

CHAMPLAIN PTO

Champlain Elementary School PTO Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2021

I. Meeting Introduction: Vanessa Berman and Jessica Blackman

- Champlain is partnering with St. Anthony's Church- supporting food baskets for families going into the Winter Break.
- A new student mentorship project will be launching after the winter break.
- SEL- Social Emotional Learning is as relevant as learning how to read and do math. It's our job as an educational learning community to teach SEL in schools and at home.
- Different schools in the Burlington School District have had a different level of impact from the changes from the COVID-19 pandemic due to a variety of factors. Reinforcing SEL skills across schools and across the district can help to mitigate some of the negative childhood experiences students have experienced in the past year and a half.

Presenters:

- Jen Colman, BSD Mental Health Specialist
- Nick Woolf, BST SEL Specialist
- Jim Kelliher, Champlain School Counselor
- Cara Gleason Krebs, Director of Howard Center Services

II. Updates from Principal Resteghini

- In music Betsey Green is teaching Ukelele
- 3/4 Girls Enjoyed basketball skills clinics from the Women's Catamount team including Emma and Josie- thank you to Chris Naley.
- Burlington Parks and Recs sign ups are ready and were sent out in the Blue Note.
- The school community celebrated Dia de los Muertos as a celebration on family and life
- Judy Dow an Abenaki leader and Activist for Vermont Climate change is leading a project on November 18th
- Special Thanks to the Care team for the successful Winter Gear Swap! There are still some items in the bins in the front of the school

III. Jen Colman, Psychotherapist and Mental Health Specialist for the district:

- Happy to be working with Nick in his new position.
- Vermont AOE has determined that Mental Health and SEL are a major focus for the federal funding that is coming into states and districts called "District Recovery Funding."

- “It's OK not to be ok” and modeling self-care by parents is very helpful

IV. Nick Woolf, BST SEL Specialist Presentation:

- At home, parents and guardians can review these resources.
- Nick has worked with schools throughout NE on how to bring SEL into the classroom with the goal of increasing mental health and well-being through emotional management, self-awareness and conflict resolution. These skills have been well-researched and linked to academic and post-secondary outcomes.
- Comprehensive and holistic K-12 framework to build the SEL skills by meeting students where they are at.
- Student and family engagement is a key
- Nick shared slide showing a draft of the BSD vision for student well-being.
- How impactful extending SEL into the home can be. Easy to use tools and resources to extend the SEL learning into the home.
- SEL VT: Free virtual platform 15-20 lessons Prek-12
- <https://sel.education.vermont.gov>
- Free for caregivers.
- Inner Explorer @ Home. Age Appropriate practices to try at home. Quick and easy to use mindfulness practices.
- There is an upcoming Zoom Workshop open to BSD parents: R. Keeth Matheny- workshop on what SEL is. Free Access. **11/15 6:30-8 pm with Colchester Schools**. Geared toward MS/ HS but great info for anyone.

Q- (Buddy)- how does this look day to day at school?

A. Systemic school climate (posters, language and message that)
As well as direct instruction led by teachers and Mr. Kelliher for instance including empathy intentionally into those topics already taught).

Q- How do the schools assess an individual child and determine where they are expected to be in terms of SEL and what to expect. Do the schools have a developmental tool that may identify those students who may need

A. (Nick) There is a big gap is in data collection. Other districts have standards by grade level as well as some type of survey that can be used to assess students.

For measuring pre-school SEL skills “teaching strategies gold” is the best metric progression. One important area is “relationship mapping metrics”. One trusted adult relationship has a tremendous impact on the SEL outcomes for youth.

V. Jim Kelliher, Champlain School Counselor Presentation:

- This year Mr. Kelliher has more opportunities to be in each classroom at least 1x a week. This provides the opportunity to be in the class and get to know the students and meet them where they are.
- Last year, Mr. Kelliher was in each classroom teaching lessons which still continue. Self-Awareness, Conflict Resolution using “zones of regulation” “Kelso’s choices” and other curricula. In 5th grade there is social thinking and social behavior mapping.

