

DGF Rebels Strengthen Wellness



Rising Above the Challenges

Covid provided many challenges for all of us. Schools were particularly hit hard. So, it's a huge win for Dilworth Glyndon Felton (DGF) Schools students and staff that their wellness committee was able to influence wellness policy changes, adopted by the DGF School Board May 2022. The wellness committee, with the guidance and support of PartnerSHIP 4 Health, had been working on the policy changes since 2019.

Policy change is one of PartnerSHIP 4 Health's measurement of success. Our policy work aims to support and advance sustainable changes that will help Minnesota achieve equitable health outcomes for everyone.

Listening to Our Students and Staff

Persistence paid off as did the heightening of mental wellness needs due to the pandemic. Students on the wellness committee shared their mental health concerns as they adjusted from online school days to in-person. The DGF School Board added mental and oral health to their policy.

When strengthening the policy, Middle School teacher Kimberly Waale said, "We believe that by adding mental health to the wellness policy, we're addressing the needs expressed by the students and staff on our wellness committee."

Oral Health Gets a Boost

Research shows that many students miss school because of oral health needs. The oral health language that was added to the wellness policy came from our four-county BCBS funded Dental Innovation Coordinator Jane Neubauer who joined wellness committees this past school year.

Brief Summary of Policy Changes

1. Mental Health

- a. Students: School staff will assist with on-site or off-site referrals regarding students' mental health needs.
- b. Classroom: Staff will be encouraged to use strategies in the classroom that can positively impact a student's mental health.

2. Staff Wellness

Ensuring that school employees' physical, social-emotional, and mental health needs are met with a focus on stress management, maintaining positive relationships, teacher self-efficacy and support for purpose-driven work.

3. Oral Health

Staff will be offered and encouraged to use free resources and educational opportunities at least once annually within their classrooms that can positively impact oral health for students.

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Learn more about PartnerSHIP 4 Health (local public health in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties) at <http://partnership4health.org701>

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