

Wayland Public Schools

FY17 System-Wide Goal ACE Progress Report: Deepening Wellness Skills and Insights

System-Wide Goal: To deepen and strengthen students’ wellness education by employing a systemic approach to curriculum, instruction, extra-curricular activities, school culture, and safety.

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.
- Administer the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey and analyze results.
- Implement “RAD for Boys” (Junior Wellness).

A Accomplishments	C Challenges	E Exemplar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVP program continues to gather momentum in the junior Wellness curriculum. All juniors now take MVP during the first half of their Wellness course, followed by RAD (girls) and “RAD for Boys.” In this sequence, all students gain a broad, powerful understanding of the signs of unhealthy relationships, along with the skills necessary to intervene and/or protect oneself in such situations. The MVP Club once again has prepared a screening of the “Escalation Workshop” for all seniors in late May, which involved training new teachers to facilitate small groups. Members of our club will help lead workshop discussion groups as well. ● We administered the MWAHS in the fall and have already discussed some of the key findings with School Council and in the Wellness Department. More complete results are forthcoming. In tandem with WaylandCares, we plan to analyze results and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The concept of “Wellness” encompasses so many topics that one challenge is being responsive to areas of current interest while maintaining a scope and sequence to our 9-12 curriculum that is clear and focused. Our ongoing thread of healthy relationships is one way that we do this. However, we also address critical topics such as mental health, nutrition, fitness, drugs and alcohol, lifetime sports, and sexuality throughout the four years. Developing overarching themes and connections between and among these many topics is an ongoing challenge so that Wellness does not become a “catch-all” for all issues. ● Following our latest administration of the MWAHS, we will determine our next directions in response to the extensive data. At this point, we know that one area of concern is students’ rising levels of stress. Continuing to work effectively on this topic, 	<p>The parent screening of “Escalation” several weeks ago was incredibly powerful and affirming as far as our work related to healthy relationships. Although the attendance was relatively low, the parents who came were visibly moved by the film and came away with many rich, new insights on relationship abuse. They were also ready to share their knowledge with all of the parents they know! We were fortunate to have present representatives from the One Love Foundation and REACH to help facilitate the post-screening discussion. They shared their expertise on recognizing the signs of unhealthy relationships to the rapt audience. Our ongoing, strong partnership with these agencies, in conjunction with the many ways we embed this topic into our 9-12 Wellness curriculum (and share insights with parents), are points of pride for us.</p>

<p>communicate them to the students, faculty, and community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● As aforementioned, we are implementing “RAD for Boys” during fourth quarter while girls are taking RAD. This comes in response to the question of how to meaningfully provide boys with self-defense skills (as a core principle of RAD is defending against men’s violence against women). Our Wellness team was trained in this particular curriculum earlier in the year, and we will survey students and reflect on the curriculum’s effectiveness as the year closes.	<p>which will require the entire community, will be a challenge — but an exciting one.</p>	
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Middle School Strategic Initiatives:

- Implement meditation and mindfulness school-wide, helping students develop skills to build attention and focus, as well as manage stress and anxiety.
- Pilot “Catch Up and Breathe Weekends” first semester.

