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Holyoke Public Schools Wellness Policy 2020-2021

Mission Statement:

The Holyoke Public School District (HPS) promotes healthy schools by supporting comprehensive health education, nutrition services, physical activity, health services, mental health services, health promotion, school and family/community relationships, and a healthy environment. Improved health optimizes student attendance and academic performance. HPS's intent is to equip students and their families with the knowledge, skills, and to reinforce behaviors needed, to make healthy choices in their daily lives.

Vision:

The School Community Health Advisory Council (SCHAC) and the Holyoke Public Schools are taking action to promote wellness, a healthy environment and to provide ongoing comprehensive health promotion and education for our students, faculty, staff, families, and community.

What is the SCHAC?

The SCHAC is a group of dedicated teachers, nurses, administrators, school staff, interested community partners, family/community members and students that meet at least four times annually to assess the school district's health status, monitor health-related issues, make relevant health-related recommendations, and support our Mission and Goals.

Subcommittees:

District-wide Green Team (School Community Gardens), Environmental, Policy Review, Mental Health and are in the process of developing Individual School Wellness Subcommittees.

Measurable Goals for the areas of Comprehensive Health Education, Nutrition Services, Physical Education, Health Services, Mental Health Services, Health Promotion, School and Family/Community Relationships and a Healthy Environment:

Comprehensive Health Education

Problem Statement: We need comprehensive health education district-wide.

Goal: HPS will have comprehensive health education for grades K-High School in place during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Strategies:

- ❖ Great Body Shop curriculum for Grades K-8, second year;
- ❖ Secure budget and contract for the following years (2021-2022 and 2022-2023)
- ❖ Review and begin to rework the high school health education curriculum;
- ❖ Provide materials, training, and support for teachers in comprehensive health education;
- ❖ Provide healthy relationships, reproductive, vaping, marijuana, opioid, mental, physical health and lifestyle, community violence prevention, and social emotional information as part of a comprehensive health education at middle and high school levels; (not limited to)
- ❖ Provide start-of-year family letter for health classes, regular family communication on at least a monthly basis for grades K-8, and increased opportunities for family engagement, PK-12.
- ❖ Work collaboratively with community partners to continue to provide high-quality health education experiences for the students.

Nutrition Services (ie. Let's Go, Holyoke! 5-2-1-0, UMass Extension, MA Health Council/Healthy Beverage Campaign, GBS and SODEXO)

Problem Statement 1: Students, staff, and families who make unhealthy food and beverage choices may lead to poor nutrition, underweight, or overweight/obesity.

Goal 1: To comply with the school food regulations, continue to establish school food procedures and to increase nutrition information, programs, and services district-wide and to families.

Strategies 1:

- ❖ HPS health services and the SCHAC will communicate the importance of the connection between student's **health and wellness and their academic performance**;
- ❖ Holyoke High School Nurses (North and Dean Campuses) and SODEXO will maintain two food pantries, one at each high school, within each health services' office, run awareness campaigns, food drives and collaborate with SODEXO to stock the pantries.
- ❖ Actively promote and engage in the 5-2-1-0 Program (Eat 5 servings fruits/vegetables daily, engage in <2 hours of screen time daily, participate in at least one hour of vigorous physical activity daily, and drink no soda, sugar-sweetened sport and fruit drinks and increase consumption of water and 1% milk in person and online through social media;
- ❖ Work with the University of Massachusetts Extension Service to increase student and family nutrition education in person and online through social media;
- ❖ SODEXO to deliver after school snacks to the athletic training room at HHSN for student athletes daily when post-COVID.
- ❖ Vending machines offer healthy options;
- ❖ Encourage teachers and families to offer fruits and non-food treats for holiday celebrations;

- ❖ Consider what is sold in school fundraisers and choose to partner with companies that provide non-food options;
- ❖ Increase cafeteria nutrition information posters/bulletin boards district-wide;
- ❖ Engage in additional Smarter Lunchroom Assessments;
- ❖ Work with the MA Health Council and the "Healthy Beverage Campaign" to offer a poster contest around increasing the drinking of water.
- ❖ Communicate with families regarding nutrition at least quarterly.
- ❖ HPS will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and After-School Snack Program, and the Summer Food Service Program.
- ❖ HPS and SODEXO will provide students with access to a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of our students, including taste testing;
- ❖ HPS and SODEXO will provide a clean and safe environment with adequate time for students to eat;
- ❖ HPS and SODEXO will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning.
- ❖ Conduct assessment, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) or Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNAS) during this academic year.
- ❖ Consult with SODEXO regarding feasibility of providing grab & go dinners for students who have away games, athletes, and students in afterschool programs (Check if USDA grant monies are available) post-COVID.

Problem Statement 2: Establish and maintain procedures and guidelines to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students with special dietary needs and food allergies.

