

WASD Mental Health Action Plan Update



March 11, 2024

Dr. Jessica Lengle, Director of Pupil Services

Background

- Strategic Plan initiated this work; 22-23 was used to identify needs, 23-24 began our work and 24-25 will include full implementation and continued goal/action step development
- 22-23 Academic Year - multiple task force meetings with opportunities for individual/group written input as well
- March 2023 - action plan developed for 23-24 and 24-25 academic years
- February 2024 - task force meeting; June 2024 task force meeting planned
- While Director of Pupil Services is leading these goals, groups represented in the work include: school board of directors, administrators, school counselors, school social worker, student assistance specialist, nurses, parents, teachers, support staff, local physicians and multiple community agencies

Area of Focus #1 - Stigma

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
Develop a K-12 menu for in-class mental health breaks – determine age-appropriate times for these to occur	Building-level administrators; OTs; social worker; behavior support specialist	Full implementation to start throughout the 24-25 academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23-24 School Year – K, 1, 2 teachers trained in MyTime Yoga March 2024 - Teacher led peer training on the short-term and long term effects of brain breaks for middle level students
Consider organizing a community-wide health campaign with community organization	Director of Pupil Services	Fall 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2023 – Dr. Lengle met with Wyo Public Library to develop plan April 2023 – worked with local signage company to develop prototype June 2023 – Funding solidified and order placed July 2023 – Signs became available to public October 2023 – Reading Eagle article https://www.readingeagle.com/2023/10/17/positive-signs-cropping-up-in-wyomissing-and-west-reading/
Create opportunities in the K-4 building to normalize mental health services and supports – rebrand eSAP	eSAP team	23-24 academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2023 – WHEC eSAP team developed new logo, new parent referral form, member door signage and building signage Fall 2023 – developed infographic for staff to better understand when to refer (“Potty PD”) 23-24 – monthly eSAP updates in principal’s monthly newsletter

Area of Focus #2 - Parental Knowledge of Age-Appropriate Behaviors

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
<p>Continue partnership with Cook Center to provide mental health education for families</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent; Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · April 2023 – completed last of 5 series virtual parent training · 23-24 Parent Guidance Series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2023 - Supporting Your Child’s Mental Health October 2023 - Compassionate Parenting and Self-compassion January 2024 - Understanding Video Game Addiction February 2024 - Parenting Through Anxiety and Depression (highest number of registered participants we’ve had thus far) March 2024 - Establishing Healthy Boundaries April 2024 - Building Your Child’s Confidence · 23-24 academic year – approximately 20 parents participating in free parent coaching
<p>Partner with COCA to host a Strengthening Families Program at WASD</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>Fall-winter 23-24 academic year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · March 2023 – Dr. Lengle met with COCA representative to discuss our commitment to hosting · June 2023 – Meeting to discuss early winter dates · Fall 2023 – COCA notified WASD staffing has changed and we will need to move this program to 24-25 academic year

<p>Run Teens and Technology program annually for students in grade 5-8 and parents in grades K-8</p>	<p>eSAP and SAP teams; Director of Pupil Services; building-level administration</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	
<p>Increase social media use to advertise parent offerings; consider ways to incentivize participation</p>	<p>District Communication Coordinator; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Pupil Services; building-level administration</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · January 2024 – Parent Guidance parent training held in person; families were offered free babysitting and dinner · 23-24 Spartan Sprouts – Parent Coaching and Parent Mental Health series is advertised in person for incoming families

Area of Focus #3 - Bullying and Depression/Suicide

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
Expand advertised suicide/mental health hotlines	School Counselors; building-level administrators	Fall 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ongoing – JSHS Avedium Club advertises hotlines throughout the building · K-12 school counselors have 988 and 911 listed on all emails
Continue youth mediation program and Hope Squad – work to increase participation	Club advisors; Assistant Superintendent	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 23-24 – 46 Hope Squad member (9th-12th grades) · 23-24 – Hope Council developed for student leadership opportunity
Increase Flight Team membership through participation in PREPaRE trainings offered by NASP	Director of Pupil Services	May 2023; ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · May 2023 – 3 school counselors attended PREPaRE 2 trainings

