

**Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC)**  
**Meeting Minutes (Virtual)**  
**Monday, April 10, 2023 from 12:30 – 1:30 PM**

Lisa Gibalerio (Wayside), Maeve Kennelly (Wayside), Wendy Conroy (BWC Chair, Sexuality Educator), Nadia Foster (EDC evaluator), Mike Crowley (BMC Member), Janice Darius (Assistant Superintendent), Melissa O'Connor (BHS SRO), Samantha Resnick (BHS Social Worker), Jess Hicks (Clinical Social Work Intern at BHS), Portia Thompson (parent), Elizabeth Dionne (Select Board member, parent), Leah Lesser (Parent), Megan Palmer (Parent), Hannah Lee (YA Services Librarian)

1. **Welcome [Introductions, Check-Ins]** Members present introduced themselves.
2. **Student Ambassador Updates:**
  - Student Survey - a survey will be sent to students to gauge experiences around staff support and academic pressure at BHS. BWC feedback on the draft survey is welcomed.
  - *One Caring Adult* Sticker Update - the stickers arrived, they will be distributed this week, Maeve will collect data on this initiative, BWC discussed marketing ideas around making the sticker visible to students.
  - Teen Mental Health First Aid initiative - Lisa explained that there is funding from the state to do Teen Mental Health First Aid, in grades 10-12, and that Maeve will be talking to Brittany King about offering Teen Mental Health First Aid to high school students. We are in the preliminary stages of planning, this training would be free and snacks and materials would be provided. We are thinking of doing three, 90 minute sessions, and although students are very busy, we are hoping that offering this initiative (for free) would be a great resource.  
Portia shared what a fantastic resource this would be and asked if the training could be used for community service hours. Maeve will check with Brittany King.

3. **2023 YRBS**

Will be administered in grades 7 – 12 during the last week of April.

Caregiver notification, opt out consent, etc. went out last week.

Janice shared that principals sent out the YRBS information, middle (grades 7 and 8) and high school students will take the survey the week after April break (4/25, 4/26). A PDF of the survey was also sent to parents. She also noted that some parents are concerned about how to navigate if a child answers 'no' to a certain question; she explained that students won't see subsequent questions if they answer 'no' to one, i.e., skip logic.

Leah asked if the question "*how much do you weigh?*" was normally included in the survey? The answer was yes, it has always been in the survey. Both Janice and Lisa were not aware of the reasoning behind that. Lisa will ask JSI.

JSI's response concerning the weight question:

Here is what the CDC says about the question –  
QUESTION(S):

- How tall are you without your shoes on?
- How much do you weigh without your shoes on?
- How do you describe your weight?

CDC RATIONALE:

- These questions measure self-reported height and weight and perceived body weight. Data on self-reported height and weight are used to calculate body mass index (BMI) and determine the corresponding BMI percentile for adolescents. BMI percentile takes into account that young people are still growing and are growing at different rates depending on their age and sex. There are different ways that BMI data can be presented; CDC recommends using BMI percentile when assessing weight status for youth ages 2–20. Although BMI calculated from self-reported height and weight underestimates the prevalence of obesity compared to BMI calculated from measured height and weight, self-reported height and weight are useful for tracking BMI trends over time.
- Children with obesity are at higher risk of having other chronic health conditions and diseases that influence physical health. These include asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems, type 2 diabetes, and risk factors for heart disease. Obesity has psychological consequences as well; many youth with obesity experience weight stigma, including being bullied and teased. In the long term, youth with obesity are more likely to have obesity as an adult than children or adolescents who did not have obesity.
- Continued monitoring of height and weight data through the YRBS provides information at the national, state, and local levels that can be used to track progress in efforts to curb the spread of obesity. The YRBS is the only survey that provides obesity data among high school students that is representative at the state and local level. Nationwide in 2019, 16% of high school students had obesity and 16% were overweight. During 1999–2019, significant linear increases occurred in the percentage of students with obesity (11%–16%) and who were overweight (14%–16%). Additionally, YRBS data can be used to describe trends in weight status since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lisa shared that we will be working throughout the summer on organizing the YRBS data, preparing to present to CMS/BHS PTO/PTSO, School Committee, Select Board, Health Board, and other community organizations. We are expecting to begin disseminating data in late September.

#### **4. Guidance and Social Work Surveys**

The BWC is seeking data on why students present to Guidance or Social Workers.

Lisa shared that we sent a short survey to Chenery and BHS social workers and guidance counselors asking them to rank the reasons students were seeking social workers/guidance department. We plan on sharing this data at the next BWC meeting (Monday, May 8 at 12:30). Samantha asked if the YRBS data possibly emphasized the need for support staffing. (Yes.) Michael added that the YRBS results are widely discussed on the school committee, are important for conversations on budget and staffing, and will hopefully reinforce the need for more staffing, if funding allows.

#### 5. **BWC Summer 2023 Subgroups:**

1. YRBS Data
2. Fall Vaping Forum
3. Planning (other) BWC Fall Programming
4. BWC Publicity and Recruitment

Lisa discussed that the summer is the only time we can really dig deep into these topics, and if anyone would like to join any of the four outlined subgroups and attend a meeting or two – please let us know!

#### 6. **Other Updates and Upcoming Coalition meeting:**

##### **BWC Grant Updates**

Lisa offered updates on the STOP Grant and DFC Grant renewal for years 6 through 10 and shared the impacts of these funding opportunities.

##### **Parenting Group – Meets again: Wed., April 26, 7 – 8 PM, virtual.**

Special Guest: Karla Koza will be there to answer questions about the transition to the new grade 7 and 8 building.

Please invite people; attendance has been lacking.

Megan shared possibly having the guidance department and Soc. Workers at the schools offering BWC's Parenting Group as a resource.

Portia and Samantha shared how powerful it can be for parents to know they're not alone and Jess mentioned that confidentiality may be a concern for some parents/children, and that may be a reason attendance is lower.

Lisa shared that she is going to reach out to Emma Thurston to open a line of communication between BWC and the marijuana dispensary opening this spring. She hopes to gather more information on how the education funding will accrue (tax on revenue?) and how it will be spent on prevention education.

We also hope to learn more about how the opioid abatement money will be spent in the community. Elizabeth (as Select Board member) will keep us abreast of this.

Mark your calendars for next BWC meeting:

**Mon., May 8 at 12:30**

Last but not least ....

\*\* Congratulations to BWC's Elizabeth Dionne! Elizabeth is Belmont's newest Select Board member. Thank you, Elizabeth – your service to Belmont is remarkable!

\*\* And, thank you to Mike Crowley for his many years of service on the School Committee. Mike advocated tirelessly on behalf of students during an incredibly turbulent time.

We thank you both and are thrilled you are a part of the BWC team!