

Wellness Advisory Committee

New Milford Public Schools

50 East Street

New Milford, CT 06776

Date: October 26, 2019

Time: 3:45-5:00 PM

Place: Sarah Noble Intermediate School, LMC

Meeting Notes:

Present: **Committee Co-Chairs:** Laura Olson, Anne Bilko, Jane Danish

Committee Members: Alex Amaru, Christine Benson, Anne Bilko, Michelle Bouchard, Angela Chastain, Debbie Clark, Justin Cullimer, Bill Dahl, Jane Danish, Alsiha DiCorpo, Ashley Dovale, Gwen Gallagher, Stacey Kabasakalian, Michelle MacDonnell, Julianne Morin, Barbara Morris, Lynn Nissenbaum, Sasha Salem, Mariann Schirizzo, Sandra Sullivan, Lisa Tarsa, Betsy Thibodeau, Len Tomasello

1. Call to order- Laura Olson

2. Public Comment None

3. Items of Information

A. Mindfulness Activity- Anne Bilko

- Anne Bilko modeled a mindfulness activity
- Mindfulness moment is an easy way to help with self regulation daily

- Teachers can use these activities to aid with being ready to transition and deal with worries/emotions, quick and easy activities that are 1-2 minutes
- Staff can google a variety of mindfulness activities
- Mindfulness is useful for staff wellness as well
- Discussion regarding staff wellness as focus for all schools

B. Camilia's Cupboard Update- Angela Chastain

- Last summer began with daily meal bags- about approx. 120-130 total
- Weekend bags continue on Fri. nights at East St. about 165 signed up
- Started including a family meal to weeknd bags to promote family togetherness
- Snacks at elementary schools continue
- Christine Benson shared that HS student council are planning a holiday fundraiser to benefit Camilia's Cupboard
- Angela Chastain provided information regarding ways to access support Camilia's Cupboard and how it operates- for more information go to website-Camilia'sCupboard.com

C. August Professional Development Overview/Copper Beech- Laura Olson

- Professional development day on 8/23 was focused on themes of Mindfulness, Mental Health and Wellness
- Keynote speaker Sean Ellis and speaker Dr. Brandon Knappy emphasised the mantra of "thrive not survive" as a way of looking at the new school year
- Mindfulness in the classroom and mastering the moment were topics discussed
- Breakout sessions for counselors discussing the Choose Love Curriculum were run by Dr. Tomesello and Lisa Tarsa
- Social workers and Psychologists met with Dr. Davis Aversa to discuss trends and topics in mental health
- The overall theme and message was well received and resonated with staff

D. Legal Updates: Administration of Medication- Betsy Thibodeau

- There are three main changes in the law regarding administration of medication

- The first change is that students can now self carry epipens, inhalers, etc. but still require a physician's order and parent consent to self possess medication
- The second change is that school bus drivers are now trained on administration of epipens and on identification of an allergic reaction in case of emergency (all district drivers are trained)
- The third change is that administration of sunscreen for students age 6 and older now only requires parent consent as opposed to physician's order and parent consent which was required previously

E. Upcoming Wellness Policy Revisions- Sandra Sullivan

- State required triennial assessment of Wellness policy to be done by 6/20/20 and is not to be confused with State Administration review which looks at the lunch program
- Policy goals in regard to nutrition promotion, exercise, marketing to students, etc. are assessed
- Our policy will be compared to a model policy, examples can be found at Healthiergeneration.org
- On 12/10/19 Laura Olson and Sandra Sullivan will attend a workshop to review our current policy and compare it to a model policy- they will report their findings to the committee after this workshop

F. Vaping Update-Christine Benson

- Review of substance abuse unit at NMHS- 5 weeks with 80 minute class periods
- Topics/activities in the unit include-toxic chemicals, documentary on dangers of vaping, article on vaping, student reflection and parent comment/signature of information
- Anti-vaping campaign on Green Wave TV and other avenues to get message out
- Various devices and methods of use were discussed-ex. One Juul pod has 59 milligrams of nicotine
- Current trend is that vaping is increasing in HS and MS students
- A survey among HS students shows that students believe that vaping devices only contain flavoring

- Lung disease, chronic bronchiolitis, emphysema, and popcorn lung are all conditions attributed to vaping and 33 lives to date have been lost according to the CDC
- Discussion of programs that will be done in schools to address vaping dangers and addressing mental health needs underlying addiction such as Red Ribbon Campaign (SADD students teach coping skills to SNIS classes), Kick Butts Campaign in March, Wingman program(SMS/HS), Choose Love lessons (K-8) and displays at conferences outlining the dangers of vaping
- NMCAN will be reviewing survey data related to vaping and will discuss results

G. Choose Love Curriculum- Dr. Tomasello and Lisa Tarsa

- K-8 students will be learning the Choose Love Curriculum
- The Curriculum is a free curriculum designed by Scarlett Lewis, a parent who lost her son in the Sandy Hook tragedy, and teaches students social emotional skills (she will be at SMS faculty meeting on 11/12)
- There are four core values that the program espouses: Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness, and Compassion in Action, students learn that all of these added together equals choosing love
- The curriculum includes lessons, activities, language/visuals to be used in hallways, writing journals, pre/post unit student surveys, informational letters to parents/guardians and other staff

4. End of meeting summary/Adjourn-Laura Olson

- New co-chairs of committee surveyed members to determine the committee's focus for this year as it will be more of a community forum/ also shared there are 2 more meetings this year
- Meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm by Laura Olson

Respectfully Submitted By:  Jane Danish

Respectfully Submitted By:  Anne Bilko

Respectfully Submitted By:  Laura Olson