

Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)
Meeting Minutes (Virtual)
Monday, December 5, 2022 from 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Maeve Kennelly (Wayside), Taylor Freeman (Wayside Intern), Wendy Conroy (BWC Chair, Sexuality Educator), Janice Darias (Assistant Superintendent), Nadia Foster (BWC Evaluator), Elizabeth Dionne (Parent, town committees), Megan Palmer (Parent), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Samantha Resnick (BHS Social Worker), Leah Lesser (Belmont Parent, Emerson Health Marketing), Hannah Lee (YA services librarian), Lenny Rodriguez (parent), Portia Thompson (parent)

1. Welcome [Introductions, Check-Ins]

Members introduced themselves.

2. Student Ambassador Updates:

- **Key Takeaways:**

Maeve presented “key takeaways” from the joint BWC / SA meeting on 11/16/2022 (e.g., staff and peer responses to MH were concerning, health/wellness curriculum needs updating - specifically around mental health and disordered eating, disconnect with School Adm. and students, access and visibility of Guidance and Social Work departments, inclusion of students in responses to hate incidents, and the creation of a breakout room for decompression).

BWC discussion on SA Takeaways:

Wendy emphasized that this is the students’ perspective and that the school is moving forward on some of these topics; she asked about the Health Curriculum Director position and Janice noted it’s not in the budget.

Megan said getting back to the SAs with what’s possible and what they can do would be helpful. Sam noted that students should start with the Guidance Dept concerning their MH issues and Guidance will refer from there.

Leah mentioned that the information from Sam was helpful, and that her child who is at BHS now was not aware of the referral process.

Janice shared that Guidance is always the first step, or a trusted adult/staff member, and they can guide students to social workers or other resources, but the capacity is lacking.

Use of electronic message boards and 5 Minutes Ago announcements to promote MH tips and reinforce how to get to MH resources, was suggested.

- BWC will present SA updates (including the 11/16 “Takeaways”) at a School Committee Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023

- The NAN Project (Peer Mentorship) - having young adults with lived experience share their “come-back” stories - This will occur in Feb./March 2023.

3. School Department Professional Development (PD) Update

Janice noted that the NAN Project will present two programs:

1. Mental Health 101: Mental Health in the Classroom (Th., February 2, 3:30-5:00)
2. Typical vs. Troubled Youth (Th., March 2, 3:30-5:00)

Janice explained that 22 people have signed up so far for the PD provided by the NAN project, and explained the two PD topics. All but one participant asked to attend both programs, and at Lizzie’s recommendation, the programs are capped at 25 people. Janice will likely contact Lizzie and request that she offer a second round of PD, for those who could not attend the first round. Lisa emphasized that this can be a good point to give to students to show them that action is being taken with regard to the staff MH concern.

4. 2023 YRBS

Middlesex League – Belmont’s input into 2023 survey questions:

Lisa reached out to the Middlesex League coordinator Becca Millock.

Lisa requested that vaping questions differentiate the substance involved (nicotine or THC), that self harm questions be added to grades 7 and 8, and that a post pandemic shut down question be added concerning overall mental health. There are other YRBS questions that would also be important to add, e.g., sexual assault/harrassment, pornography and sexting.

Janice noted that the survey will be sent to parents ahead of time and they can review it and choose to opt out.

5. 2023 Programming for BWC:

- I. **The NAN Project -- Suicide Prevention FACTS (Feelings, Actions, Changes, Threats, Situations)** – tentative date: Monday, March 6 at 7:00 PM at CMS

BWC - Please help publicize this event!

- II. **“Straight Talk” with BHS Seniors (late March or early April) -**

Question for Janice - Do we need any permission or can we proceed to plan this program? Janice indicated that we need to contact Principal Taylor.

- III. **BHS Seniors and Parents (Social Host, Substance Misuse strategies, etc.)**

Melissa noted that this program is likely to occur again this Spring. She will reach back out to the BWC after the holidays.

IV. SEL Guidelines - a program for parents

Megan is gauging interest from within the community; Wendy noted that the past presentations were helpful.

6. Closing Thoughts and other Updates

- Next BWC meeting: Monday, Jan. 9, 2023 from 1:00 - 2:00

Please note: going forward the BWC will meet virtually the *second Monday of the month* from 1:00 - 2:00. Please make note of the following Monday meetings:

Feb. 13
Mar. 13
April 10
May 8
June 12