

Security Advisory Committee November 14, 2018

Meeting 2 Notes

Topic: Build a Shared Understanding of Mental Wellness and Review Syosset's Work to Date

Enhancing School Safety/Security: A Focus on Mental Health

A presentation was given by Dr. Joseph LaMelza, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Service, along with Mr. David Steinberg, Syosset High School Assistant Principal, Ms. Mary-Lou Sapienza, Director of PPS, District Social Workers Ms. Lauren O'Rourke and Ms. Melody Chan, and School Psychologist Dr. Jennifer Eastman.

During the presentation, the Committee was provided with an overview of the mental wellness programs in place at the elementary, middle and high school levels, the staffing enhancements made by the District and new processes and protocols put into place to identify students who may need support. Topics included:

- The importance of school climate.
- Use of evidence-based social-emotional learning programs.
- Development of positive behavioral supports for all students with school-based goals.
- Grade- and building-level programs for students including peer leadership and mentoring programs, social skill and friendship groups, and events such as Junior Day and the Health Fair.
- Health curriculum aligned with NYS mental health literacy guidelines, embedded wellness programs.
- Professional development for faculty and staff.
- Added school psychologist and social worker support.
- Establishment of a K-12 task force inclusive of teachers, nurses, mental health staff, and administrators to address student mental wellness.
- Dedicated team in every building that meets once a week to collect data, develop best practices, and review student cases.
- New Threat Assessment Protocol implemented, which was designed to identify students who may be a threat to themselves or others and provide appropriate support services.
 - The protocol is designed to define and identify concerning behaviors, develop a reporting system and defined procedures, align intervention systems and programs, and provide ongoing professional development.

As a result of the proactive approach taken by the District, Syosset CSD exceeds the NYSED Health Curriculum mandates issued on July 1, 2018.

The Committee then engaged in a discussion regarding mental wellness. Discussion topics included:

- Restorative practice approach to discipline.
- A focus on building mental health literacy among the student body and de-stigmatizing the need for support.

- The importance of students developing the ability to recognize mental health issues in themselves and others and how to address it.
- The process to determine if a student who threatens violence has access to weapons.
- Addressing how to educate parents and guardians about the services offered, and how the District can support parents and guardians in knowing how to address mental wellness with their children.