

## Mental Health Progress report

When the teachers arrived back to school, the Behavior Specialist, Nery Cenicerros, and I completed 3 individual 2 hour trainings, with one hour devoted to Behavioral RTI, and the second hour devoted to Trauma-Informed Care, for each of the grades PK-6. In addition, BMS welcomed a training regarding Trauma informed care, and all schools have requested additional information. BHS has 2 trainings scheduled on October 11, including a training with a behavioral focus, and one with a trauma-informed and emotional safety component. The DAEP staff is invited to attend both of these trainings with an additional focus on de-escalation strategies in the afternoon. Discussion is pending regarding an afternoon Elementary school training.

Community meetings have been scheduled and Ms. Cenicerros and I have had the opportunity to meet with Accel Health, where we discussed bringing a substance abuse small group class to our DAEP, and CFLR where we discussed the various resources available there as well, including a teen anger management group, and the emergency services as well. One CFLR representative is conducting 2 of the trainings on Oct 11<sup>th</sup>.

2 students have been struggling severely in their educational setting, creating issues of runaway and self-harm. We are working with Northwest and Coggin Intermediate on implementation of a Rage 2 Reason program to teach these children skills including communication through verbal language, and forethought before decision making. There have been frequent changes to the staff serving one of the children, and this has required some additional training.

The behavioral specialist, myself, and the counselors from each campus have developed a tiered system to evaluate the progress of each student, and identified a referral system for students on each campus. Currently, the majority of students will be referred through Tier 3 of the Behavioral RTI system, though counselors may utilize discretion in their requests for students who do not show behavioral issues in the event of concern. Those students will be staffed individually.

A grant was written and submitted on September 13, 2019 to the Chan Zuckerberg foundation, requesting \$620,700 over the course of 2 years for the purpose of educating and training staff regarding the building blocks of learning, which includes many of the goals of creating a mentally healthy environment. The goal is to focus on building up the whole child by providing in depth training in mass to grades 5-12. We are waiting to hear if we have made it to the final round, for additional questioning.

\*Unfortunately, due to last minute and unpredicted staffing changes, our special education department found themselves in need of a counselor working full time to complete the ARD-mandated special education counseling. While my position was expected to be part time sped counseling, it was unanticipated that another staff would leave so close to the school year, and her counseling load would require completion as well. At this time, I have been serving as the special education counselor full time to ensure services are provided until one can be hired.

This, of course, was not the original intention nor is it the long term plan, but services are legally required to be provided. A part time LSSP has been hired to assist in assessment and evaluation. Posting of a full time counselor was approved, but was delayed due to the sudden health concerns of our Special Education Director. The position has now been posted, and there have been 2 people express sincere interest in the position, and intention to apply. I have answered numerous questions from each. Fortunately, due to my having filled this role the first of the school year, and having been a special education counselor in the past, I am now in a position to fully train the incoming employee, whomever that may be as to how to appropriately meet the needs of this position. I am grateful to be able to provide this service after our Director's recent passing.

Next steps include:

Training new special education counselor upon her hire, and introducing served students.

Connecting with New Horizons STAR program.

Implementation of services suggested through local agencies.

Continued progress with 2 students through Rage to Reason Program.

Acquiring a list of struggling students through behavioral RTI and counseling referrals.

Learning of Grant progress, and acting accordingly.

After speaking with BHS and BMS counselors, we are going to create a reporting system for concerned students utilizing a QR code that students may fill out to report a concern regarding another student directly to counseling staff or myself as appropriate.

Danielle Howard, M.Ed., LPC  
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