



Franklin Public Schools

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To: Franklin School Committee
From: Peter Light, Assistant Superintendent
Miriam Goodman, School Business Administrator
Date: June 1, 2018
RE: School Wellness Advisory Council Update on Goals Report for Years 2016-18

Introduction

The School Wellness Advisory Council (SWAC) is a standing advisory council established through the School Committee's [Wellness Policy \(JLCCB\)](#). The purpose of this committee is to *"recommend, review and help implement school district policies addressing school nutrition, nutrition education, physical activity and related issues that affect student health. In addition, the SWAC shall encourage development of a program that actively promotes wellness in schools and maximizes the school district's opportunities for grant awards."* The SWAC is comprised of 20 individuals representing students, parents, community members, teachers, administrators and School Committee members. The SWAC held six meetings between October and May of the 2016-17 school year and four meetings during the 2017-18 school year.

Goals:

During the 2016-17 school year, the SWAC developed and adopted a set of two-year goals aligned with the District Improvement Plan. The committee established three Strategic Objectives in the areas of I) Program Evaluation, II) Communication, and III) Systems of Supports for Students. Each Strategic Objective targeted areas of A) Nutrition, B) Physical Activity, and C) Mental Health. Attached to this update, you will find a copy of the [SWAC Goals for the 2016-18 School Years](#).

Updates on Goals:

- I. *In order to better understand the impact of programs previously established in schools through partnerships with the School Wellness Advisory Council and to ensure programs meet the needs of a range of students, the committee will collect and analyze data describing student participation patterns in the various programs.*

The SWAC analyzed data to inform programmatic decisions focused primarily on student participation patterns in the before school movement program at the elementary level

(BOKS). Specifically, the group analyzed two years' worth of student participation data at the Davis Thayer Elementary School with respect to the proportional enrollment of students who qualified for free and reduced price lunch (FRPL) (and free breakfast) as compared to their peers. The committee identified that during the first year of the analysis, 2016-17, the FRPL group was underrepresented in the BOKS program based on the proportional enrollment of this group within the school. The committee worked with the business office, food services office and the school Principal in order to analyze the data and make suggestions for additional outreach to families to encourage participation. An analysis of data during the 2017-18 school year showed that enrollment between the FRPL and non-FRPL cohorts was proportional to the enrollment of the school. This data and discussion also informed the implementation of the BOKS program at the Parmenter Elementary School, which was a new program implemented during the 2017-18 school year. While the SWAC stopped short of making formal recommendations with regard to programmatic changes to insure equity (such as reserved or priority registration for FRPL students), the committee recommended that increased awareness about the participation of traditionally underrepresented groups will be important as the before school movement programs continue to develop.

The District also identified, through discussions with elementary administrators and the Lifelong Learning Program, that the before school movement programs at the various elementary schools were offered through varied and somewhat inequitable funding and administrative mechanisms. School and District administrators have worked to revise the program to ensure that it is consistently implemented across the District through the Lifelong Learning Program beginning in the 2018-19 School Year.

- II. *In order to ensure that families understand the range of offerings available to students that support healthy lifestyles, the Franklin Public Schools will communicate opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote good nutrition, increased physical activity, and social and emotional well-being through school and district newsletters, electronic communications and applications.*

Improved communication with stakeholders has been a goal of the Franklin Public Schools and was identified by the SWAC as a goal based on student, parent and faculty surveys administered during the 2015-16 school year. The following actions were taken by the district and schools and supported by SWAC in order to improve communication:

Nutrition:

A [newly revised website](#) (SY 2016-17) was developed emphasizing complete school lunch menus that provides families with nutritional information including calorie and carbohydrate counts and allergy information for all offerings. Two-way communication is

fostered through the enhanced website by giving students and families an opportunity to provide feedback about the various meal offerings. The Nutrislice menu system also includes a mobile application as well that provides all of the same information that is found on the main website.

Additionally, during the 2016-17 school year, In order to increase participation in the school lunch program, the middle schools implemented an iTunes gift card incentive program. This brief program was geared towards students who might not have typically purchased a meal and provided a small incentive for them to do so, however, it did not have the impact that was initially anticipated and was not continued. At the high school, the food service program partnered with the film club in order to produce a commercial for the food service department. This [commercial](#) aired on televisions around the high school.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Foodservice Director attended PCC meetings at several schools to provide information about the food service program and options available to students. He also met with student groups and received direct feedback from students about their food preferences and foods they would like to see served in the cafeterias.

School Lunch participation data was reviewed by the food service office throughout the 2017-2018 school year in conjunction with feedback from the Nutrislice menu rating system to make adjustments to the menus for the 2018-2019 school year. Participation in the lunch program has increased to an average of 39% district-wide, up from 34% in April, 2016.

Elementary families received a colorful printed calendar of menu options for the school year promoting nutritional information, recipes, free/reduced participation and providing access to Nutrislice information and rating systems. Additionally, families were informed of our farm to school initiative that involves purchasing organic, locally grown produce as available through the year from Silverwood Farm in Sherborn, MA.

