

## ESS Report for DEC Ends Policy #3

11 May 2022

**Engage system's leaders in improving mental health and resiliency for both learners and staff through proactive strategies such as Positive Education and Social Emotional learning.**

**Goal 3.1:** Improve mental health and resilience for both learners and staff through proactive strategies

### **Section 1: PBIS & Restorative Practices**

**Strategy 3.1.1:** Support adoption of PBIS in identified schools.

**Strategy 3.1.2:** Support adoption of Restorative Practices in identified schools

**Status:** In Progress & Ongoing in 2022-2023

#### Definitions

- Positive Behaviour Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is a research-based approach designed to establish the learning environment needed to achieve academic and social success for all students. The core principles of PBIS are creating improved outcomes for all students, supporting early intervention, using tiered models of support, using research-based, scientifically validated interventions, monitoring student progress to inform instruction and intervention, and using data informed decision making
- Restorative Practices is an approach that helps people to strengthen relationships, build community, and prevent conflict. Restorative practices are rooted in restorative justice. They emphasize repairing the harm done to people and relationships, rather than punishing people. Unlike restorative justice, which is primarily reactive in nature, restorative practices include proactive practices to prevent conflict and improve relationships.

#### Actions

Six schools were identified for district support to implement PBIS last year, and three schools were identified for support to implement Restorative Practices. Unfortunately, with the interruptions from COVID, these schools have not yet received the support we normally put in place for schools. Accordingly, we will continue to support these schools through the 2022-2023 school year. Dates are scheduled in June to begin training for these schools to ensure a strong start in September (PBIS June 15 & Restorative Practices June 21).

The schools implementing PBIS will be Apohaqui Elementary School, Bayview School, Beaconsfield Middle School, Blacks Harbour School, Fairvale Elementary School, and St

Stephen Elementary School. The schools implementing Restorative Practices will be Barnhill Memorial School, Hampton Middle School, Forest Hills School, and Sussex Corner Elementary School.

## **Section 2: Social & Emotional Learning and Positive Education**

**Strategy 3.1.3:** Provide direct support to coordinators and coaches to increase integration of Social Emotional learning into curricular outcomes

**Strategy 3.1.4:** Provide direct support to teachers to implement Positive Education and Social Emotional Learning into their classroom practices, specifically at the middle school level

**Status:** Ongoing

### Definitions

- Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL is found throughout the New Brunswick curriculum.
- Positive Education is the application of the science of Positive Psychology within an educational setting to encourage students, faculty, schools, and communities to flourish. While SEL tends to focus on the curriculum, and these outcomes can be taught across the curriculum, Positive Education focuses more on instructional decisions which embed the skills of well-being students need to be strong and healthy with the skills of achievement

### Actions

- This year, the district employed a dedicated SEL & Positive Education Coach, Christine Morgan-Aherne. Ms Morgan-Aherne is a veteran classroom teacher and school counsellor with experience at both the high school and elementary school levels. In addition to providing strategies and background information to all teachers in the district newsletter, Ms Morgan-Aherne has been working directly with school leaders and professional learning communities (PLCs) of teachers to increase SEL and Positive Education. Specifically, Ms Morgan-Aherne has run workshops on Embedding SEL into School Culture, Restorative Practices, PBIS, SEL Signature Practices, Community Circles in the Classroom, and creating lesson plans for specific SEL competencies. She has worked with twenty-seven schools this year, as well as the K-8 Physical Education teachers and the Compass Alternate Education Program.

- In November and December, beginning teachers were given a day of training in SEL, including developing strong relationship with students, incorporating SEL and positive education into instruction decisions, and developing cultural competency. This was led by the then School Counselling Coordinator, Jennifer Grant, and her team.
- Many of the high school SEL outcomes are concentrated in the Personal Development and Career Planning (PDCP) course. PDCP teachers were brought in for a day's professional learning in September to build their knowledge and skills with those outcomes. Specific outcomes addressed included the social and emotional learning outcomes, suicide prevention, LGBTQ+, sexual health, and career planning. This was led by Jen Grant and her team.
- Curriculum coordinators received professional development on incorporating positive education into their coaching roles on October 18<sup>th</sup>. This was led by the Director of Education Support Services and Christine Morgan-Aherne.
- Coaches and school administrators were able to participate in a one-hour SEL training with Christine Morgan-Aherne, SEL and Positive Education with a second hour planned for late May.
- Kevin Cameron, Executive Director of the North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response (NACTATR), met with school and district leaders three times to offer excellent strategies to promote mental health and wellness in schools in the ongoing context of COVID (August 27, December 8, and February 28). These were very well received by our instructional leaders.

### **Section 3: Positive Mental Health Framework**

**Strategy 3.1.5:** Continue to implement the Positive Mental Health Framework with school and district leaders using the Mental Fitness Resiliency Inventory.