<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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This year, beginning in October, we initiated daily 3–5 minute meditation sessions with homerooms school-wide each morning. We first offered students a presentation in the Teacher Advisory Group (TAG), explaining why mindfulness skills were valuable. Then teachers chose from a menu of online resources to play pre-recorded meditations or offer meditation scripts that they read on their own. Teachers continued daily meditation until the beginning of second semester. At that point, teachers decided by homeroom whether or not the practice was the right fit for their homerooms. ● Of the 583 students who responded to our meditation survey in April: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 30.5% said they developed the skills to meditate independently; ○ Another 14.5% indicated that they could meditate when guided; ○ 20.6% endorsed that they are able to meditate sometimes; and ○ 34% answered that they could not really meditate yet. ● When surveyed about how meditation made them feel, the following number of students endorsed the descriptors listed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 125 - “more relaxed” ○ 76 - “less stressed” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers’ own comfort and sense of expertise around meditation varied, impacting students’ perceptions and experiences. ● Meditating is hard and requires sustained focus, commitment, and buy-in from all involved. It can be difficult to let oneself be vulnerable enough to meditate in a group of 20+ students (especially at the middle school age). ● When asked how meditation made them feel, students also endorsed the following descriptors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 258 - “sleepy” ○ 72 - “uncomfortable” ○ 56 - “anxious” ○ 200 - “no effect” ● We are reassessing how we might still teach all students mindfulness skills next year and then differentiate to match the best stress reducing techniques to what works for different students (meditation, deep breathing, exercise, walking, talking with friends or adults, etc.). ● Our MetroWest Health Survey Data, combined with anecdotal data, still indicates that student stress is an area that continues to need our attention. 	<p>Here is the framing of CUB weekends we offered students, parents, and teachers:</p> <p><i>We have created the concept of "Catch Up and Breathe" weekends, which are about embracing wellness and balance. It is a recognition that weekends are different than other days of the week. We all need time to reconnect, recharge, and regroup, and these weekends are a chance to do exactly that. During a "Catch Up and Breathe" weekend (scheduled every other weekend), students do not receive homework due the following Monday. Additionally, no assessments are scheduled for the Monday after a "Catch Up and Breathe" weekend.</i></p> <p><i>The initiative allows us to honor the fullness of our students’ lives outside of school, and at the same time affords us a chance to mentor students in striking a balance between work and play. "Catch Up and Breathe" is designed to allow us to coach students about how to take healthy pauses in life. Friday conversations become about what folks have planned and give teachers a chance to make suggestions that go beyond academics. Since there is no assigned work, we suggest students think about doing any, all, or none of the following if they so choose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>sleep in really late</i> ❖ <i>restock a pencil pouch</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 66 - “more focused” ○ 27 - “happy” ● Catch Up and Breathe (CUB) weekends were a success this year. Parent, teacher, and student data all supported a continuation of twice-a-month CUB weekends into second semester and beyond (see the rationale under “Exemplar” column). ● Of the 460 students who responded to our CUB Weekend Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 51% said CUB greatly improved their stress, and ○ 32% said CUB somewhat improved their stress. ● Of the 150 parents/guardians who responded to our CUB Weekend Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 41% said CUB greatly improved their child’s stress; and ○ 41% said CUB somewhat improved their child’s stress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CUB weekends have made scheduling assessments more challenging with the drop-add schedule, and some subjects (most notably math) are challenged to fit in as much practice as many teachers feel they need. ● Some parents shared the worry that the transition to high school may be a bigger adjustment, given that CUB weekends do not exist at WHS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>go on a hike</i> ❖ <i>work on an art project</i> ❖ <i>meditate</i> ❖ <i>watch a movie with family</i> ❖ <i>curl up with a good book</i> ❖ <i>complete any overdue assignments</i> ❖ <i>clean up/update their Google Keep or planner</i> ❖ <i>play a board/card/video game with friends</i> ❖ <i>run wild in a field</i> ❖ <i>organize a binder</i> ❖ <i>do anything that they feel would allow them to come back Monday feeling ready and refreshed.</i> <p>A sample of CUB student survey comments:</p> <p>“Every other week not having HW makes my weekend much easier. I do not have to dread HW over the weekend and find weekends much more fun.”</p> <p>“CUB weekends let me catch up on my sleep. Also, I get to spend more time with my friends and family instead of doing homework.”</p> <p>“I think CUB weekends are a good opportunity to get caught up or revise work that needed to be done, without having other homework on top of that.”</p>
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Elementary Schools Strategic Initiative:

- Continue to develop wellness skills and insights at the elementary level by integrating responsive classroom and mindfulness practices into the pedagogical practices of classroom and specialist teachers.

<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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At all three schools, teachers remain committed to the new Open Circle curriculum and social language. Now in the second year of the new curriculum, the teachers acknowledge that they have been more effective with implementing the program. ● Key Open Circle social language is posted in the hallways of all three schools. ● Michelle Garcia Winner’s social thinking curriculum has continued to supplement Open Circle with key social language and the use of the unthinkables particularly with the younger grades. ● Students and teachers employ fitness and brain gym techniques (which are physical exercises designed to cross the midline which purposefully connects the body with the brain). For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Claypit Hill begins each day with these exercises through live streaming. ○ Loker has expanded its before school fitness program to occur from October through June with kindergarten through second grade attending on Wednesdays and third grade through fifth grade on Fridays. In these sessions, healthy eating habits and developing personal fitness goals are a strong focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responsive Classroom training is a four-day training that is typically offered in the summer. This is limiting for some educators who have other summer commitments and plans. ● Some Responsive Classroom practices, such as Morning Meeting and Closing Meeting, require dedicated time, which is a challenge due to the many academic demands in the elementary schedule. ● Fitting two dedicated twenty-minute Open Circle periods per week is a challenge given the many academic demands of the elementary schedule. ● Increased student anxiety over the last several years has resulted in needing more time for social-emotional learning outside of Morning Meeting and Open Circle time. 	<p>Twenty-seven elementary educators, including classroom teachers and specialists, completed Responsive Classroom’s Level I four-day training in August 2016. In addition, six other teachers and administrators took the four-day course in Northborough in July. As a result, most elementary classrooms are leading instruction and developing classroom environments utilizing this important approach.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Teachers model yoga, movement, and mindfulness practices within the schools. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mindfulness activities have been modeled at Happy Hollow and Loker faculty professional development meetings.○ The Happy Hollow School Council hosted a parent night on mindfulness.○ Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow begin and/or end each day with a mindful minute of reflection.○ Responsive classroom energizers and group activities are modeled by the principal at Loker School faculty meetings for teacher professional development.● In April, administrators and teachers from across the district and across grade levels participated in Instructional Rounds (held at Claypit Hill) that focused on Social Emotional Learning.● Funded by a grant from the Cultural Enrichment Committee of the PTO, Bren Bataclan involved the students at Claypit Hill in designing a Health and Wellness themed mural in the cafeteria.		
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