Physical Activity:

District-wide, the Health and Physical Education Department implemented a new [Twitter account](#) in order to keep the community informed of activities within the department and teachers across the district are able to share activities at each school. Faculty simultaneously share these to individual school Twitter accounts as appropriate.

As part of its curriculum review (2016-17), the Health and Physical Education department solicited feedback via surveys from all parents, faculty and administrators across the district as well as students in grades 6-12. This information was

subsequently analyzed by the curriculum review team, shared with the community and is being used to inform revisions to the physical education curriculum.

Mental Health:

In order to help families and the community better understand Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in our schools, the District produced a [Social Emotional Learning Documentary](#). This video was previously presented to the School Committee, shared with PCCs across the district and distributed directly to families via email. The video details the range of social emotional programs and supports offered by the Franklin Public Schools.

At the elementary level, all schools have sent monthly SEL updates to families via newsletters. Additional information has been shared with parents through curriculum nights, Twitter updates, and direct emails to families. Elementary schools have solicited feedback about SEL through their PCC meetings and have used this to inform communication. Middle schools have also included monthly SEL updates in school newsletters and through PCC communications and meetings. At the high school, the guidance department has communicated via a monthly guidance newsletter to families and has offered parents “Counselor Coffee Sessions.” Additionally the high school guidance department actively uses [Twitter](#) to communicate information to students and families. Specific information has been sent to families at the high school regarding Mental Health Awareness Week.

During the 2017-18 School Year, the District released updated websites focused on [Anti-Bullying](#) and [Substance Abuse](#). The anti-bullying website provides unified access to materials for students and families including a district-created parent training video, policies and procedures, online reporting forms and resources. The Substance Abuse Resources page on the District Website provides easy access for students and families to policies, educational materials, and resources to help with recovery and treatment from substance abuse.

Finally, during the 2017-18 School year, the SWAC reviewed the District’s Wellness Policy and made recommendations to the Franklin School Committee for possible revisions that would update the policy to reflect current practices, particularly around Social and Emotional Learning and Nutritional Guidelines, and provide clearer communication with families about the policies of the Franklin Public Schools.

- III. *In order to ensure that all students are supported in making healthy choices, the Franklin Public Schools will develop a range of supports within the school and partnerships with outside agencies that can provide assistance to at-risk students and their families.*

Nutrition:

During the 2017-18 School Year the Franklin Public Schools, through partnerships with the Hockomock Y and the Franklin Food Pantry, was able to pilot a “weekend food backpack program” at the Parmenter Elementary School. The backpacks for the program were funded through a grant from The Y and food donations are provided through the Franklin Food Pantry and donations from families at the Parmenter Elementary School. In its first year, the backpack program served approximately 25-30 food insecure families whose children attend the Parmenter Elementary School. As part of the program, children attending the school were able to discreetly pick up backpacks of food essentials on Friday afternoons that supplemented families food supplies for the weekend. The SWAC discussed the success of this program, thanks in large part to the administration and staff at the Parmenter Elementary School as well as the generosity of The Y and Franklin Food Pantry. Initial discussions began with regard to expanding this program to other schools within the District during the 2018-19 school year.

The Hockomock Y continued to offer their PAC (Promoting Achievable Change) Program to 10 Franklin area students and their families. This is an evidence-based youth obesity intervention program for high risk children. Students ages 7-13 who are in the 95th percentile in Body Mass Index would be eligible to work with Y instructors to learn about nutrition, physical activity, and goal setting. The Y will be continuing this program into the 2018-2019 school year.

Physical Activity

All elementary schools across the district continue to participate in the Safe Routes to school program collaboratively with the Y during the month of May 2018 and the Oak Street Elementary implemented “Walk to School Wednesdays” this school year as well.

Additionally, The Franklin High School Physical Education Department is offering two new courses during the 2018-19 school year: Team Sports 2 and Speed and Strength 2. These courses will allow students to continue to master skill themes, motor concepts, explore collaboration and teamwork while implementing a variety of advanced skill-based strategies, olympic weightlifting movements, and training for fitness vs. sport as well as leadership skills.

Mental Health:

For the past two years, each secondary school has offered a unique version of a “Mental Health Awareness Week” in which students are provided with information and experiences to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness. These events were the result of a successful collaboration among school counseling staff, the health and physical education department, administration, faculty and the greater community.

During the 2017-18 School Year, the Franklin Schools undertook a number of initiatives to increase support for students’ mental health across the District. The Parmenter Elementary School was able to partner with Y.O.U., Inc. to provide clinical counseling services to students at the school during the school day to students who would otherwise be unable to access these services. This was accomplished at no additional cost to the District as the counseling services were funded through family’s health insurance.

The District also began a partnership with William James College that afforded an opportunity for a cohort of four administrators, counselors and classroom teachers from the Oak Street Elementary School to complete a nine-month graduate certificate program in Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate and Culture. The program provided participants with in-depth access to the research base around SEL and School Climate and Culture, and develop both school and district action plans to continue to improve efforts in these areas.