Dr Bill Morrison and Dr Patti Peterson, both well-respected professors of Education at UNB, have developed the Positive Workplace Framework, an evidence-based model for building resiliency, mental fitness, and positive leadership in the workplace. This model uses principles of Self-Determination Theory (sometimes called the CAR model for Competence-Autonomy-Relatedness) and Positive Psychology to assist workplace leaders to increase positive mental health practices on their teams.

Seventy-three school and District leaders completed the two half-day training from Dr Morrison and Dr Peterson, and to date 27 schools and the SJ District Office staff have completed the Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory, a 25 question inventory of positive mental health practices that principals can use a guide to improving positive mental health practices in their schools.

## **Section 4: Additional initiatives**

### ASD-S UNB Master of Education Cohort

This year marks the completion of a four-year partnership with the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Education and Anglophone South School District. In 2018, we approached UNB about creating a special cohort of the Master of Education in Counselling program exclusively for teachers in ASD-S in an effort to increase the number of school counsellors in the district.

A teacher can only be certified as a school counsellor, formerly called a guidance counsellor, if the teacher has completed a graduate degree in counselling with a supervised counselling internship. In the absence of school counsellors, a teacher in the school will be designated as a “guidance teacher” but only a school counsellor can provide the entire Developmental and Comprehensive School Counselling Program. Counselling is a responsive service that requires a specialized skill set, and school counsellors are educated at the graduate level to the same extent as Licenced Counselling Therapists in the College of Counselling Therapists of New Brunswick and Canadian Certified Counsellors in the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association.

UNB normally takes fifteen graduate students into the Counselling program each year, and because the classes take place at the Fredericton campus and there is a 300-hour internship, it is often a difficult master’s degree for teachers to complete.

With the Anglophone South cohort, UNB ran courses specifically for eighteen teachers from the District, many of which were taught in the Saint John Education Centre in the Donaldson Room. Teachers were able to complete their internships during their regular employment with the schools. This month, fifteen of those teachers will graduate with the Master of Education in Counselling degree from UNB and will be certified by EECD as school counsellors in July. The remaining three are expected to complete the program next year.

This arrangement would not have been possible without the support of Dr Jeff Landine, Associate Professor of Education at UNB, and Kim Landine, Director of Field Services at UNB. At ASD-S, internships were supervised by Heather Whittaker, Acting School Counselling Coordinator, Rob Mather and Jessica Bellis, School Counselling Coaches, and Todd Cormier, School Counsellor on the Saint John West Child & Youth Team. This was a significant amount of additional work and commitment from these professionals and is a testament to their commitment to improving responsive services in ASD-S.

### EECD Mental Health & Wellness Action Plan

EECD is working with the four Anglophone school districts to implement a Mental Health & Wellness Action Plan. This spring, the focus has been on developing a ten-question pulse survey

for middle and high school students. A pulse survey is a brief and regular set of questions that can be sent to students. The questions do not take much time but can be used to gather data quickly and regularly about the mental health and wellness of the student population. The ten questions are based on the “CASEL 5”, the five SEL competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. This spring, the ten questions will be tested by students at Belleisle Regional High School and Sir James Dunn Academy; the feedback from students and school staff will help EECD staff calibrate the questions for a larger rollout in 2022-2023.

### Responsive Mental Health Training for Staff

- This year ASD-S conducted one Mental Health First Aid training (July), three Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Trainings (August, October, March), and three Violence Threat Risk Assessment trainings (August, October, March) for school staff and partner agencies. ASD-S was able to ensure all school administrators and guidance staff have training in MHFA and VTRA, and all guidance staff have training in ASIST.
  - Ten school staff also received advanced VTRA training (Level II) from Kevin Cameron (NACTATR). As well, our school counselling coaches completed Traumatic Events Systems Training with Mr Cameron and will be completing Family Assessment training with Mr Cameron at the end of this month.
  - We would like to acknowledge the support of Pam Miller in the ASIST training, as well as Jen Grant (EECD), Jen Dwyer (Horizon), and Beth Ernst-Marr (Social Development) for their support in the VTRA training.
- In November, school counsellors at the 6-12 level received a day of training in career counselling, cultural competency in counselling, and suicide prevention.
- In June, Child & Youth Team members will be receiving a day of training in cultural competency and other current issues in counselling. In addition, CYT members have received training in Family Assessment and “One at a Time” through Horizon as well as cultural competency training from EECD.

### Mental Health Youth Forum and School-Based Initiatives

As has happened for several years, ASD-S hosted a Mental Health Youth Forum for student representatives from our high schools in December. Students learned about suicide prevention, learned how their brains function in terms of anxiety and emotion, had a guest speaker (Caleigh Dunfield, Child & Youth Team Counsellor), and spent time planning their own school activities.

It is important to note that our Coach teachers were on call to supply teach from February until end of April and this limited what they were able to do to support schools. Due to the staff situation, we have not been able to have PL sessions during the day.

Peter Smith