

Wayland Public Schools

FY16 System-Wide Goal ACE Progress Report: Health and Wellness

System-Wide Goal: To enhance health and wellness education, with an emphasis on healthy relationships and violence prevention, employing a systemic approach to curriculum, instruction, extra-curricular activities and school culture.

High School Strategic Initiatives:

- In partnership with REACH, continue to implement Mentors in the Violence Prevention (MVP) program in Grade 11 Wellness, including a student MVP club.
- Strengthen school culture according to identified advisory goals through continued implementation and refinement of the 9-12 Advisory program.
- Begin to evaluate current practices, specifically homework, as they relate to student stress and social/emotional wellness.

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| Accomplishments | Challenges | Exemplar |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full implementation of the MVP student club, which includes nine active members (all seniors) who have played a vital role in planning (1) a parent evening on the Wellness curriculum, and (2) the Escalation Workshop to all seniors on May 31. Club members have also visited 8th graders in Wellness class and have established a plan for sustaining membership. ● Second year of implementation of the MVP curriculum in junior Wellness class. Two additional Wellness teachers have been trained in MVP. Curricular improvements include the resequencing of MVP and RAD (reversal of the two quarters) in order to better lay a groundwork for conversations about healthy relationships and violence prevention. Also, during fourth quarter while the girls are doing RAD, the boys are engaged in a new curriculum that builds on lessons in MVP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scheduling the MVP sections junior year so that each section is taught by a male and female instructor--which is recommended by the program--is a staffing challenge (but more possible with the increase in trained instructors). ● With regard to the Advisory program, finding the right balance between content and scheduling continues to be a challenge. Currently, students are in Advisory for 25 minutes a week; at the same time, the goals of the program are to develop close relationships between adults and students and to strengthen school culture. Would more frequent, but shorter, Advisory sessions achieve this goal more successfully? How do we prevent Advisory devolving into Homeroom if there aren't ample minutes for delving into meaningful discussion? These are challenges that we continue to grapple with. | <p>On May 31, the entire senior class will view "Escalation" and engage in the Escalation Workshop, the signature program of the OneLove Foundation in its work to educate high school and college students about relationship violence. Thanks to our strong existing partnership with REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, as well as our ongoing connection with the Domestic Violence Roundtable and the Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Foundation, we have implemented a plan involving a parent viewing, facilitator training, and then running the workshop with our seniors. The planning team, which includes REACH, OneLove, and our Guidance Department, has given careful thought to supporting students and families during this powerful experience. A driving force behind bringing the Escalation Workshop to our senior class is the students in the new MVP Club, who have been vocal advocates for having this important experience before they graduate. Their objective -- to best</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● In order to evaluate the Advisory program and its goals related to school culture, all staff and students took a survey in the winter. Results were reported back to the students and staff, and the Advisory Planning Committee is weighing next steps around content of Advisory sessions and possible tweaks to the schedule.● Due to consistent concerns around homework levels causing undue stress in our students, a task force of faculty members spent four inservice meetings researching and discussing best practices when it comes to assigning homework. Out of this, a “Statement of Philosophy” and recommendations for both parents and teachers was drawn up and shared at a recent faculty meeting. The department head group will codify this Statement, which will be shared with the community when we launch the 2016-17 school year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● In larger discussions about stress experienced by our students, we are focusing on issues that the school has control over. We have identified the issue of homework as one that we as a school can better understand and communicate more clearly with families our expectations. While our Statement of Philosophy will help make our expectations clearer to students and families, and has created a more shared understanding among faculty, its direct impact on student stress is unknown; additionally, it will only be impactful if it is adhered to by teachers and respected by students and families. | <p>equip their class with effective bystander intervention strategies and knowledge that will keep them safe in relationships -- is laudable, and their leadership has been very impressive.</p> |
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Middle School Strategic Initiatives:

- Complete implementation of ALICE safety protocol.
- Implement new, updated Life Skills curriculum.
- Explore meditation and mindfulness as tools to manage stress/anxiety.

