Student Wellness: Mental Health and Resiliency

Strategy 2015-2017
Student Wellness has been an important topic for many years for the students, parents and teachers of the Calgary Catholic School District. Student Wellness allows students to live to their full potential academically, spiritually, physically and socially. Within our district we use the Tell Them From Me Survey (TTFM) and the Accountability Pillar Results as a performance measures. Please see the appendix for more information. The Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD), the largest Catholic school district in Alberta serves over 52,000 students in Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, Chestermere and the Rocky View County. It is comprised of 105 schools; 50 of which are Elementary, 36 Elementary/Junior High, 5 discrete Junior High, 3 Junior/Senior High, 9 High School and 2 Special Education. Just over 28% of the population is made up of English Language Learners.

In promoting Student Wellness in the classroom, the Calgary Catholic School District will be part of a coordinated approach involving the whole school community (parents, teachers and students), local community resources, and government initiatives and supports (AHS). The aim is to create a vibrant culture of Student Wellness in all our schools.

“A whole school, whole community approach: Actively promoting positive mental health and creating a healthy, caring inclusive class and school environment (Carney, 2015 p.18).”

Adapted from the Comprehensive School Health. Please see the following link for more details:
CCSD What Is Comprehensive School Health?
“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” John 10:10b

The Calgary Catholic School District supports schools to create a stronger sense of community based on our shared Catholic faith. We are all called to create a healthy environment so that our students reflect the image of God and are successful contributors to a global society.

To develop the capacity of school communities in promoting student wellness to ensure healthy development.

Strategic areas of focus are:
- Wellness
- Resiliency
- Mental Health
Definitions:

Wellness
Adapted from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC, 2006, p.2) Student Wellness can be defined as.....
“to develop the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, move and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections, and personal dignity”

Resilience
We are all faced with challenges that affect us at some time in our lives. Resilience is the ability to adapt to these challenges that may include stress, tragedy, trauma, threats, setbacks, and loss. By developing resilience, we are able to better manage stress or feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. The ability to work together, navigate resources, and thrive despite these challenges arise from skills of resilience.

Mental Health
Mental health means striking a balance in all aspects of your life. It includes:
- How we feel about ourselves
- How we feel about others
- How we are able to meet the demands of life
Reaching a balance is a learning process.
1.2 The school district builds student wellness through the ongoing development of the Catholic Community of Caring within the school climate and culture.

3.2 Students and communities have access to safe and healthy learning communities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action # 1 – ILN Presentation – Dr. Stan Kutcher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>- All Principals and Supervisors</td>
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<tr>
<td>- On January 13th, 2016 Dr. Stan Kutcher will present on student wellness and Mental Health</td>
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<td>Individual Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dr. Stan Kutcher</td>
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<td>Completion Date</td>
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<td>- January 13, 2016</td>
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<th>Action # 2 – Implement the Dr. Stan Kutcher “Go To Educator Program” (Mental Health Literacy for Staff)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Train a minimum of three Go To Educators per school</td>
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<td>- Identify the number of trained Go To Educators per school</td>
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<td>- Train all DLCT’s at DLCT PD</td>
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<td>- Full school training for schools identified as high need</td>
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<td>- Full training for Specialized Program Schools</td>
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<td>Individual Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Jodie Heywood (Consultant – Counselling)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>- DLCT’s trained by June 2016</td>
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<td>- Three educators trained per school by June 2017</td>
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<th>Action # 3 – Implement the Dr. Stan Kutcher Mental Health Resources (Mental Health Literacy for Students)</th>
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<td>Tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>- All Jr. High Schools implementing curriculum to Grade 8 &amp; 9 students</td>
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<td>- Train all Health teachers as Go To Educators</td>
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<td>- Train all Health teachers in the Mental Health resources</td>
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<td>- Provide trainers to observe and co-present resources with teachers</td>
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<td>- Gather research from schools and collect research data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Responsible</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mental Health and Wellness Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>- All Health teachers trained as Go To Educators by June 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>- All Health teachers trained in the Mental Health resources by June 2017</td>
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### Action # 4 – Implement the 4th R Resources (Social/Emotional Literacy for Students)

**Tasks**
- All Junior High Schools implementing the 4th R resource in grade 7, 8 & 9
- Have a minimum of one teacher trained per Junior High School in the 4th R
- Implement 4th R resources into the Health Curriculum
- Teach emotional and social wellbeing skills

