



# Westborough Public Schools

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TO: Amber Bock, Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Sherrie Stevens, Director of Student Services  
Roger Anderson, Wellness and PE Director  
Kim Tynan, Clinical and Social Emotional Learning Coordinator

DATE: March 5, 2021

RE: School Committee Update - March 10, 2021  
Social-Emotional-Wellness Curriculum Initiatives & Planning

Historically, the Westborough Public Schools has been committed to the progressive leadership that aggressively strives to eliminate stigmas associated with mental health and social-emotional wellness. Faculty have worked to proactively tailor curriculum and interventions that support our students, families, and faculty at a very high level.

For the last twelve (12) months, the Westborough Public Schools community has undergone a traumatic and profound experience related to the COVID pandemic. The Westborough Leadership Team and faculty have invested countless hours reshaping the characterization of public education. The impact of this experience has clearly impacted our faculty, students, and families from both an emotional and physical wellness standpoint. The journey continues in welcoming our next normal as we return more fully to in-person learning.

The following is a synopsis of this journey in terms of the milestones, attention, and care that continues to be actively sought after and provided to ensure the wellness of the Westborough School community:

The following key initiatives have been developed and implemented on a continual basis to address the Social-Emotional-Wellness needs of our students:

- Roger Anderson, Director of Wellness and PE, and Kim Tynan, Coordinator of Clinical and Social Emotional Learning, collaborate and plan on at least a weekly basis to address issues and develop initiatives to address Social-Emotional-Wellness, and also have strong ongoing collaboration with Cara Presley, Director of Westborough Youth & Family Services;
- The Wellness Department has significantly modified the Wellness curriculum to incorporate direct instruction of skills related to Social and Emotional Wellbeing;
- Our PreK-Grade 6 faculty have implemented the Second Step SEL curriculum and made SEL a key component of essential learning for students each day

- Our Westborough High School faculty and Wellness Department have been dedicated to the work as demonstrated by their extensive training in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) skills: a type of cognitive-behavioral therapy that combines strategies like mindfulness, acceptance, and emotional regulation;
- Our Gibbons Middle School faculty have initiated the CREW program to bring small groups together to focus on relationships/identity, communication/perspective taking and problem solving/collaboration;
- Our educators have been leaders in bringing best practices such as Open Circle and Responsive Classroom into their classrooms for many years;
- Our school Counselors and Administrators have provided grade level and classroom lessons, character education programs, assemblies and more with this focus in mind.

During the course of the last three (3) years the Westborough Public Schools has worked in a progressive manner to develop, implement, and align its Social-Emotional-Wellness curriculum and instruction inclusive of the following benchmarks:

- 2018-2019
  - District Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Steering Committee formed;
  - District-wide SEL Committee formed;
  - Kindergarten sets District-wide SMART goal together to pilot SEL curriculum (alignment across 3 elementary schools);
  - 4/24/2019 School Committee Report & Presentation (Daniel Mayer) Social and Emotional Learning Committee Recommendations;
  - Kindergarten Pilot Summary preferred Second Step;
  - Formed '19-'20 50 member K-6 SEL Committee including teachers and counselors;
  - 6/17/2019 PD with K-6 SEL Committee and schools' leadership teams.
- 2019-2020
  - Faculty received Second Step curriculum kits prior to the onset of school - 133 kits distributed;
  - 10 member - Social Emotional assessment work (SDQ) / curriculum work over summer
  - Data: finished product of developed systems;
  - July 2019 - District subscription to William James Interface Referral System;
  - Data: Since our initial membership July 1, 2019, our Westborough community has had 95 cases utilizing these services. Most recently, June 1st through November 30th, 2020 there have been 30 cases accessing the referral service. In 60% (18/30) of these cases the caller heard about these services through our schools;
  - Provided multiple PD opportunities summer 2019
  - 7/2/2019 Second Step representative
  - 8/5/2019, 8/19/2019, 10/1/19, 1/13/20 & 3/3/20
  - Data: check-in October 2019;
  - Full faculty PD opportunities - 10/4, 11/5, 12/6, 2/7 & 3/3;
  - Data: District Curriculum Guide and Instructional Practices now includes SEL Scope & Sequence;

- [Roger Anderson](#), Cara Presley and Kim Tynan collaborate to share resources to Westborough families, educators and the community through the Community Wellness Guides;

This year:

- 2020-2021
  - September back-to-school PD focus on SEL - dedicated time for faculty to lesson plan for SEL with returning students
  - Summer Gibbons and High School Social Emotional Learning Committees were formed to support colleagues in this work
  - Fall check-in with PreK through Grade 6 teachers indicated: [79 teachers responded (71.2%) 49 Hybrid/30 Remote]
  - 100% of teachers who responded indicated that Second Step lessons are occurring or due to begin within the next week
  - Separate Gibbons and HS SEL committees continue their commitment for '20-'21 school year
  - Gibbons and High School faculty dedicate time to provide direct SEL instruction to students via curated lessons provided by SEL Committees
  - The Westborough Parent CounSEL is formed this fall with the goal of sharing information about the importance of Social Emotional Learning and developing a strategic plan to share information in larger ways to families and our community
  - Wellness Parent Series coming this spring - planning in progress for Tuesdays 7:00-8:00 pm
  - April 27 - - Dr. Kim Kusiak - Emotion Curve/Dysregulation/Validation
  - May 4 - - Dr. Kim Kusiak - becoming trauma informed/minimizing triggers
  - May 11 - - How Understanding Behaviorism May Help You Approach Parenting with a New Perspective
  - May 18 - - Social Emotional Learning at School & Home
  - May 25 - - Roger Anderson - Comprehensive Wellness
  - June 1 - - Town panel - resources & resilience - still in the works in partnership with Cara Presley, WFYS
  - Conversation and planning in the works for the anticipated return to school in-person across the next several weeks...

We are actively engaged in the planning for returning students more fully back to the classroom and welcome and embrace this important transition to our next normal. We acknowledge that while this transition is truly a celebratory milestone for the Westborough Public Schools community, we also fully anticipate that the social, emotional and physical wellness of our students will be an essential priority for the Westborough education community.

As reflective practitioners feedback from ongoing individual, group, and survey opportunities continue to shape the evolution of this work. We are extremely grateful to the School Committee, as well as the greater Westborough community for your continued support.

Gratefully,

Sherrie Stevens, Director of Student Services

Roger Anderson, Director of Wellness & PE

Kim Tynan, Clinical & Social Emotional Learning Coordinator