- “Champ Academy” is a SEL curriculum that the school uses which provides teachers a week at a time of SEL sections that helps teachers to incorporate SEL into their ongoing classroom practices. The weekly activities give freedom for teachers to use them as needed. Each classroom is using the resources differently and finding aspects that fits in their day.
- Restorative practices are also being included in the staff meetings an PD opportunities.
- Highlighting our own healthy strategies and practices that we use as adults and modeling them with our children is very helpful.

The overview of SEL is provided at this link: <https://education.vermont.gov/content/sel-vt>

Q- Zones of regulation. Joe asked Jim to expand on how these can apply to home.

A- Blue, Green, Yellow and Red. These are sent home and children are bringing their awareness home with them. These include strategies including how do you manage in those zones. What activities match up with each zone. Using that language and symbols to reinforce the strategies presented in school can be helpful to reinforce these skills.

Q- re Champ Academy: Can those things be included in some way in the blue note? It is really helpful for parents to know.

A- Yes, look forward to an upcoming blue note

VI. Cara Gleason Krebs, Director of Howard Center Services Presentation:

- VT has a unique system of SW. Some districts donot have direct hired Social Workers. They are co-hired School Services Clinicians who show up at the school district as an employee. 12 clinicians are in Burlington. They have a caseload of voluntary clients. The clinician is a LICSW or MSW. They are able to do mental- health assessments and provide family services and supports including in-home supports. Caseloads are “relatively” low and their caseload generally is designed to fit into the other services that are part of the schools SEL/ Mental Health Continuum for schools.
- Slide Show presentation: Continuum of Stress: Positive Stress, Tolerable Stress, Toxic Stress.
- *See slide show Get Grounded and Connected – does everyone know what they need to do when they are feeling stressed out “ I am the kind of person who needs....” “What are the rituals in the family that make people feel like they are part of your family and help them to feel connected.” In stressful times, the more we can be super thoughtful and clear about this is helpful.
- How do I know when to seek help for my child? (slide)
- When you are concerned about your child: (slide)

Local and National Resources: (slide):

- Text HOME to 74174
- Vermont 211 united way
- 1-866-652-4636
- Partners for Access 802-488-7474 partnersforaccess@howardcenter.org
- Center Point Services
- Crisis text Line: <https://www.crisistextline.org>

VII. Questions and Answers

Q- Social Media- is this a concern for other PTO's Is there an interest for parents as the students grow "Internet Safety Officer" is a position in some districts.

A- (Jen Coleman) started the conversation with the conversation with your pre-teen regarding the phone, that you will be looking at their phone, where phones are kept at night, contract etc. Susan Ames does some work on this in the library with Digital Citizenship.

Nick Woolf Shared information on the Digital Wellness Lab: <https://digitalwellnesslab.org>

Q- (Brettan) what is happening to support the teachers (and staff!)

- We have to prioritize time to support teachers and staff focus on SEL for students and taking care of each other and ourselves as well.
(Jessica)- part of what prompted the meeting is to acknowledge that this year is a really hard year ! The PTO is working on supporting the teacher in-service day on the 8th of December. There will be communications coming out. The teacher wish lists are also out. Look for your teacher wish lists please on Facebook, bluenote and other vehicles.
 - November 22nd. Monday of the parent teacher conferences we will have a pop up food pantries shelf for families. 2nd winter swap will also be then. There is still a box in front of the school.
 - Soon there will be a fundraising call re: support over the winter holidays for gift cards for families in need and also fun gift boxes. Please fill out the family survey. Please pass it around. It helps to identify families who need support. The survey is also still active.
 - The form is available on an old blue note and is on the PTO email. The PTO will re-post it to Facebook.

IX. Announcement: Mike Fischer will not be running for re-election in March. If anybody has interest Mike would be more than welcome to share his experience with them.