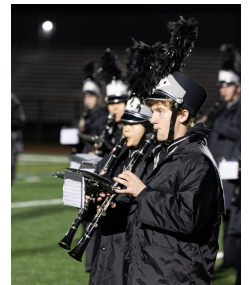




# STUDENT SERVICES PARENT ENGAGEMENT BLUEPRINT

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FIVE SCHOOLS



FIVE PATHWAYS



# *Identifying community needs*



The inaugural meeting of the Cultural Proficiency Equity Student Ambassador group occurred at Strath Haven High School. This is a partnership with several Montgomery County school districts that Dr. Marseille, WSSD Superintendent, has brought to our district. We have 11 Strath Haven students who are in this program that focuses on agency and advocacy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Feedback about counseling needs at the elementary, middle, and high school level is gathered from parents, students, community members, and school personnel. There are multiple opportunities for discussion and sharing of information and perceptions about the K-12 school counseling program goals and perceived needs. The information gathered has helped the Office of Student Services develop four teams to address counseling within the district: Social Emotional Learning, Student Assessment, Parent Engagement, and Suicide Prevention.

## *Social-emotional learning surveys*

Check-in surveys have been developed by our student assessment team in order to assist staff in gaining a better understanding of varying levels of mental health needs at all levels. These surveys are administered twice per year at all levels by the Wallingford Swarthmore School District. Surveys are disseminated in the fall and winter to all students. Students complete a brief survey that provides information to their school counselors and behavioral health staff members about the status of their mental health. The surveys provide data that informs where needs exist as well as the degree of need: low, medium, or high risk. Students are able to provide information about their level of sadness, hopefulness, connectedness in school, as well as other relevant mental health factors. Once completed, behavioral health teams at all schools use this data to provide responsive services including more immediate to longer term individual counseling, small group counseling, and referrals for community based resources. Staff members then meet with students who have been identified as needing additional mental health resources. These surveys have proven to be helpful in highlighting the needs that are present in our student population at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

## *The K-12 Stakeholder Advisory Group*

The purpose of the Advisory Council is to share information about the School Counseling Department, as well as make connections for career support and postsecondary planning within our District and community. The Advisory Council consists of administrators, teachers, school counselors, parents, students, alumni, college representatives, business owners, and other members of the community. Advisory Council participants are nominated by school counselors across the district. Members' input supports job-shadowing, internships, mentoring, and needed skills for successful career paths. Through group work and feedback from the Advisory Council, department goals have been developed in the areas of academic, career, and personal/social. The council also partners with outside entities, such as college representatives to present about admissions trends, and therapists to speak to trends in mental health. The works of the Advisory Council, and goals developed during the meetings, have impacted the Department's daily responsibilities and roles to best support students. The Advisory Council meets twice per school year, in the fall and spring.

## *WSSD Wellness Advisory Committee*

The WSSD Wellness Advisory Committee was designed to bring together individuals from a variety of roles across the District to address issues affecting the health of WSSD students, recognizing that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, emotional well-being, development, and readiness to learn. The Committee strives to promote and maintain a District-wide environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. The Committee meets periodically across the school year, with the goal of sustaining a healthy school environment in which all students can learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve their achievement. WSSD behavioral health staff members attend these Committee meetings to incorporate mental health as an element of Wellness for all students. Additionally, parents attend these meetings to voice their concerns, values, and ideas for positive change within our District. School staff members present at these meetings incorporate the feedback and insight presented by parents into the work that they do within their buildings, as well as the work they do as members of this committee. This is an open committee and is actively seeking new members.

## *Home and School Association*

Through collaboration with the Strath Haven Home and School Association, the Counseling Department gathers feedback from parents about Counseling needs. School and Behavioral Health Counselors present at least three times a year at Home and School meetings on a range of topics, and communicate frequently throughout the year with the Home and School Representatives.



Some familiar faces around WSSD cut the ribbon for the grand reopening of King Field.



SHHS Marketing Class took a trip to Subaru Park for the Work-in-Sports Camp sponsored by Widener University and Philadelphia Union!

## *Central Office Administration Communication*

WSSD administrators communicate any parent and community feedback that has been brought to our district's Central or Building-level Administrative team regarding behavioral health services to the Counseling Department through regular department meetings. At each level, counselors meet with their building administrators on a weekly basis. At the high school, counselors work in triad teams with an administrator and a behavioral health counselor. That triad team meets weekly.



A photo from National Walk, Bike, or Roll to School Day! Students at SRS took on the streets around Swarthmore College to start their journey to school! WES also encouraged students to walk, bike, or roll to school today with our amazing crossing guards helping our students travel safely!