During the 2017-18 school year, the District began planning to join the Interface Program at William James College during the 2018-19 school year. This program, which will be funded largely through the District’s 2018-19 operating budget, will provide access to mental health referral processes and resources free of charge to any member of the Franklin Community.

The Director of Health and Physical Education worked collaboratively with the Substance Abuse Task Force, SAFE Coalition, and FHS Video Production students to develop a script, film, and edit the Hidden in Plain Sight Program. This process is still ongoing, but the goal is to create a digital version of the Hidden in Plain Sight Program to post on the FPS District Website to educate parents and community members on current trends in drug use and paraphernalia so they are able to have open and honest conversations about drugs with their teens.

Additionally, the Franklin High School Health and Physical Education Department partnered with the SAFE Coalition again this year to engage a speaker who spoke to all 10th grade students at Franklin High School about his drug addiction, his recovery,

community resources, and the impact of drug use on the school, families, and the community.

Finally, the District piloted a program at the Parmenter Elementary School that partnered resources from the school, the Department of Children and Families, the Franklin Police, and Juvenile Court Probation to meet with families and provide support and resources to parents whose children struggle to attend school on a regular basis.

Grant Awards Update:

In the past, the district has received funding for the BOKS (Build Our Kids' Success) program through the Hockomock Area Y's Mass in Motion grant. This grant also supported the implementation of our school gardens. The New England Dairy Council's Fuel Up to Play 60 grants have provided additional grant funding to support the implementation of the breakfast programs throughout the district. Funding for the continuation of these programs is through the current appropriation budget as well as the Foodservice and Lifelong Learning revolving accounts.

Finally, during the 2018-18 School Year, the District was awarded grant funds by the Hockomock Y to support the implementation of the Weekend Food Backpack Program at the Parmenter Elementary School.

Related Community Partnerships

The Hockomock Area Y continues to be an active partner with the Franklin Public Schools. This year, The Y continued to offer its Nutrition Detectives Program to all students in the third grade. The Y has also helped the district to secure grant funding for prior-year projects including school gardens and the BOKS program. Last year, the schools continued to grow the partnership with The Y by training summer program counselors in the Zones of Regulation, an SEL program used in the schools to support student's emotional health. The District continues to explore grant opportunities supported by The Y including The New England Dairy Council's Fuel Up to Play 60 Grant.

Over the past two years, the Franklin Public Schools initiated a Substance Abuse Task Force. The Task Force is a partnership between the schools and community and includes representation from students, parents, administration, faculty, counselors, athletics, medical professionals, community organizations and elected officials. The goal of the task force has been to develop a series of recommendations to the school department in the areas of:

- I. Policy Development
- II. School-Based Prevention Strategies & Interventions
- III. Community-Based Prevention & Intervention Supports
- IV. Possible Screening Tools & Processes
- V. Strategies & Supports for working with Families

During the 2016-17 school year, the District initiated a roundtable that includes administrators and counselors from across the district as well as representatives from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the District Attorney's Office, Court Probation and the Franklin Police. The goal of this Roundtable has been to enhance communication with these organization and ensure that the schools continue to collaborate with these agencies to effectively support students.

Discussion of Goals 2018-19 and Beyond

The School Wellness Advisory Council discussed possible goals for the 2018-19 school year. The committee elected to defer specific goal setting until fall 2018, but considered the following opportunities:

- Expanding the Weekend Food Backpack Program to additional schools across the District
- Expanding the Partnership with Y.O.U., Inc. to provide clinical mental health counseling services to students in additional schools across the District
- Expanding attendance support meetings held in conjunction with families, schools, the Department of Children and Families and other agencies to additional schools across the District
- Supporting the implementation of the Interface at William James Program, with a focus on communication with regard to supports available to ensure families understand the availability of the program and how to access services.
- Developing a unified Health and Wellness Website that provides district-wide information about Social and Emotional Learning, Mental Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity in one location for families
- Reviewing and streamlining surveys previously conducted by the SWAC to solicit feedback from stakeholders to inform future goal setting

Recognition and Thanks

In closing, we would like to recognize and thank the following members of the School Wellness Advisory Committee for their dedication to our student's health and wellness:

Shannon Barca, Principal, Parmenter Elementary School
Marykate Bergen, Director of Community Wellness, Hockomock Y
Colin Boisvert, Director of Food Services, Franklin Public Schools
Francisco Coakley, Student, Franklin High School
Cindy Douglas, Franklin School Committee
Gregory Lee, School Psychologist, J.F. Kennedy Elementary School
Kristin Letendre, Director of Health and Physical Education, Franklin Public Schools
Michael Masto, Health and Physical Education Teacher, Franklin High School
Michelle Palladini, Parent, Helen Keller Elementary School
Kate Peretz, Principal, Oak Street Elementary School
Adrienne Smith, Guidance Counselor, Remington Middle School
Roberta Trahan, Community Member
Katrina Walbert, Student, Franklin High School
Nancy Whitehouse, Nursing Coordinator, Franklin Public Schools
Brian Wildeman, Principal, Remington Middle School
Craig Williams, Assistant Principal, Franklin High School