

WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

Winter Newsletter 2017

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Focus on Social Emotional Learning

The Departments of Special Education and School Counseling have been very busy! Livingston elementary school counselors have been focusing their work with students on “Mindfulness”. In order to increase student focus and awareness of their actions as well as physiological responses to emotions, students participate in lessons on mindful listening and mindful bodies with the school counselors. Additionally, students are creating “*mindful glitter jars*” to help calm their sometimes scattered or frustrated selves. To learn the importance of being more mindful in their everyday lives, students are reading important books, including *Moody Cow Meditates* by Kerry Lee MacLean, *Mindful Monkey*, *Happy Panda* by Lauren Alderfer, and *Meditation is an Open Sky: Mindfulness for Kids* by Whitney Stewart and Sally Rippin. Through lessons geared toward social and emotional competencies, elementary school counselors are covering topics on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making.

At Mount Pleasant Middle School and Heritage Middle School, school counselors have been facilitating groups with students, such as New Student and Adjusting to Middle School. These groups help provide them with information they need to be successful while serving as a tool to orient students. Advisory lessons in both MPM and HMS focus on social and emotional learning and growth for all students. Additionally, classroom lessons at both MPM and HMS concentrate on career and interest exploration. Furthermore, HMS school counselors direct their lessons to tie together multiple intelligences, learning styles and the 8th Grade Tour of Livingston High School and student course choices. Please visit our school counseling webpage for more important information.

The Livingston High School counselors continue the work to support social and emotional well-being for students with a focused and clearly articulated continuum of supports. School counselors meet with students individually when they are having difficulties, feeling stressed, or in times of crisis. They infuse social and emotional learning into all meetings with students, in addition to their scheduling and post-secondary planning meetings. In freshman groups, the focus is on transition and ensuring that students are acclimating well to their new environment at LHS. The school counselors discuss the many resources available for support, such as the writing/math lab, Organization of Student Tutors (OST), school counselor, and extra help meetings with the teacher, in addition to discussing the importance of a overall healthy balance. It is extremely important that students are maintaining a balanced academic and extracurricular schedule to ensure that they are prioritizing their well-being and health. Conversations about the importance of balance and well-being is incorporated into post-secondary planning and scheduling meetings. School counselors support students as they work to identify their academic and personal goals while choosing courses and learning opportunities that are consistent with their interests and strengths. In addition, school counselors encourage students to challenge themselves and take a rigorous program of study while exploring and reminding students of the importance of balance.

For students who are experiencing further difficulty in managing the social and emotional demands of their age, their stage, and/or their grade level, our district offers additional supports from multiple sources. All schools in Livingston are supported by Child Study Teams who are charged with identifying and supporting students with disabilities including those with social and/or emotional disabilities. For the past four years our district has supported a very strong K-12 intensive school counseling program called L.I.N.K.S. (Linking Individual Needs of Kids for Success) and E.S.S. (Effective School Solutions for 9-12 students) within which identified students can receive a more intensive level of counseling support within their school day. Families may also be supported through the L.I.N.K.S. and E.S.S. programs. We now have three S.A.C.’s (Student Assistance Counselors) who serve to support our at-risk students specifically within the frame of substance use/abuse and mental health. All of these counseling professionals are deeply involved in the training of our staff and are available on a full time basis in our schools to support the faculty as they meet the needs of each of our students.

If your child is struggling with any issues relating to mental health, social and/or emotional development, or in adjusting to school, please reach out to your school’s administration or a school counselor to receive assistance.

We wish you a New Year full of peace, kindness, and mindful reflection!

Celebrations in Professional Development

We have already engaged in hundreds of hours of professional development! Please find some of the topics below:

- Assistive Technologies
- Executive Functioning in the Classroom
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Reading and Writing Strategies
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Mindfulness
- STEAM in the Classroom
- Design Loop
- Building Positive Relationships
- Questioning Strategies
- Enhancing Student Engagement
- ... and much, much more!

Parent Programs for this School Year:

We are VERY excited to share with you a growing calendar of parent programming for this school year. Please see **page two** for the events that our staff and leadership team will be offering throughout the year.



JANUARY 2018

January 18th

PRIDE Parent Workshop
Mindfulness Strategies for your Child
2:00—3:00 p.m.
Burnet Hill Elementary School

January 18th

8th Grade Transition Night for
Parents of Students with a Disability
6:00—7:00 p.m.
Livingston High School Media Center

January 18th

8th to 9th Grade Orientation Program for
All Parents
7:00—9:00 p.m.
Livingston High School Auditorium and Breakout Classes

January 24th

Book Club—*Smart but Scattered Teens*
Registration required
6:00—7:30 p.m.
Heritage Middle School Media Center

Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

Reminder...
Please refer to
your
child's school
calendar for
building-based
SEPAC
meetings!

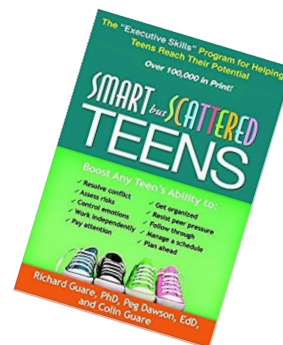
FEBRUARY 2018

February 8th

PRIDE Parent Workshop
Sensory Strategies
2:00—3:00 p.m.
Burnet Hill Elementary School

February 26th

PRIDE Open House for Lottery Accepted Integrated Students
2:00—3:00 p.m.
Burnet Hill Elementary School



APRIL 2018

April 5th

College Admissions Panel for
All Parents

Livingston High School Media Center, 5:45 p.m. Reception
Livingston High School Auditorium, 7:00—9:00 p.m.

April 11th

Book Club—*Smart but Scattered Teens*
Registration required

6:00—7:30 p.m.

Heritage Middle School Media Center

April 17th

Understanding Behaviors for
Parents of Students with a Disability

7:00—8:00 p.m.

Burnet Hill Elementary School

April 26th

Livingston High School College Fair

7:00—8:30 p.m.

Livingston High School Fitness & Wellness Center/Auxiliary Gym

April 29th

Abilities Expo

12:30—4:00 p.m.

Livingston High School Cafeteria



MAY 2018

May 10th

Post Secondary Support Programs Presentation for
Parents of Students with a Disability, ages 16-21
6:00—7:00 p.m.
Livingston High School Media Center

May 10th

Applying to College for
All Parents
7:00—9:00 p.m.
Livingston High School Auditorium

May 15th

PRIDE Parent Workshop
From PRIDE to Kindergarten: The Transition Process
7:00—8:00 p.m.
Burnet Hill Elementary School

May 24th

6th to 7th Grade Transition Night for
Parents of Students with a Disability
6:30 p.m.
Heritage Middle School

May 24th

6th to 7th Grade Transition Night for
All Parents
7:30 p.m.
Heritage Middle School



JUNE 2018

June 7th

Senior Awards and Scholarship Program

7:00—10:00 p.m.

Livingston High School Auditorium

June 13th

Managing Expectation of the Junior Year for
Parents of Students with a Disability

6:00—7:00 p.m.

Livingston High School Media Center

June 13th

Overview of the Junior Year for

All Parents

“Getting Started... Where do we begin?”

7:00 p.m.

Livingston High School Auditorium

June 14th

5th to 6th Grade Transition Night for

Parents of Students with a Disability

6:30 p.m.

Mount Pleasant Middle School

June 14th

5th to 6th Grade Parent Orientation

7:30 p.m.

Mount Pleasant Middle School