

WELLNESS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Submitted by Beverly Shea, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
6/12/15

Co-Chairs: Beverly Shea, PPS Director and Patricia Smith, Coordinator of Health Services

Wellness Representatives:

Cedar School- Maura Dowling, Nurse

Hanover High School- Sue Egan, School Psychologist and Guidance Director

Center School- Carol Krall, Nurse

Hanover Middle School- Shelley Ireland, P.E. and Wellness teacher

The Wellness Committee met four times during the 2014/15 school year, with Wellness representatives from each building. Additionally, many of our School Psychologists, P.E. and Wellness teachers, representatives from the FACE program, School Nurses, parents, and others have chosen to participate in our Wellness meetings on a regular basis, creating a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and develop Wellness initiatives on behalf of our students, staff and families.

Last year the committee identified stress reduction as an area of primary concern and need for our students. In order to address that need, our Coordinator of Health Services, Patricia Smith, made a strong connection with the **Benson Henry Institute** for Mind Body Medicine, and brought one of their Educational Initiatives to the Hanover district. A representative of the institute provided 2 days of professional development to a group of staff members, who in turn will ultimately bring the stress reduction techniques back to their buildings to share with other staff and to incorporate into the fabric of the work we do with students on a regular basis.

Included in this packet of information is a summary written by Sarah Kelser, the school psychologist at Cedar School, who describes some of the work she has begun to do at Cedar to incorporate what she learned in the professional development sessions and apply it directly to her work with students. The group who attended the training will gather together again to discuss next steps and how to best apply what they have learned to their work at the building level with students and staff.

This year, Mrs. Shea was also able to arrange for the Benson Henry representative to speak to parents in the evening as part of our Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) workshop series.

Other areas of focus this year for the Wellness Committee included the **Youth Risk Survey**, which was administered to the 8th graders on June 10, 2015, with a great deal of thoughtful preparation for students and parents. Just a few students opted out, and all students were encouraged to seek support from the adults if needed, but it went very smoothly, without incident. The state will share results with us in September of 2015.

Finally, the committee continues to discuss **addiction** and how to better educate and support students and families dealing with these challenges. Our plan is to partner with our police and fire department next year to better assess the impact on our community and to put together a joint plan for offering information, resources, and support to our school community and the Hanover community at large.

It has been a great pleasure to work with the Wellness Committee this year. I am very appreciative of the dedication of our group, and look forward to continuing our work together in the 2015/16 school year.