

March 3, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians:

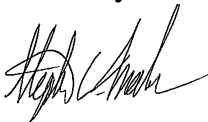
The Becker School District is committed to the social and emotional wellbeing of every student. As we advance our mission to prepare self-directed learners to thrive in a changing global community, it is important that every child feel safe and comfortable within our schools. Our staff is dedicated to maintaining a positive school climate. We want to collaborate with you to ensure your child has an excellent school experience whereby he or she can reach her potential.

Our School District has adopted policies that protect the social and emotional wellbeing of students. For example Policy 514 Bullying Prohibition states that “an act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school related functions or activities, or on school transportation.” Also, Policy 413 Harassment and Violence states that “the school district prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

The pages that follow describe the resources available at each of our schools to assist you and your child with social or emotional concerns. Contact information is also provided for you to seek assistance at each of our schools.

Feel free to contact me if the resources we are providing do not resolve a particular issue. I look forward to our continued partnership with parents as we work together to ensure a quality education for each of our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen L. Malone".

**Dr. Stephen L. Malone**  
Superintendent

March 2016

**Becker School District Mental Health Intervention Programs**

- The school district has been working with SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) since 2013 to provide social-emotional support for our students. SAVE is a national organization that provides research-based and best practice recommendations to prevent suicides.
- A SAVE representative provided training for all school staff in August of 2014. The training informed staff of indicators, which 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 and information related to the socio-emotional wellbeing of students.
- A Healthy Community Event took place in the fall of 2014 and 2015. 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 2014 program featured the national SAVE director, and a panel discussion, which included students, parents, mental health professionals, and a law enforcement representative. The 2015 program featured Kevin Hines, an award-winning global speaker, bestselling author, suicide prevention and mental health advocate who reaches audiences with his story of an unlikely survival and his strong will to live. Two years after he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, he attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge.
- Student grief groups are formed after a student death. A counselor facilitates the groups for several months or as long as needed.
- The 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 updating the K-12 health curriculum to ensure we are providing appropriate social and emotional wellbeing support for our students.
- The school district just began a new partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health. They provide a Psychological First Aid (PFA) program for school staff after a crisis. 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 met with the Becker School administrators last year. She shared information about All Hazards planning framework which focuses on prevention, intervention, response and recovery.
- TRAK (Together Reaching Area Kids) was formed in the fall of 2013. Membership includes Becker School Staff, Dylan's Hope Foundation, Becker Police Department, Spiritual Leaders, Sherburne County Health and Human Services, Parents, Mental Health Professionals, CentraCare, Sherburne County Sheriff's Department, and Sherburne County Probation. The committee was formed in response to concerns for the youth of the Becker Community. TRAK activities to date include Healthy Community Events and Resource Fairs, sending students to the MN High School Suicide Prevention Youth Summit, sending school staff members to be trained by the SEARCH Institute <http://www.search-institute.org> conducting a developmental assets survey of all Becker students and establishing goals to increase developmental assets, and hosting a community events to explain and promote the developmental assets.

## High School

- The Becker High School Wellness Center - We have partnered with community mental health agencies to provide additional support for students when they are in crisis. Services provided include individual counseling, chemical health education, truancy prevention, and nutrition awareness. The Becker HS Wellness Center has service agreements with the following counseling providers: Sharon Kuhlmann Counseling, Lutheran Social Services, Family Prospective Resources, and Barbara Tollefson Counseling. A partnership with CMMHC is being explored. More information is on the website <https://sites.google.com/a/isd726.org/beckerschools/schools-1/high-school/wellness-center>.
- The Becker HS food shelf is providing food on a regular basis to approximately 5 families. Counseling staff within the Wellness Center also has access to food/snacks to ensure their clients have a positive experience.
- An anxiety support group for students began in October of 2014 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 “WeCare Club” - The mission of the 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 meet at least once a quarter during lunch and to participate in our group volunteer efforts. Recently the club completed 2500 notes of kindness to students and staff.
- 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 showed that 60% of Becker High School 11<sup>th</sup> graders did not use alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs during the past year. Furthermore, of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade boys who use alcohol, 54% obtained it from their parents or other family members.
- This year our high school started the DREAM (Drug Related Education and Awareness Mentors) team. They are a group of students committed to be drug and alcohol free and encourage others to do the same.
- The high school health curriculum provides mental health coping skills for students and includes strategies to help students make responsible choices.
- Dylan’s Hope Foundation is a local non-profit organization, which brings awareness about suicide and mental illness. The school district has partnered with Dylan’s Hope to fund individual student counseling, student support groups, and other mental health initiatives in our schools including the Health Community Event, which addressed mental health issues last October.
- Becker Safe Schools Committee meets quarterly to address at risk behavior exhibited by students. The committee includes numerous county and local agencies.
- Becker Middle School and High School were among the first area schools to introduce the TXT4LIFE program to its students. This program allows for 24/7 access to mental health counselors via texting. Becker Schools share a close working relationship with the program’s host agency, the Four County Crisis Response Team (CRT). Research shows that during an average month, the CRT receives approximately 1,000 phone calls and less than 10 are from the age demographic ages 12-24; therefore, having access to texting based support is critical to meet the needs of these age demographics.
- Becker HS contracts with Recovery Plus to host a Chemical Health Educator during the school year for 4 hours per week. The CHE meets with students and is also a resource for parents. In addition, she helps students access Rule 25 and private insurance chemical dependency assessments.
- Becker Middle School and High School adopted Project Northland and Class Action curriculum this year through the SCSUPC. Staff from both the MS and HS were trained in this program.

