

Health Committee Notes January 10, 2023

The regular meeting of the Health Committee was held on January 10, 2023 on Zoom Meeting Platform and called to order by Erin Hamilton and Leo Suazo Negron at 3:04 PM.

Present: Sherry and Tad Bartles, Erin Hamilton, Donna Koser, Melissa LoSchiavo, Donna Osuch, Kristen Peck, Leo Suazo Negron, Tina Tanguay, Rachael Witkewicz

Welcome and introductions

Guest Speaker Melissa LoSchiavo, Ivy Drive School Psychologist on Behavioral Health in the schools (discussion summarized below with actionable items in bold):

- Influx of mental health concerns since Covid
- It can take months to see a practitioner
- Children seem to be having more open discussions about therapists and are able to ask for help
- Not enough mental health professionals to help
- Social impact since pandemic – not at same level as before
- 1st graders at Ivy need lots of support
- Wish could change curriculum for young children, but that won't happen
 - Community programs could be flexible and have social/emotional curriculum be forefront
 - Young children need to get used to structure, curriculum and demands of kindergarten as they increase every year
 - **Talk to families about importance of play and model appropriate emotional reactions** – help parents to understand
- Technology makes it challenging
- Children come to preschool not wanting to wear shoes, clothes, not toilet-trained, using bottles
- **What could FRC do to help?**
- **Does Wheeler Clinic have information?**
- **Share videos and resources on Facebook, etc.**
- Parents struggling with own mental health – pandemic hard for everyone
- **If teachers notice something different about a child, bring to Rachael's attention**
- Families don't trust systems – need to build trust with families that services are not a stigma
- Wheeler Clinicians do a deeper dive with social/emotional needs
- **Ask Wheeler Clinic to do a public service announcement**
- School social workers working on PBIS
- Is there something about PBIS and **how families can support children on BOE website? Could we put on Making Bristol Better website and each school's website?**
- **Information on Parent Square, Ready4K, Sparkler**
- **Home visits – FRC does**
- Educate how to recognize when a child is struggling, what to look for
- Next steps:
 - FRC create draft resource guide for next meeting
 - Donna K described **Parent Circle** that a small committee is exploring and **will bring behavioral/mental health as a topic**

Updates about ongoing ideas:

- **Wellness Wednesday** – This project to promote health information on social media and the website continues, and Donna Koser is requesting content from all partners. Send to dkoser@uwestcentralct.org
- **Tasty Tuesdays** – While this initiative is on hold for now, Leo creating a handout with recipes to distribute at Family Fun Day
- **Community Baby Shower** – Will hold Community Baby Shower with the Library and partners.
- **Seed Project** – Sherry and Tad said Ocean State Job Lot has an application process. Need to be ready to answer “what kinds of seeds do we want and what would we do with them?” Some responses include educational and give away.
- **Senior Knitters** – No update, but the knitters at the Bristol Senior Center will continue to provide hats, mittens and scarves to keep kids warm when they play outside during the winter.

Next steps:

- Continue to send content to Donna Koser for Wellness Wednesdays

Meeting schedule: The committee will continue to meet the second Tuesday of the month on Zoom at 3:00 PM. The schedule for the year is:

Tuesday, October 11 at 3:00

Tuesday, November 8 at 3:00

Tuesday, December 13 at 3:00

Tuesday, January 10 at 3:00

Tuesday, February 14 at 3:00

Tuesday, March 14 at 3:00

Tuesday, April 11 at 3:00

Tuesday, May 9 at 3:00

Tuesday, June 13 at 3:00

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Osuch