<p>Annually review WASD Crisis Intervention Support and Postvention Manual</p>	<p>School counselors; building-level administrators; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · April 2023 – School counseling department chair met with administrative team to review most recent updates · August 2023 – School counseling dept. chair and district-wide administration met to updates all resources
<p>Provide evidence-based suicide prevention training to school staff</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent; Director of Pupil Services; school counselors</p>	<p>23-24 and 24-25 academic year</p>	

Area of Focus #4 - Stress and Pressure

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
<p>Provide parent training on stress and anxiety in children and adolescents</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services; Assistant Superintendent</p>	<p>23-24 academic year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · February 2024 – Parenting Through Anxiety virtual training held; recording on website
<p>Identify at-risk youth through universal mental health screenings at developmental milestones</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services; school counselors</p>	<p>To begin in 24-25 academic year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · April 2023 – Dr. Lengle applied for participation in Penn State Health School Mental Health Screening Grant (First grant opportunity denied Nov 2023) · August 2023 – Caron Foundation met with district to discuss S-BIRT implementation
<p>Work with professional agency to ensure K-12 SEL curriculum is comprehensive and spiraling throughout a WASD student’s career</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services; school counselors</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · March 2023 – School Board of Directors approved contract for partnership with Dr. Arasz · March-April 2023 – Dr. Lengle met with Dr. Arasz and provided extensive data specific to WASD · April – August 2023 – Dr. Arasz met with stakeholder groups for interviews · Fall 2023 – Dr. Arasz gave WASD report with recommendations · Winter-Summer 2024 – School counseling and health/PE departments reviewing curriculum and addressing recommendations

Area of Focus #5 - Lack of Access to Mental Health Providers and Services

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
Reorganize social work services 7-12	Director of Pupil Services	Summer 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · October 2023 – behavior support specialist position from the JSHS ES classroom eliminated, allowing for K-6 Student Assistance Specialist position · October 2023 – Mrs. Lascalea, social worker, became full-time at JSHS
Assign District Homeless Liaison responsibilities to Director of Pupil Services	Director of Pupil Services	July 1, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · July 2023 – Dr. Lengle received training from state task force to ensure district compliance · 2023-2024 All Homeless Liaison responsibilities assigned to Dr. Lengle · February 2024 – M-V monitoring occurred with PDE

<p>Continue to promote school-based counseling services – after reviewing enrollment data, consider developing a fund for students who are unable to provide co-pay for services</p>	<p>Building-level administrators; school counselors; social worker; nurses; eSAP and SAP teams; Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · April 2023 – EBH added a 2nd school-based counselor to provide services to WASD students · October 2023 – students receiving school-based counseling: WHEC – 12 WREC – 6 JSHS – 28 · February 2023 – students receiving school-based counseling: WHEC – 22 WREC – 13 JSHS - 46 · March 2024 – EBH added a 3rd school-based counselor to provide services to WASD students
<p>Based on training received, identify school staff as ‘Mental Health Ambassadors’</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>To begin the 24-25 academic year</p>	
<p>Gather regular input from families and students on behavioral health needs</p>	<p>Building-level administrators; school counselors; social worker; nurses; eSAP and SAP teams; Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fall 2023 – PAYS administered in grades 4 (pilot), 6, 8, 10 and 12

Area of Focus #6 - Bias and Cultural Factors

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
<p>Create visual artifacts that convey anti-bias and affirmation for all groups</p>	<p>Administration; club advisors; athletic coaches; teaching staff</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 22-23 and 23-24 academic years- JSHS special education dept. participated in 'Spread the Word' campaign
<p>Partner with EBH to run intensive groups outside of school hours to promote diversity and affirmation</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · March 2023 – Dr. Lengle met with EBH Director to review needs identified by our MHTF · Fall 2023 – Dr. Lengle met with Ms. Johnson, EBH employee, to discuss options for 24-25 academic year
<p>Provide high-quality diversity training for all teachers, counselors and administrators – develop specific protocols for responding to hate speech and discrimination</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent; building-level administration</p>	<p>Ongoing; protocols developed by spring 2024</p>	