Becker is the only school district in Sherburne County to adopt this Hazelden curriculum which research shows has an impact on lowering alcohol and marijuana usage among students.

- Each November, BHS conducts a student advocate survey where students identify adults within the school with whom they have a strong connection. For students without a strong connection, the guidance staff meets with students to develop relationships and encourage participation within the school. Each staff member is provided a list of the students who identify with them.
- An anxiety support group for students began in October of 2014 and continues to meet as needed. This group supports students with anxiety issues. Students who would like to participate in this opportunity should contact the high school guidance office.
- Anonymous online reporting for bullying is available at <https://beckerschools.wufoo.com/forms/bullying/>
- For assistance with your child's social emotional needs or to learn more about available programs, please contact: Sandy Logrono, Principal (763 261 4501) [slogrono@isd726.org](mailto:slogrono@isd726.org); Mark Kolbinger, Assistant Principal (763 261 4501) [mkolbinger@isd726.org](mailto:mkolbinger@isd726.org); Heather Eigen, School Counselor (763) 261 4501, ext 3121) (Students with last names A-K), [heigen@isd726.org](mailto:heigen@isd726.org); Margaret Smude, School Counselor (763-261-4501 ext. 3125), (Students with last names L-Z) [msmude@isd726.org](mailto:msmude@isd726.org);

### **Middle School**

- Check and Connect is a program for students with attendance issues. Through daily contact with at risk students, staff members determine causes for absences and address issues with families such as anxiety and friendship issues.
- Partnered with Four County Crisis Response to make a crisis phone line (320-253-5555) that is available 24/7. Parents or students can connect with mental health specialists who are available to provide immediate support as well as obtain information about ongoing services and other resources.
- On Thursday, February 25th, a resource table was available in middle school commons during parent/teacher/student conferences. Information for parents relating to dealing with grief and talking with children about death and dying was available.
- The Becker Middle School Community promotes academic achievement and success through the three R's: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and RELATIONSHIPS. This serves as the foundation of our school.
- Becker Middle School is building a Multi Tiered System of Support. Our Tier I programming targets effective practices for building a healthy learning community and culture. It is research based and follows the principles of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. The philosophy and strategies utilized throughout the building are aimed at promoting a positive and caring culture that values, recognizes, and rewards respectful and caring behavior toward others. Programming such as Matrix Minutes and Wednesday morning community meetings focuses on topics relevant to early adolescence and developing skills necessary to be successful in the middle school years and beyond.
- Victoria Powell, Asst. County Attorney, delivers a powerful presentation to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders about bullying and provides students strategies to stop bullying as well as ways to deal with bullying.
- The School Liaison Officer serves as a resource to assist administrators and staff address matters of safety that have the potential of negatively impacting the learning environment.
- The media specialist teachers provide information to students about internet safety and responsible use of technology including discussions about the consequences of bullying through the internet and with cell phones.
- Becker Middle School administrators review the bullying policy at the beginning of each year with teachers and students and repeat the message with each grade level either quarterly or at a minimum, at the beginning of first and second semesters.

