Student Wellness, Behavioral Support, and Prevention Initiatives

Professional Learning and Student Support

This year, the Student Wellness Department, in collaboration with the Special Education Department, has developed targeted professional learning opportunities for Social-Emotional Advocates. Training focuses on four key areas: understanding the root causes and functions of behavior, implementing interventions and strategies aligned to those functions, applying practical strategies to support diverse learners, and collaborative problem-solving.

The Student Wellness Department also continues to serve as a resource for school-based student services teams, providing support during student mental health and behavioral crises and assisting families with referrals to community health providers.

Bullying Prevention and Reporting

Throughout the past month, elementary schools have focused on teaching students the skills necessary to recognize, prevent, and respond to bullying. Using the CharacterStrong social-emotional learning curriculum, schools are reinforcing the importance of being an "upstander"—someone who speaks up and supports peers who may be experiencing bullying. Students and families are encouraged to report concerns about bullying to teachers or school administrators.

To strengthen the district's ability to monitor and respond to bullying incidents, a new documentation protocol has been implemented. Because Oregon Department of Education (ODE) discipline codes categorize incidents under harassment, threat/intimidation, or physical aggression rather than a distinct bullying category, administrators will now include the phrase "ongoing bullying" in applicable discipline incident records within Synergy. This change will allow for more accurate tracking and reporting of bullying incidents moving forward. Previous years' data relied on interpretations of incident descriptions within existing ODE discipline categories and may not fully reflect the number of bullying incidents.

Crisis Prevention and De-Escalation Training

The Student Wellness Department has coordinated seven Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training opportunities for the school year, with 234 staff members currently certified. MSD has seven certified CPI trainers, and staff certifications remain valid for two years.

To strengthen onboarding and preparedness, newly hired Special Education staff are now required to complete the online portion of CPI training before beginning classroom assignments.

Additionally, the Special Education Department has introduced **Ukeru**, a trauma-informed, restraint-free crisis response approach, within the district's self-contained programs. This training equips staff with strategies to prevent escalation, respond safely to physically aggressive behaviors, and preserve student dignity and positive relationships with adults.

Alternatives to Suspension: Substance Use Intervention and Support

An Alternative to Suspension program has been fully implemented across all secondary schools, building on work initiated during the latter part of last school year. The program provides a supportive, intervention-focused response for students involved in substance use incidents.

Through a partnership coordinated by the Student Wellness Department and Crisis Prevention Manager Jill Jeter, eligible students found in possession of substances are offered a substance use assessment and on-site counseling through Continuum, provided by a certified alcohol and drug counselor, as an alternative to out-of-school suspension.

This program is provided at no cost to the Medford School District through a partnership supported by the City of Medford's opioid settlement funding. The approach prioritizes early intervention, access to treatment resources, and opportunities for students to remain engaged in their education while addressing substance use concerns.