

MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MCPS)
Mental Wellness, Safety and Security Advisory Committee

August 26, 2013 6:00 to 8:00 PM (public comment 6:30 – 6:45)
MCPS Board of Trustees Room – South Avenue Administration Building

MENTAL WELLNESS, SAFETY AND SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE “CHARTER”

The Mental Wellness, Safety and Security Advisory Committee is asked to help inventory what's in place; identify “core elements” they collectively agree are important for mental health, safety and security; and deliver recommendations to the School Board that forward a consistent, District- wide approach to mental wellness, safety and security in our schools.”

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Refocus Committee discussion by reviewing the June 3, 2013 Mental Wellness, Safety and Security Advisory Committee meeting summary.
2. Affirm mental wellness, safety and security guiding principles – providing “decision space” within which recommendations to the Board can be crafted.
3. Using a hypothetical “case study” approach, explore/draft specific, concrete strategies that support mental wellness in the school environment including those that address bullying.
4. Describe the role of the District in an effective mental wellness, safety and security community framework.
5. If possible, take a first cut at recommendations for the Board of Trustees and determine a timeframe within which they might be delivered.

AGENDA ITEMS

- Getting Started...
 - Process review from the Superintendent – What's happening with the other Committees? Expectations related to this Committee?
 - Objectives for tonight... agenda review; who's here?
- At this point, where are we in the process in terms of “mental wellness, safety and security” in the school environment?
 - Reviewing the June 3 meeting summary
 - Revisiting... affirming mental wellness guiding principles for the District
 - Briefly – what's in place that's working? What's not?
- Using a hypothetical “case study approach, identify/explore strategies to support mental wellness in schools:
 - Critical mental health “topic” areas in a school environment
 - What “best practices” exist related to mental wellness in schools?
 - Identifying/exploring “useful” concrete strategies and desired results
 - How do we make “mental wellness” strategies, etc., fit in the District Crisis Plan/building level crisis plans?
 - Do we have the “beginnings” of recommendations for the Board of Trustees?
- Describing a desirable District role in an effective mental wellness community system
- Laying out a timeframe in terms of recommendations to the Board:
 - Mental Wellness Committee meeting dates?
 - Possible Board of Trustees meeting date for recommendations?

As of June 3, 2013 - “Mental Wellness, Safety and Security” Framework

Guiding Principles/“Vision” (June 2013)

- 1) We believe everyone involved in the life of a student has some responsibility related to the mental wellness, safety and security of that child.
- 2) We believe high quality integrated, evidenced-based mental health services should be available to all students regardless of their payment source.
- 3) We believe all students receiving mental health services should be progress monitored and that academic outcomes are a key indicator to student mental wellness.
- 4) We believe common language, practices and training for school and mental health providers will improve outcomes for our students.
- 5) We believe prevention through universal screening, clear expectations and consistent consequences should be deliberately planned, monitored and responsive to student needs and are equally important as reactive strategies (interventions and crisis response).
- 6) We believe parents are central to helping teams develop effective intervention plans and must be part of a well-integrated and fully functioning team.

Criteria (February 2013)

- Will families support it?
- Will there be “consensus” support in the community?
- Have legal issues be addressed (e.g., Can a parent opt their child out, etc.)?
- Will it be easy to do... relatively simple to implement?
- Does it take into account the “variety” of kids?
- Will the child be involved in helping evaluate effectiveness?
- Can everyone who works in/with schools be trained - regardless of role?
- Will it provide sustainability for the child?
- Can it be sustained in the District?
- Can it be “culturized” in schools – can it be systemic... institutionalized?
- Does it include opportunities for children to succeed... participate in activities where the child can be part of success?
- Does it inform/educate/develop informed people... understanding in people?

Looking for “gaps”... (February 2013)

- What model should be used to assess children's needs?
- What are the evidence-based practices that you would like to see?
- What practices exist for those experiencing secondary trauma?
- What's our process for asking kids/families about what might be useful for them?
- How can educators be empowered to use skills to address mental health?
- In each school situation – is there a comfortable “someone” that each kid can reach out to?
- How can schools be structured to provide “connections” with kids daily?
- How can kids be eyes and ears about things that without creating “tattle-tales”?
- What do we need to do so that families/family members/.kids/community members navigate the mental health support system?
- How can we all contribute to getting the system organized so it is user-friendly and can be navigated effectively?