

**Revised**

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Well-Being Committee met in special session on Tuesday, October 29, 2019 at 4:00 PM in the Library at John Lyman Elementary School, Middlefield, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback  
Committee members absent: Dr. Friedrich and Mr. Hicks  
Student Advisors present: Conner Byrne and Molly Yale  
Teacher Advisor present: Mrs. Schaefer  
Administration present: Mrs. Manning, Director of Organization Development

Mrs. Caramanello called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Schaefer, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda as amended: Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion carried unanimously.*

**Approval of Minutes - September 24, 2019**

*Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the minutes of September 24, 2019.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of September 24, 2019, as presented: Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion carried unanimously.*

**Equity Update**

Mrs. Manning explained that the Equity Steering Group has had conversations about partnering with Middletown High School and they all attended the Dismantling Racism conference. They met over the summer with some of the leadership from Middletown Public Schools. Michelle Gohagon, their professional development coordinator, and Dwight Sharpe, their equity coordinator, agreed to be part of the partnership and work directly with our students. Melissa Gonzalez is our district's midlevel leader for special education and she is the equity book club coordinator. About two weeks ago, they got the two groups of kids together and had a very rich conversation. It went so well that they would like to expand their three meeting days to five days. Mrs. Manning would like to have Mrs. Gonzalez and Mr. Sharpe come to a committee meeting as well as some students who participate in the book club. There are currently about 10 students from each district participating.

Connor Byrne and Molly Yale had not heard anything about this outside of this committee. Mrs. Caramanello stated that her children had not said anything about it either. She asked how the committee saw this working out to the whole high school and Mrs. Manning stated they are hoping to have the committee members work on that will happen. They will be working more with SERC over the course of the year and will hopefully have more details about that. They met with the leadership team at the high school as well as the equity committee.

Mrs. Schaefer stated that she just recently attended a conference on equity, but many teachers don't know how to even start these types of conversations. Mrs. Manning added that most people say to just dive in. The book they will be using are a compilation of short stories that are geared toward today's youth. Mr. Moore asked if there were any plans to have the students talk to the rest of the school and Mrs. Manning hoped maybe it would be a springboard for something else. Mrs. Schaefer suggested a diversity/equity club. Mr. Roraback mentioned learning about diverse cultures through food and perhaps even visiting a market that is foreign to them.

Mrs. Manning added that the state Department of Education is requiring black and Latino course work beginning next year and SERC is the service center that has partnered with the state to help develop that course work. Mr. Roraback cautioned that they are careful not to create a sense of guilt or privilege through all of this. Mr. Moore also mentioned that there was a requirement this year for course work about the Holocaust. Mrs. Manning stated that Mr. Sadinsky is working on that with Dr. Good. Mr. Moore added that art and music would also be a good way to introduce students to other cultures. Mrs. Schaefer thought that the advisory program at Strong would be helpful too.

### **District Well-Being Committee Update**

Mrs. Schaefer stated that they have not had a meeting this year as of now, but have three scheduled. She brought a copy of the article about mindfulness and IFS and the models that are coming to Strong. Mrs. Schaefer did PAUSE training during the summer.

Mrs. Manning added that the work from the first two years of the committee have really resulted in the work at Strong School. They will look at developing well-being captains or ambassadors as a way to formalize communications. Mrs. Schaefer added that Strong will be only one of three schools in the nation to implement this.

### **Social Emotional Learning: PAUSE and Restorative Practices at Strong Middle School**

Mrs. Schaefer reported that Mr. Sadinsky studied PAUSE a lot during the summer and the mind set at Strong is much different this year. They had the first initial PD on restorative practices for all of Strong School. The training included all of the staff, including the librarian, support staff and the paras. Eight from Strong School will be trained further on both PAUSE and restorative practices. Mrs. Schaefer defined restorative as liking who you are in the moment.

Mrs. Manning explained that self-leadership model is a very well-research, model that is now moving into schools. PAUSE is just a piece of that model, but it's where the school is starting to go. She reviewed that PAUSE is to pause, become aware, understand one another, have strategies and experiment and try to

rewrite the pattern. Restorative practices are how to bring yourself back and have a conversation with one another. She quoted Joanne Fryeburg, who brought restorative practices to Connecticut, stating that it is a “philosophy that recognizes the importance of prioritizing the relationships and the connections between and among all people within a school community and provides a framework for creating positive school climate and culture.” Mrs. Manning explained that there are both proactive and reactive models there.

Mr. Moore asked how the kids do with the PAUSE and Mrs. Schaefer stated that she has unbelievable success stories with her students. She noted that Mrs. Penney has seen it also. Several other committee members use the model also. Mrs. Schaefer also noted that she and Mr. Sadinsky did a survey from Columbia University as well.

Mrs. Manning would like to see this move up to the high school as well with a committee, then a more structured learning experience for the staff. Mrs. Schaefer commented that the current freshmen are already asking for some of the techniques. Mrs. Caramanello added that Ms. Suchy practices wellness in her class and felt she might be a great resource at the high school. Mrs. Schaefer explained that the teacher has to be a mindful person first before it can be brought into any aspect of teaching and they will need to be consistent.

Mr. Roraback mentioned that he expressed slight reservations on the self-leadership professional development from his personal experience and would like the minutes to reflect his feelings.

### **ConnectiCare Wellness Initiative: eMindful**

Mrs. Manning explained that they sent out a Thoughtexchange survey at the end of the summer, talking about what help staff would like. Four items came to the surface: breathing, exercising, stopping in all areas of life to pause and reconnect and knowing the administration and colleagues have your back. ConnectiCare presented the platform, eMindful, which provides an app to track progress on exercise, healthy lifestyle, mindfulness and positive changes. The 1 Percent Challenge was presented by Dr. Veronesi last week and that challenge is to have folks in the district download the app and spend 14 minutes a day utilizing the platform. The challenge will run for about a month. If they complete 10 sessions, they will receive a \$10 gift card. If they complete 20 sessions in 30 days, they receive a \$20 gift card. The idea is to provide a resource to staff to support them in their own well-being. ConnectiCare is providing the gift cards and close to 150 people have signed up in the last four or five days.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Moore asked the students what they got out of the China experience. Molly Yale stated she was so sad when they left and Connor Byrne commented that he wasn't a part of it, but still talked to the Chinese students. He knows a few people who still text the Chinese students to see how they're doing. They both agreed that everyone is very excited for next year.

### **Adjournment**

*Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Caramanello, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion carried unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First