- Becker Middle School administrators follow the district policy for addressing bullying. When appropriate, middle school students are referred to attend the County Bullying Intervention Program conducted by the Asst. County Attorney, Victoria Powell.
- Safe Space training was provided to district principals and other administration as well as district mental health team members in the fall of 2015. The trainers provided data and information pertaining to sexual orientation and bullying as well as strategies for educators/schools to address and prevent bullying relating to sexual orientation.
- Mental health and various aspects of safety are addressed within our middle school core curriculum in classes such as Health 7, Life Skills 7 & 8, PE, Media, and Tech Ed.
- The Text for Life program is introduced to 7th graders as a resource available for individuals in crisis.
- Anonymous online reporting for bullying is available at <https://beckerschools.wufoo.com/forms/bullying/>
- For assistance with your child's social / emotional needs or to learn more about available programs, please contact: Nancy Helmer, Principal (763 261 6333) [nhelmer@isd726.org](mailto:nhelmer@isd726.org); Chantel Boyer, Assistant Principal (763 261 6333) [cboyer@isd726.org](mailto:cboyer@isd726.org); Julie Fox, Counselor (763 261 6333) [jfox@isd726.org](mailto:jfox@isd726.org)

### **Intermediate School**

- Partnering with Solutions Counseling to provide small grief group therapy. Groups are meeting 3 days per week. Solutions Counseling is also providing intense individual trauma therapy for students in need.
- Collaborating with Central MN Mental Health: provided a parent workshop to discuss grief, loss, and provide area resources.
- Central MN Mental Health provided staff with information on grief and loss for children.
- Additional school psychologists were provided by the Sherburne Wright Special Educational Cooperative to staff comfort rooms for students and staff in the days following the loss of a student.
- Providing additional structured daily activity time for 5th graders.
- Parents received resources, including children's literature suggestions to parents for dealing with grief and loss.
- Provided research based perseverance and resiliency education for all students in the fall of 2015 using criterion from The Search Institute.
- Trained specialists taught 6 research-based lessons to every classroom last fall to increase students' social, emotional and behavioral skills.
- Weekly school-wide Team Rock meetings focusing on building a positive school climate, anti-bullying, respect, and citizenship.
- Mission Mondays is a video sent weekly out to students, families and staff to promote social and emotional wellbeing, positive behavior, and how to report inappropriate behavior.
- Student groups meet daily to learn perseverance skills (GRIT Group), social/friendship skills (Lunch Buddies), engagement (Ready to Learn) and relationship/connection skills (Rock Hounds).
- Check and Connect is a program for students with attendance issues. Through daily contact with at risk students, staff members determine causes for absences and address issues with families such as anxiety and friendship issues.
- Every Student, Every Day - Staff greet every student at the door every day to build a relationship of trust.
- Anonymous online reporting for bullying is available at <https://beckerschools.wufoo.com/forms/bullying/>

- For assistance with your child’s social / emotional needs or to learn more about available programs, please contact: Dr. Christine Glomski, Principal (763 261 4504) [cglomski@isd726.org](mailto:cglomski@isd726.org); Mark Graham, Behavior Interventionist (763 261 4504) [mgraham@isd726.org](mailto:mgraham@isd726.org)

### **Primary School**

- A school wide Positive Behavior System "Being your Bulldog Best" focuses on helping students to be kind, caring, ready and safe. School wide expectations are taught using a matrix that is reinforced every Wednesday at Bulldog Pack meetings.
- A character education program uses a “word of the week” to build vocabulary and character education.
- A Therapist, Tonya Dolly, is in the building to assist students and families in need. This is funded through a Bridges Collaborative Grant.
- The Behavior Specialist teaches the Second Step program to Kindergarten students to help build positive social and behavior skills.
- The Behavior Specialist works with small groups of students using The Second Steps and Check and Connect programs to support at risk students.
- Anonymous online reporting for bullying is available at <https://beckerschools.wufoo.com/forms/bullying/>
- For assistance with your child’s social emotional needs or to learn more about available programs, please contact: Dale Christensen, Principal (763 261 6330) [dchristensen@isd726.org](mailto:dchristensen@isd726.org); Nicholas Jacobs, Behavior Interventionist (763 261 6330) [njacobs@isd726.org](mailto:njacobs@isd726.org)