Goal 2: HPS will provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students with special dietary needs and food allergies.

Strategies 2:

- ❖ Develop district-wide guidelines for Modified Texture Diets/Thickened Liquids collaboratively with SODEXO, Health Services, and Speech-Language Pathologists.
- ❖ Reduce the likelihood of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions through the development of clear procedures developed cooperatively between HPS and SODEXO.
- ❖ Provide professional development for nurses around life threatening food allergies.
- ❖ Ensure a rapid and effective response in the case of a severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reaction;
- ❖ Protect the rights of food allergic students to participate in all school activities.
- ❖ Provide support and education around food allergies.

Physical Activity

Problem Statement: Students are at-risk for limited physical activity due to unhealthy lifestyle choices regarding screen time, poor nutrition choices, and lack of regular physical activity. This is further complicated by COVID-19.

Goal: Provide student opportunities to engage in meaningful physical activity throughout the school day and to promote the adoption of habits and attitudes that contribute to their physical well-being following CDC/DPH guidelines for physical activity.

Strategies:

- ❖ Review CDC and DPH COVID-19 Guidelines for physical activity in schools.
- ❖ Increase and encourage outdoor time for students whenever possible.
- ❖ Make sure that current school guidelines do not allow physical activity to be withheld (ie withholding recess) or used as punishment (ie making students run laps or do push-ups);
- ❖ Review current district-wide opportunities for recess and encourage safe and healthy physical activity at these times;
- ❖ Require students participating in intramural sports (as allowed d/t COVID-19) to be up-to-date with physical examinations and immunizations;
- ❖ Provide Unified Sports Programming (as allowed d/t COVID-19/re-start post COVID-19) for Track, Field, and Basketball. Unified Sports includes students with intellectual disabilities (athletes) and those without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition;
- ❖ Provide regular family communication around physical activity, at least quarterly.
- ❖ Encourage HPS staff attendance at sporting events and create a positive and supportive culture around athletics post-COVID.
- ❖ Conduct assessment, such as the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNAS) or Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) during this academic year to gather current information about our students' physical activity.
- ❖ Look at restorative opportunities to keep students engaged in school physical activities and sports.

Health Services

Problem Statement: HPS attendance is at 91.8%, Chronic absenteeism, district-wide is at 25.7% and the average number of days absent is 13.4 days. Compare that to the state of Massachusetts, where attendance is at 94.6%, chronic absenteeism is at 12.9% and the average number of days absent is 9.6 state-wide. (2019 Profiles.doe.mass.edu)

Goal: Increase attendance to no more than 5 days absent per year and overall 95% attendance rate and decrease chronic absenteeism to 25% by June 2020. Based on COVID-19

Strategies:

- ❖ Outreach to students/families to meet their individual needs;
- ❖ Help student/family access to needed physical or mental healthcare providers;
- ❖ Ensure students feel safe at school;
- ❖ Provide student and family support during the school day;
- ❖ Advocate and support a district-wide approach to addressing chronic absenteeism;
- ❖ Encourage the utilization of reporting systems for better data collection;
- ❖ Conduct parent/caregiver and student classes on health topics;
- ❖ Address chronic tardiness, early dismissals, and class absence; in addition to chronic absenteeism.

- ❖ Conduct assessment, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) or Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNAS) during this academic year.

Mental Health Services

Problem Statement: Students are living in an uncertain world with multiple fears and grief. Concerns regarding COVID-19 pandemic, racism, and violence are present for our students and need to be addressed.

Goal: To educate and work with students to increase awareness about how the current world events affect their mental health, well being and tolerance of others, and peaceful and healthy coping skills strategies.

Strategies:

Great Body Shop Comprehensive Curriculum K-8
Individual mental health supports and programs training for nurses/resource availability
Community Support of Behavioral Health Needs
Anti-discrimination District
Specific training and support such as Mental Health First Aid
Bereavement Support resources for students and families

Problem Statement: Holyoke continues to have among the highest teen pregnancy rates in Massachusetts. Although the teen birth rate has continued to drop nationwide and in Massachusetts, with 9.4 per 1000 teens ages 15-19 becoming pregnant each year, Holyoke has the highest rate of teen pregnancy at 40.5 per 1000 and this is nearly double the national average of 22.3 per 1000. Hispanic teens have the highest birth rate (32.7) as compared to Black teens (14.4) and white teens at 4.5 per 1000.

Goal: In addition to our reproductive health education and message of postponing pregnancy, we will put in place procedures to provide a system of guidance for the student's mental/emotional/social health and well being, physical health, as well as academic support of the expecting/parenting teen.

