ensure mental health services are accessible to all members of the school community.
4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of district health and wellness policies and protocols.
5. Provide regular feedback to the Board of Education and recommend changes or modifications to the district's health and wellness program for board approval.