

January, 2014

Existing Becker School District Mental Health Intervention Programs

- *The school district has been working with SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) since last summer to provide social-emotional support for our students. SAVE is a national organization that provides research-based and best practice recommendations to prevent suicides.*
- *High school students who were friends of the students that died by suicide in February and July participated in a discussion group last August. The Chaplain from the Sherburne County Sheriff's Office, a High School Counselor, and the Assistant High School Principal, facilitated the discussion. The discussion format used the SAVE protocol. The purpose was to provide emotional support and encourage students to make healthy choices.*
- *A SAVE representative provided training for all school staff last August. The training informed staff of indicators that students may exhibit suggesting they are in need of mental health support. Additional resources were provided to the school staff, which included how to refer students in need of help.*
- *The high school teachers have provided SAVE materials, and information related to the socio-emotional wellbeing of students during weekly advisory time.*
- *A Healthy Community Event occurred last October 24th. The event was advertised in the local newspaper, the school website, and an e-mail invitation was sent to all school district parents. A resource fair preceded the event. Sherburne County, the school, churches, and several mental health agencies had tables, information, and personnel available during the resource fair. The program featured the national SAVE director, and a panel discussion, which included students, parents, mental health professionals, and a law enforcement representative.*
- *A student grief group started last March after the first suicide. The group was facilitated by a high school counselor, met for several months, and some students continue to meet.*
- *A second grief group, which includes a different group of students has been organized. The group will continue to meet as long as it is needed. Students who would like to join this group should contact a high school counselor.*
- *An anxiety support group for students began in October and continues to meet on a regular basis. This group supports students with anxiety issues. Students who would like to participate in this opportunity should contact the guidance office.*
- *The school district has partnered with community mental health agencies to provide additional support for students when they are in crisis. Approximately 30 students have been referred so far this year. Many of these students are success stories.*

- *The high school health curriculum provides mental health coping skills for students and includes strategies to help students make responsible choices. Furthermore, the school district is in the process of reviewing the K-12 curriculum to ensure we are providing appropriate social and emotional wellbeing support for our students.*
- *The school district has partnered with Dylan's Hope, a local non-profit organization. They have provided funding for individual student counseling, the community forum in October, and the student support groups.*
- *The school district is an active participant in the Sherburne County Substance Use Prevention Coalition. This county-wide alliance is working to decrease chemical usage among young people. For example a recent survey shows that only 60% of Becker High School 11th graders did not use alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs during the past year. Furthermore, of the 11th grade boys who use alcohol, 54% obtained it from their parents or other family members.*
- *The Becker Safe Schools Committee meets quarterly to address at risk behavior by Becker students. The committee includes numerous county and local agencies.*
- *The school district just began a new partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health. They will be providing a Psychological First Aid (PFA) program for our high school staff on December 13. This intervention is designed to reduce the psychological stress, so staff members are better able to assist students.*
- *Nancy Riestenberg, The School Climate Specialist at The Minnesota Department of Education will meet with the Becker School administrators on January 3rd. She will share information about All Hazards planning framework which focuses on prevention, intervention, response and recovery.*
- *The BHS WeCare Club was formed at the end of November. The mission of BHS WeCare Club is to inspire learning and action that supports student citizenship and creates tangible change in our school, community and around the world. The WeCare Club is open to any BHS student who is willing to make a commitment to meet at least once a week, possibly before school or during lunch, and to participate in our group volunteer efforts. Recently the club completed 2500 notes of kindness to students and staff.*