## *School Staff Collaboration*

At every level—elementary, middle and high school—administrators, teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, behavioral health clinicians, and social workers collaborate and communicate with one another to ensure that they are aware of and attending to the needs of the student population within their buildings with the support of Holcomb Behavioral Health, our community SAP liaison.



Superintendent of Schools Dr. Marseille joins in a kindergarten phonics lesson.



School spirit on display from our SHHS cheerleaders!



## *Student Assistance Program*

The Student Assistance Program is one example of this collaboration. Teams which include members from each of these areas come together to identify students that might be in need of additional support and services, specifically from a behavioral health perspective. This team fields referrals, which can come from parents, students, teachers, or other school staff members, which indicate that a specific student was observed to require more support. A referral to this team commonly happens as a result of observed changes in the student's behavior or school performance. The team will then conduct a pre-assessment to develop an appropriate plan to support the identified students who have been referred to the team.

# Recurring Programming

## ELEMENTARY PROGRAMMING

### Botvin Life Skills Parent Nights

Botvin Life Skills Parent Training is a comprehensive substance abuse prevention program that focuses on targeting the social and psychological factors that initiate risky behaviors rather than simply educating participants on the dangers of drug and alcohol use. It helps students to develop greater self-esteem and self-confidence and to effectively cope with anxiety. Parents are provided with information and strategies to help support their children as they grow up and face various challenges. This program helps give children the tools to make good choices. The program focuses on these 8 components and builds on them throughout the 3rd through 5th grade: Self esteem, Decision making, smoking, advertising, dealing with stress, communication skills, social skills, and assertiveness.



Perry the Panther Cub came to visit SRS to reinforce the three Bs – being safe, being respectful and being responsible – with our students!



Artist Amber "Amberella" has installed "power hearts" throughout our WES building with sayings such as "you are loved" and "you are not alone" and "I believe in you."



Roxanna Shelton, a former NPE student, and a member of troop 57002, designed and completed this beautiful mural at NPE.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

### Morning at the Middle School

Morning At The Middle School is an event that is offered each year in August by the sixth grade teachers, as well as the 6th grade school counselor and the Assistant Principal for grade 6. This event is open to all rising 6th grade students before they begin middle school. During the event, teachers who serve as the "Team Leaders" for grade 6 provide important information to the students about what to expect during their transition to middle school, and across the next 3 years at Strath Haven Middle School. The day begins in the Auditorium for an information overview and question and answer session. Information covered during this portion of the day includes, but is not limited to the school schedule, locker usage, lunch time expectations, bussing/transportation and school supplies. Students then break out into groups, based on their assigned Connections teacher, for a teacher-led tour of the building. After their tours, the students spend some time with their Connections teacher in that classroom and get to know the students in that class. After Connections time, students go out to the field for a treat and spend time catching up with old friends and meeting new people. Students head home after this event feeling more comfortable and confident as they prepare to return to the building for their first day of school at Strath Haven Middle School.

### SHMS Parent Orientation Night

The Strath Haven Middle School Parent Orientation Night is offered for the parents of rising sixth graders during the spring of their child's fifth grade year. This event provides an opportunity for parents and guardians of future middle school students to learn more about Strath Haven Middle School and to engage with some members of the middle school staff. Middle School Administrators present the school's mission statement, and discuss the transition from elementary to middle school, detailing how parents and families can prepare for this change. Important information is reviewed with families, including but not limited to: technological resources (i.e., PowerSchool Portal, Google Classroom), differentiated assessments used in the middle school, teaming, academic content areas, world language programs, specials, extracurricular activities, and getting involved in our school community. During this event, the 6th grade Assistant Principal, as well as the 6th grade school counselor are introduced. The school counselor discusses their overall role in supporting students through middle school, and reviews the school counseling program offered at the middle school level. Academic department chairs provide an overview of their content and curriculum to be delivered. Finally, the event culminates with building tours that are offered to attendees.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMMING, continued

### SHHS Orientation Night

The annual Strath Haven High School Orientation event is offered to the parents and guardians of rising ninth grade students in March of their eighth grade year. The event is held in the Strath Haven High School auditorium and is led by members of our high school administration. During this event, the Strath Haven High School Principal talks about the high school's mission, discusses how students can and should get involved, and also presents an overview of academic requirements in high school, as well as the social-emotional/academic balance they work to provide for their students. The High School Assistant Principal also reviews the scheduling process. All high school department chairs are introduced and discuss their content areas. All presenters then remain available for questions and answers following the formal presentation. The following day in school, the topic of scheduling and course selection for the high school is reviewed with the eighth grade students by the high school school counseling department.



