



The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Board of Trustees
Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 1st, 2023 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

<i>Trustees:</i>	<i>Others:</i>
Jennifer McKee, Committee Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Janet Armstrong, Trustee	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
	Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
	Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
	Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Lona Carter, School Health Grant Facilitator
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Jonna Schwartz, Instructional Coach

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Jennifer McKee.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the 02.01.23 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. District School Health Grant Facilitator Update

Ms. Lona Carter, District School Health Grant Facilitator, gave an update on sustainable school-based health services to the Teaching and Learning Committee. Ms. Carter discussed that after emerging from COVID there were gaps in social and emotional learning for students. Ms. Carter mentioned that this year 1,728 students qualified for free meals, 261 students qualified for reduced-price meals, schools vary from 12.5%-59% eligibility, and 1 in 4 of our students is surviving poverty. As of February 13, 2023, there are 318 Helena School District McKinney-Vento students in transition. Ms. Carter moved on to discuss behavioral health. In our Helena School District, the number of students requiring hospitalization from suicidal ideation has elevated as students emerge from the global pandemic. During the 2021-2022 school year 223 students in our district warranted crisis care at school due to suicidal ideation. Sixty-seven of these students were transported to the hospital for evaluation, and fifty-three were hospitalized. There was no age group that didn't have students at risk. We have traditionally identified students as needing behavioral health support through self, peer or family reporting, discipline referrals, absences, school failure, or suicide attempt. To better understand the depth and breadth of the number of students managing mental health crises in our district, the Behavioral and Emotional Risk Index (BASC-BESS) was administered districtwide in October 2022. The results are sobering. Ten percent (156 students) of our K-2 students were identified as having an "Extremely Elevated Risk" of behavioral and emotional risk, with an additional 15% (235 students) identified as having an "Elevated Risk" for a total of 391 district K-2nd graders. Completing the survey themselves, 9% (445 students) of third through twelfth grade students rated themselves as being in the "Extremely Elevated Risk" of behavioral and emotional risk, with an additional 17% (854 students) rating themselves as having an "Elevated Risk." Our internal screening tools indicate that approximately one in five youth have an elevated risk for anxiety and/or depression.

Ms. Carter moved on to review the resiliency program currently in the Helena Public Schools.

- BASC-BESS (Behavioral & Emotional Screening System) Kindergarten-12th grades; given in October and February.
- Conscious Discipline- Kindergarten-12th grade; Conscious Discipline is based on brain research and is a social emotional learning program that emphasizes adults modeling behavior and problem-solving during a student behavioral episode that teaches the student skills that assist in self-control and self-regulation.
- Second Step Lessons-Kindergarten-5th grades; The skills with Second Step are focused on empathy, emotional management, friendship, and problem solving.
- PAX GBG (PeaceBuilders Good Behavior Game)- Kindergarten-5th grades; The PAX GBG is an evidence-based, best practice, universal preventative intervention applied by the teacher in the classroom. Students learn self-management (self-regulation) skills while collaborating to make their classroom a peaceful and productive learning environment. The PAX GBG was not designed to be a suicide prevention program, but studies have shown students who learned the PAX GBG are significantly less likely to have experienced suicidal ideation.
- SOS (Signs of Suicide) -Middle school and junior year program, presented by counselors. SOS is specifically designed to teach students how to recognize the signs of suicide and mental health struggles in themselves or peers and to encourage students to reach out for help. Students learned ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell).
- YAMH (Youth Aware of Mental Health)- Freshman year program run through the Frosh PE courses. Five lessons are presented by outside mental health professionals.
- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)- Sophomore program run through the Health classes by health teachers. The focus of this program is for students to learn how to engage with a classmate who may be having suicidal thoughts and to understand the importance of asking for help from an adult if they feel their friend is at risk.
- Individual Behavioral Health and Wellness Screening- Middle school and high school; free, opt-in, voluntary screening conducted during school hours with parent permission by the School Based Outpatient Therapy (SBOT) services of Intermountain.
- Rural Behavioral Health Institute (RBHI)- Middle school and high school; free, voluntary, opt-out screening conducted during school hours with same-day data, safety intervention along with free case management and a link-to-care.

Ms. Carter discussed the BASC-BESS (K-5) is given in late fall and early spring. RBHI (6-12) is given in the late fall and early spring with link to care. YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) is given in odd years to 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. PNA (Prevention Needs Assessment) is given even years to 8th, 10th, and 12 graders.

Ms. Carter discussed next steps:

- Formalizing sustainable community partnerships with the Helena Schools and community health care providers, and creating a menu of on-campus, community, and/or virtual support for youth in need. Barriers to care will be removed as services will be delivered to school sites.
- Partnership with Carroll College's new LCSW program (MOU signed, launching 2023).
- School Site Transition Centers (implementing at 9-12; K-8 forecasted for 2023-2024).

- Current Professional Development to support staff with students' needs, students supporting students and schools supporting families: PAX, Conscious Discipline, QPR, SOS, YAM, Suicide and/or Threat Assessment training.
- Anticipated Professional Development: Trauma Informed Care Modules, Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, Suicide Self Care Tools Training, and others (2023).
- SEL calendar for district coordination of staff training, training for students, and assessments/survey dates (2023).
- District webpage dedicated to mental health resources for staff, students, and families (2023).
- Development of updated PK-12 Crisis Response Protocol (2023-2024).
- Include School Based Clinics in plans for future school sites.

Ms. Carter concluded her presentation by reviewing staff mental health resources and support offered at Helena Public Schools, along with new professional development opportunities being offered.

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

The Trustees expressed their appreciation to Ms. Carter and district administration for everything that they are doing to support students in the Helena Public Schools.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m. by Committee Chair Jennifer McKee.