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| <p>ALICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We completed our ALICE implementation. In addition to conducting further training with staff, we ran grade-wide ALICE assemblies to train students and held intellectual and live ALICE drills with students. We have scheduled a second set of drills in June. We will walk students to our two evacuation sites so all students will know the routes to the destination points in the event we have an ALICE emergency. <p>Life Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We purchased and implemented the updated evidence-based Life Skills curriculum in Wellness classes this year. Wellness staff members were pleased with how the scope and sequence of topics built off of one another, while allowing students to make connections back to the initial topics of "Self Image, Self Improvement, and Making Decisions." Many of the topics, especially around substance abuse, resulted in an abundance of questions and conversations within the class. <p>Meditation and Mindfulness</p> <p>Dr. Parker received a grant from the WPSF which allowed us to offer the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Chris Willard from Harvard University presented to the entire faculty about the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is no mention of e-cigarettes or vaping at all in the New Life Skills Curricula (which was disappointing). Our sixth grade Wellness teacher needed to add these topics on his own. ● We are issuing and using the Life Skills workbooks to ensure fidelity to the program, but environmentally and fiscally our Wellness teachers do not feel like the outlay of funds for the workbooks are the best use of our resources given other potential uses of the funds. They feel that a few reference copies of the workbooks would be useful and that they could utilize Chromebooks or bluebooks for written reflections. ● Despite many gains on the mindfulness front, not all staff have the skills or confidence for a school-wide rollout of a meditation initiative yet. Even where teachers have been implementing mindfulness and meditation, not all students have yet built the skills to quiet their minds to appreciate the benefits of this practice. | <p>One teacher shared the ways in which mindfulness meditation is helping her students:</p> <p><i>"We have been practicing meditation on Wednesdays in my Org Skills classes. We have done various meditations using the Mindshift app, such as deep/calm breathing exercises, body scans and visualization meditations. They have been helpful for stress management as well as a way to settle my classes in order to be more productive, especially for some students with ADHD. I have even had students ask me if we could meditate for an entire block at some point this year. I am excited to see if my students are able to generalize some of these meditations in order to settle themselves in the moment when they have a little too much energy or they are stressed out about a task."</i></p> |

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| <p>benefits of mindfulness and meditation, focusing on a range of strategies for getting started (for example, 7/11 breathing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Two 8-week mindfulness classes were offered by highly-skilled instructors (William Jackson and Helen Rainoff) for interested staff members. Over 30 staff members participated.● Many staff members taught and tried different mindfulness strategies with students.● Read more about our mindfulness efforts in the school's April newsletter. | | |
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Elementary Schools Strategic Initiatives:

- Implement the new Open Circle curriculum.
- In addition to the Open Circle curriculum, we will utilize the SEL guide created during summer work 2015 to integrate aspects of the Social Thinking Program “Incredible Flexible You” curriculum, Collaborative Problem Solving, and Responsive Classroom to foster a safe learning environment at each of the schools.
- Each spring, all fourth and fifth grade students will continue to take an anonymous survey regarding their anxiety and stress levels, including causes.
- Develop a schoolwide social-emotional language by prioritizing specific language from Open Circle, Social Thinking, and Responsive Classroom that best meets the learning needs of elementary school students.

| <p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Accomplishments</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Challenges</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Exemplar</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed a school-wide document that outlines all of the social competency terminology utilized at each grade level, which serves as a glossary of key vocabulary. The document integrated language drawn from the Open Circle, Responsive Classroom, and Social Thinking programs. ● Utilized school meeting time to reinforce key social vocabulary in helping students follow the “group plan” and become “social detectives” in understanding the expected behavior for various settings. In addition, led discussions on what bullying represents and how to respond if you see it occurring. ● Through summer work, a document titled “Social Competency Skills,” was created to show how each of three social-emotional approaches can be utilized in the five state mandated areas of social-emotional learning (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making). As a result, we designed a more comprehensive social competency program for the Wayland Public Schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is difficult to successfully integrate all three social-emotional approaches (Open Circle, Social Thinking, and Responsive Classroom) into a unified social-emotional program. ● Competing curricular demands make it increasingly challenging to allocate additional time in order to proactively teach lessons around social interactions such as Open Circle and Morning Meeting. | <p>In an effort to create common school social competency language across the faculty, specialist teachers and many teaching assistants participated in an Open Circle Specialist Training in December and January. They learned about the core philosophy of Open Circle and key vocabulary such as “school listening look,” “double d’s” (dangerous and destructive behavior), and “positive self talk.” This has helped all teachers focus on providing social-emotional instruction aligned to the five state mandated areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Elementary classrooms are more regularly learning and utilizing mindfulness techniques as a way to support students, employing emotion regulation, calm breathing, and reflection.● Fourth and/or fifth grade students at all three elementary schools took an anonymous survey regarding some or all of the following topics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students' anxiety and stress levels, including causes;○ Students' thoughts, feelings, and opinions about their overall school experience;○ How often they use the strategies that are being taught during social competency lessons/units of study.The results are shared with the school community and are used to generate school improvement goals. | | |
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