Strategies:

- ❖ Review District policy and guidelines developed around expecting and parenting students with input and collaboration from nursing, guidance, counseling, administration, students, and interested parties and reviewed and adjusted as needed by nursing and interested parties.
- ❖ Guidelines and procedures put in place to support the expecting/parenting student and consultation with the district's attorney, as needed.
- ❖ Nurses, counselors, and principals district-wide will be provided the Expecting and Parenting student packet.
- ❖ Conduct assessment, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) or Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNAS) during this academic year.
- ❖ Support for and members participate in a Mental Health Sub-committee.

Health Promotion

Problem Statement 1: Currently, there are few faculty/staff/administration trained in CPR/AED across the district, and only two identified CPR/AED Instructor trainers.

Goal 1: To educate interested HPS staff members in becoming certified as CPR/AED instructors, with the ultimate goal being able to increase the numbers of staff, teachers, administrators, and community members who are CPR/AED trained to have at least 6 at each school by May 2021.

Strategies 1:

- ❖ Fully train at least 6 HPS staff members, such as nurses, the athletic director, and the athletic trainer, as instructors of CPR/AED.
- ❖ Hold at least one CPR/AED training at each school and at Central Office and train a minimum of 6 staff per school (12 buildings x 6 staff = 72 minimum to be trained).
- ❖ Offer at least one free community CPR/AED course, which increases the opportunity for family engagement
- ❖ Pilot at least three school-based health advisory councils that could support health promotion efforts at the school level.

Problem Statement 2: During the 2017-2018 school year, about 6 in 10 students screened needed a referral for oral health concerns. This has dropped to 4 in 10 students during the 2018-19 school year.

Goal 2: To provide oral health education to students and families and to offer 100% of HPS students the opportunity for oral health screening and referral, if needed.

Strategies 2:

- ❖ Follow CDC/DPH COVID-19 Guidance regarding oral health screenings.
- ❖ Collaborate with the Holyoke Health Center Dental Department to offer dental screenings.
- ❖ Provide oral health education to students and their families
- ❖ Document and follow up with students regarding their oral health screenings and needs
- ❖ Develop and implement an action plan for our comprehensive oral health program
- ❖ Provide oral health professional development for nurses
- ❖ Share HPS oral health achievements statewide with other nurses and health professionals

Healthy Environment

Problem Statement: Holyoke has consistently high numbers of cases for COVID-19 in western Massachusetts.

Goal: During this time of COVID-19, to provide a healthy school environment for our students, staff/faculty, administration, and visitors, district-wide following CDC/DPH/DESE guidance while remaining cognizant of the cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing's impact on students and

staff in terms of their protection and wellness. This includes attention to those with respiratory conditions such as asthma and allergies.

Strategies:

- ❖ Provide up-to-date COVID-19 information for the HPS Website and Social Media
- ❖ Develop a strong flu-shot campaign district-wide including flu clinics and social media
- ❖ Active participation and leadership in district-wide Reentry Planning teams
- ❖ Provide signage and educational information regarding COVID-19
- ❖ Establish protocols, procedures and guidelines r/t COVID-19

Problem Statement: Holyoke students experience a high rate of asthma, with approximately 25% (1287) of our students having an asthma alert on their health charts as of November 2019.

Goal: To provide a lung-friendly environment for our students, staff/faculty, administration, and visitors, district-wide.

Strategies:

- ❖ Support Green Cleaning district-wide;
- ❖ Signage outside of schools and educational information around "No Idling" zones is in place and monitored;
- ❖ Provide increased opportunities for family engagement around asthma by providing a packet of information to all families of children with asthma in both EN/ES when they bring their child's inhaler to the school nurse.
- ❖ Anti-tobacco /smoking/vaping signage and education district-wide
- ❖ Maintain regular meetings of the Environmental Health Committee

Family/Community Relationships

Problem Statement: We would like to see more parent/guardian/family involvement and support.

Goal: To increase the amount and frequency of reaching out to families around each health-related educational or promotional activity, district-wide, with the goal of families increasing their involvement across the district.

Strategies:

- ❖ Regularly communicate with families around school health/nursing expectations and other health-related programs and initiatives through regular letters home, newsletters, HPS website ("Families" and "Health, Wellness & Nursing"), Twitter and Facebook, parent special education group, school committee, pamphlets, booklets, all call, etc.
- ❖ Dental Health Champions to reach out to all families who do not have a dental home through district-wide survey, telephone calls, and letter(s) home, to share information/resources and support to families who need a dental home for their children.
- ❖ Monthly GBS educational material sent home with EN/ES learning activities for families to participate in together.

- ❖ Establish at least three school-based health advisory councils and invite parents and community members to be a part of the council.

Monitoring

The Director of Health, Wellness, and Nursing is directly responsible for the School Community Health Advisory Council and its meetings, and the Superintendent/Receiver or his designee will ensure compliance with the Holyoke Public Schools Wellness Policy.