

UPPER PERKIOMEN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Education Center

2229 E. Buck Road Pennsburg, PA 18073

Pupil Services/Special Education Committee Meeting

January 24, 2022

Ex-Officio: Judy Maginnis, President CHAIR: Mrs. Judy Maginnis, MEMBERS: J.P. Prego, Mike Elliott

Superintendent – Dr. Allyn J. Roche

Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Andrea Farina

Director of Special Education–Carol Giblin

Supervisor of Special Education – Amy Coyle

Approval of November 2021 minutes.

Social and Emotional Learning

SEL provides the structure and process for adults and students to develop fundamental emotional and social competencies and experiences to: understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The goal of SEL is to promote social-emotional skills, positive classroom behavior, and academic achievement. The goal is also to prevent conduct problems, aggressive behavior and emotional distress.

There are 5 competencies associated with SEL. 1. Self-awareness (SA)-the ability to recognize one's emotions, thoughts, feelings, and values and understand how they influence one's behavior. 1. Self-management (SM)-the ability to successfully regulate one's own emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations- managing stress, controlling impulses and motivating themselves. 3. Responsible decision-making (RDM)-the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. 4. Social-awareness (SoA)-the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. 5. Relationship skills (RS)-the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.

SEL is Foundational to our district and is found in our mission statements (Upper Perk Supports, Upper Perk Partners and Upper Perk Empowers). SEL, Resiliency, Cultural Proficiency and Inclusion are foundational for every student up through graduation. SEL is Integrated in our school structure. It is part of our MTSS framework, particularly Tier III. Students in grades K-8 receive instruction in Second Step (a classroom-based curriculum that explicitly instructs students in social emotional learning). For those that struggle with the competencies, we have added Calm Cat (small group instruction) and additional supports from counselors. SEL is Responsive. We participate in the PA Climate Survey which provides data to our district annually about how kids feel, how connected they are, how safe they feel and how they feel about their teachers. The PAYS survey, given every two years in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12, provides data about how students connect with adults, positive behaviors and problem behaviors within school.

Second Step addresses a wide range of needs to assist students with experiences that affect their behavioral health. Second Step utilizes a language that is consistent throughout the curriculum so that students in each grade have the same tools.

Calm Cat provides explicit SEL instruction. Parents can opt in or out. It is tailored to address students who have more significant social, emotional and/or behavioral needs. It is relaxation skills training in 5 weekly, 30 minute small group sessions. Additionally, there is feedback and support for students from staff mentors for 8 weeks.

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) is a school wide program which reduces problem behaviors and increases positive behaviors. The program establishes school-wide expectations (3-5), and

teaches the expectations directly and regularly to students. There is a positive reward system and consistent consequences for challenging behaviors.

Restorative Practices is a practice that promotes inclusiveness, relationship-building and problem-solving, through such restorative methods as circles for teaching and conflict resolution to conferences that bring victims, offenders and their supporters together to address wrongdoing. The district plans to implement the program in phases with district rollout being planned for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

Other school climate and culture efforts that UPSD is utilizing include Mindfulness, Link Crew, Perk Pals, Great Kindness Challenge, building celebrations and continued professional development.

Brian Callan discussed how he has changed his approach when addressing student behavioral issues to be more restorative. Students will still be held to the code of conduct, but the overall goal is to create a community.

Question regarding parent involvement in the PBIS program was addressed by Allie Stephens who explained that parents are part of the team and there is direct communication with families regarding PBIS. Parents have the ability to submit questions/concerns directly to anyone in the school.

Some of the materials that are used in the Second Step program were shared, including puppets, the curriculum and forms.

Meeting adjourned.