**Individual Responsible**
- Mary-Beth Mulligan (Consultant Healthy Schools)

**Completion Date**
- A minimum of one Junior High School teacher trained in the 4th R by June 2017

### Action # 5 – Implement the Dr. Stan Kutcher “Go To Parent” Program (Mental Health Literacy for Parents)

**Tasks**
- To educate parents about the “Go To Parent” Program on Mental Health
- Have Andrew Baxter (Alberta Health Services Mental Health) present the “Go To Parent” program to the Trustee Forum evening to parents in the fall.
- Obtain their feedback and responses to the program and how it relates back to students

**Individual Responsible**
- Superintendent Luba Diduch

**Completion Date**
- November 2015

### Action # 6 – Implement Dr. Dean Kriellaars’s Tool Kit on Physical Literacy K-6

**Tasks**
- All Elementary Schools implementing the Physical Literacy objectives Tool Kit
- Have a minimum of one teacher trained per Elementary School in the Physical Literacy Tool Kit

**Individual Responsible**
- Jennifer Wallace (Consultant Health and Wellness)

**Completion Date**
- June of 2017
APPENDIX:

TELL THEM FROM ME SURVEY

All junior and senior high schools participate in The Tell Them From Me Survey which allows students an opportunity to provide input on a variety of topics related to student engagement. This year it was optional for elementary schools and 40 out of 88 schools with an elementary population took part.

ANXIETY

For the measure of anxiety, students responded to the following six questions:

- I worry about what other students think about me.
- I am too fearful or nervous.
- I worry about people laughing at me.
- I worry about a teacher asking me a question.
- I worry more than most kids.
- I am afraid that other students will think I am stupid.

Students answered on a rating scale of:

- Never or hardly ever
- About once a week
- About 2 or 3 times a week
- Almost every day

Students responded to the 6 Likert questions regarding the extent to which they experience feelings or display symptoms related to anxiety. The data are scaled on a 4-point scale, and students with a score above 2 are considered to be experiencing high levels of anxiety, while those with scores above 1.2 but below 2 are considered to have moderate levels of anxiety. The results are reported as “the percentage of students with moderate levels of anxiety” and “the percentage of students with high levels of anxiety”.

For elementary students (grade 4-6), 22 per cent reported moderate to high levels of anxiety, while the Canadian norm for these grades is 16 per cent. This included 25 per cent of the girls and 20 per cent of the boys, while the Canadian norm for girls is 20 per cent and for boys is 13 per cent.

For secondary students (grade 7 – 12), 25 per cent reported moderate to high levels of anxiety, while the Canadian norm for these grades is 18 per cent. This included 34 per cent of the girls and 17 per cent of the boys while the Canadian norm for girls is 21 per cent and for boys is 14 per cent. These rates for 2014-2015 are slightly higher than the previous year.

Of the six questions asked, the two which showed the highest levels of anxiety at the district level were:

- I worry about what other students think about me.
- I worry about people laughing at me.
DEPRESSION
For the measure of depression, secondary students only responded to the following six questions:

- I feel sad or depressed.
- A lot of things seem to bother me.
- I feel lonely.
- I cry without a good reason.
- Other students seem to have more fun than me.
- I have trouble falling asleep at night.

Students answered on a rating scale of:

- Never or hardly ever
- About once a week
- About 2 or 3 times a week
- Almost every day

Students respond to the 6 Likert questions regarding the extent to which they experience feelings or display symptoms related to depression. The data are scaled on a 4-point scale, and students with a score above 2 are considered to be experiencing high levels of depression, while those with scores above 1.2 but below 2 are considered to have moderate levels of depression. The results are reported as “the percentage of students with moderate levels of depression” and “the percentage of students with high levels of depression”.

For secondary students (grade 7 – 12), 23 per cent reported moderate to high levels of anxiety, while the Canadian norm for these grades is 18 per cent. This included 30 per cent of the girls and 16 per cent of the boys while the Canadian norm for girls is 20 per cent and for boys is 15 per cent. These rates for 2014-2015 are slightly higher than the previous year.

CCSD ACCOUNTABILITY PILLAR RESULTS

Results from the 2015 provincial accountability pillar survey related to safe and caring schools indicate that 89.1 per cent of district parents, students and teachers agree that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of helping and respecting others, and are learning respect for others. This is a slight decrease of 0.7 per cent from 2014 and 0.1 per cent below the province.

Results also indicated 84.8 per cent of parents, students and teachers are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship (students are encouraged to try their best, follow the rules, help each other when they can and respect each other). This is a slight decrease of 0.4 per cent from last year but 1.3 per cent above the province.