Area of Focus #7 - Poverty

Action	Assigned To	Completion Date	Progress
<p>Continue partnership with Helping Harvest to run Weekender Program in all schools</p>	<p>Director of Pupil Services</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Summer 2023 – ran weekender program for students eligible for summer programming · July 2023 – Applied for participation for 23-24 academic year · 23-24 academic year – approximately 85 students participating
<p>Increase advertisement of community supports</p>	<p>District Communication Coordinator; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Pupil Services; building-level administration</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fall 2023 – WASD staff worked to gather materials from agencies to have on hand to provide resources at district events · November 2023 – WHEC eSAP team were present with many community resources for parent-teacher conferences · January 2024 – Dr. Lengle and St. Luke’s presented community resources at Parent Guidance parent training
<p>Provide staff training on ACEs and their impact on student well-being</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent</p>	<p>24-25 academic year</p>	
<p>Advertise free/reduced lunch program with more frequency and provide support for families to complete application</p>	<p>Director of Food Services; Child Accounting Coordinator</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fall 2023 – Director of Food Services changed location of information on district website and utilized social media to advertise free breakfast option for all students and application for free lunch

Additional Highlights of Student Behavioral Health Supports

- Summer 2023 – WASD school counseling department and administration updated WASD Crisis Postvention Manual
- August 2023 – Staff opening day presentations and activities surrounding building meaningful connections and relationships with students; keynote speaker – Dr. Arasz, activities led by WASD coaches
- October 2023 – eSAP team at WHEC and WREC sponsored Red Ribbon Week
- October 2023 – WASD committed to participation in Caron’s pilot program for virtual outpatient drug and alcohol counseling
- October 2023 - Lauren Johnson, from EBH, added as a contracted employee to support student attendance
- Fall 2023 – Dr. Lengle participated in Flight Team training for administrators
- Fall 2023 – Dr. Lengle applied for Penn State PRO Wellness Grant opportunity related to suicide prevention; January 2024 – DOH accepted grant request; Phase 1 will begin spring 2024 and run through the 24-25 academic year
- Fall 2023 – Dr. Lengle began implementing monthly connection calls with families experiencing housing instability to ensure awareness of community supports

Additional Highlights of Student Behavioral Health Supports

- January 2024 – Dr. Lengle began participating on Helping Harvest’s Youth Advisory Board
- January 2024 – SRSS screener expanded to WREC (previously done only at WHEC)
- February 2024 – WREC provided students and staff with kindness challenges on daily announcements
- February 2024 – eSAP team at WHEC and WREC sponsored Kindness Week

Upcoming New Supports and Services

- March 2024 - Teens & Technology presentation for 5th-8th grade students
- March 2024 - Kids & Technology presentation for K-8th grade parents
- March 2024 - K-12 Inclusion Week supported by Unified Champion Schools/Special Olympics
- March 2024 - EBH and WASD developing options for groups to run outside of school for 24-25 academic year
- May 2024 - eSAP team at WHEC and WREC will sponsor Mental Health Awareness Week
- Spring/Summer 2024 - Planning for 7th or 8th grade behavioral health screening (implementation fall 2024)
- Spring/Summer 2024 - Planning for developing student group to provide input to our task force
- May 2024 - eSAP team at WHEC and WREC will sponsor Mental Health Awareness Week

MHTF February 2024 Work

1. Review action plan and progress as a group
Discuss areas to increase attention toward and brainstormed ways to add additional action steps
2. Discuss ideas for a community-wide engagement event (spring or summer 2025).
Who would be our target audience?
What message would we want people to leave with?
3. What additional data would you like to review at our next meeting (in addition to our PAYS data)? What would help our group to better understand WASD needs?
4. As additional grant opportunities pop up (with short turn around times for application), what are other needs of our students?

Next Meeting - June 2024

- Interpret 2023 PAYS data and develop executive summary, review additional data as requested by MHTF members, discuss action plan process and future grant opportunity ideas

Penn State PRO Wellness Grant

Berks County Suicide Prevention Program

- Staff will complete the School Mental Health Quality Assessment
- Penn State staff will review results and help the district develop an action plan that addresses a supportive mental health environment and utilizes program funding
- Funding for a student club (\$1,000) and a community engagement event (\$1,500) - likely to occur in summer of 2025
- yMHFA training for staff (WASD is having 4-5 people trained as trainers through another grant the BCIU has received) - minimum of 10% of JSHS staff will be trained
- yMHFA training for one grade level (9th or 10th) to occur in 24-25 academic year (with support from Berks Counseling Center)

Questions?