Strath Haven Middle School's September Panthers of the month.

## HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

At Strath Haven High School, the School Counselors provide a range of programming for students and families to address their needs and interests. At the start of the Fall Semester, counselors present to the parents/guardians of seniors about post-secondary planning, with a concentration on the college application process. Later in the fall, a similar program for parents/guardians introduces the topic of post secondary planning and timelines for juniors. Each year, a representative from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Association (PHEAA) comes to Strath Haven High School at the invitation of the Counseling Department to present to families about financial aid for post-secondary education. Families of students of all ages, K-12, are invited to this event. Each quarter, counselors are available for informal Question and Answer sessions with parents/guardians at a series of “Coffee with the Counselor” events. These sessions address a range of topics including course scheduling, student engagement, standardized testing, and social emotional learning. Special interest programming related to college, including College Recruiting for Athletes Night, Naviance Information, and Transition Night related to student services are also organized by the Career and College Counseling Center. These evening events feature guest speakers with expertise in these fields. Counselors also appear at Home and School Association meetings upon request to present and answer questions about course selection and scheduling, summer opportunities for teens, how to encourage social engagement for adolescents, and facilitating a balanced life.



Strath Haven High School celebrated its inaugural “Panther Pride” Kickoff Event this fall, culminating in the 2022-23 yearbook distribution.

# *Responsive Programming*

Multiple workshops are offered to WSSD parents/guardians/family members throughout the school year based on feedback collected from community. Programming includes but is not limited to Drug and Alcohol prevention and education, Anxiety, social media, healthy sleep, and resource nights. Some of the events planned for the 2023-2024 school year are detailed below:

## Financial Aid Information Night

Regional Higher Education Access Liaison Fran McKeown shares valuable information about financial aid, student loans, and resources for scholarships to families of students of any age in the WSSD. With changes to the FAFSA, this presentation features timely updates that everyone needs.

## Drug and Alcohol Information and Prevention

Featuring mental health professionals, this event for families and secondary level students addresses current drug trends among youth and adolescents, signs and symptoms of substance use, the developmental impact of drug use, as well as the presentation of additional prevention resources for parents/guardians, students, and education professionals.

## Setting Boundaries for Screen Time and Social Media

Kristen McGarvey, whose mission is to explore the responsibility that comes with having a social media account, speaks to families about what it means to have a positive digital footprint, the dangers of social media and gaming, and its effect on children's mental health. The workshop provides parents/guardians with tools to help their children explore social media in a positive way while keeping them safe.

## Anxiety, Worry, and School Refusal

Local professionals help parents/guardians identify the signs of anxiety in their elementary school-aged children, as well as differentiate between anxiety and worry. This program will provide resources for to help families and children who struggle with both, as well as suggest possibilities for further treatment if appropriate. A similar session will be held on a separate date for families of middle and high school aged students to provide information and resources for them on this important topic.

## Nurtured Heart Approach®: Transforming Your Tween or Teen

The Nurtured Heart Approach® is a research-based, relationship-focused methodology which helps children and adults build their inner wealth and use their intensity in successful ways. It has become a powerful way of awakening the inherent greatness in youth while also facilitating parenting success. This approach is being initially employed at the elementary level.

## WSSD Staff Wellness Day

The district is collaborating with parents and other community members to offer a Wellness Day for our staff. The focus of this day will be both physical and mental health for the district employees. WSSD employees will participate in a wide range of offerings to suit their personal holistic health needs.



Members of our Student Services department show their support for Suicide Prevention month.



Middle school faculty and staff wear green to support "Say Hello Day" to encourage saying "Hello" to make sure no one feels alone.

## Communication and Feedback

The Wallingford-Swarthmore School District publicizes and markets school events/information using our Communications and Community Relations Liaison Rachel Riley. Using social media, including Instagram and Facebook, Rachel is able to reach a larger audience through posts indicating what is going on within the district, including parent events. Additionally, within the bio of WSSD's Instagram page, there is a link to guide users to additional resources - including a shortcut to Student Services and events. Likewise, members of WSSD's Student Services Parent Engagement Team have shared important events, information, and resources with their respective schools within the district. Members of the committee send fliers and informational content over to colleagues and parents via Google Classroom, Email, and other media. The WSSD Office of Student Services website provides multiple resources to support student wellness as well as information about district wide programming for families. Each school website also features a counseling department website that promotes opportunities for parent engagement.

# *Prepared by:*

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