SCHOOL DISTRICT 63 (SAANICH)

EDUCATION DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE
Report to the Board of April 23, 2025

Committee Members:	Trustee Silzer, Chair
	Trustee Vandall
	Trustee VanWell
Staff Support:	Carly Hunter, Director of Instruction, Learning & Innovation
	Mel Paas, Assistant Superintendent
Partner Representatives:	Leila Sinclair-Wise, SAA
	STA – Don Peterson
	CUPE – regrets
	COPACS – regrets
Other Attendees:	Chair Dunford, Trustee Hickman, Trustee Elder, Pete Westhaver – Assistant Superintendent & Cat Jensen

Tuesday, April 15, 2025
3:00 pm

A.   PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

1.   A presentation on Mental Health Student & Parent Feedback – Cat Jensen & Peter Westhaver

B.   ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

No Items.

C.   ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION

No Items.

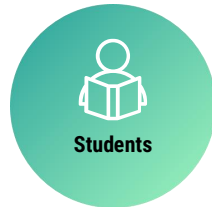### D.   ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

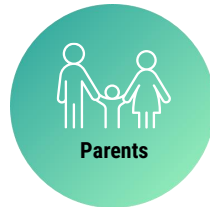No Items.

E.   FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Advocates Presentation (June)
- AI Implementation (September)
- International Schools Benefits Presentation
- Data Sharing around Strategic Plan Goals - ongoing
- Student Voice Feedback – ongoing

Mental Health Strategy Touch Points

Students

Student Voice Sessions

Parents

Parent Engagement Evening

Student Voice on Mental Health

Questions

- What are the biggest mental health struggles youth face today? What do we as adults need to pay attention to?

- What are some barriers that prevent students from seeking help and what support would make a difference?

- What are some misconceptions about mental health that you have heard?

- If you could design a mental health initiative or program for you school, what would it look like?

- What does your school do a decent job of in terms of supporting student mental health? What would make it better?

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Student Voice

Accessibility and Privacy of Mental Health Support

- **Anonymous Support**: Implementing anonymous platforms for students to seek help.
- **Improved Accessibility**: Making information about mental health easily accessible through assemblies, posters, and helplines.
- **Private Counselling**: Emphasize confidentiality, reducing visibility and providing private support spaces.

Mental Health Awareness and Education

- **Daily Integration**: Incorporating mental health literacy into daily classes and existing curricula.
- **Training**: Offering training for teachers and mandatory classes on mental health issues.
- **Awareness Campaigns**: Educating students about available mental health apps and potentially developing a school-based app for easier access to resources.

Community Building and Peer Support

- **Clubs and Activities**: Creating clubs and drop-in activities to foster community and support.
- **Peer Mentorship**: Implementing peer mentors or groups where students can connect with peers.
- **Safe Spaces**: Providing quiet spaces for students to retreat to when feeling overwhelmed.

Parent Engagement Evening on Mental Health

Questions

- What are the existing or potential barriers in supporting families' mental health and wellness in your school community?

- How can the school community create a supportive environment to promote mental wellbeing?

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Parent Engagement

Communication and Engagement
- **Effective Communication**: Using varied methods of communication between schools, parents, and families is crucial to ensure information reaches everyone.
- **Parent Engagement**: Increase parent involvement through regular parent only events.
- **Mental Health Literacy**: Sharing information about mental health initiatives and resources in a digestible manner.

Mental Health Awareness and Support
- **Integration**: A strong focus on building mental health capacity alongside academics.
- **Reducing Stigma**: Reducing defensiveness around mental health issues through promoting openness, sharing stories from parents, and including parent voices.
- **Resource Sharing**: Making mental health resources available and accessible to families through various platforms, such as websites and newsletters, is crucial.

Inclusivity and Accessibility
- **Equity and Diversity**: Ensuring equitable access to resources and support for all families, regardless of location or socioeconomic or family status.
- **Cohesion**: Utilizing school-wide programs that provide knowledge and language that students and families can use both at home and at school.
- **One-stop Shop**: A hub for parents and offering teacher resources to support students.

What are we doing well?

Reducing Stigma — Efforts to reduce stigma around mental health are evident, with strategies like increased availability of psychoeducation and mental health literacy.

Resources — Schools are providing orientation and introduction to available resources at the beginning of the school year.

Student Friendly Practices — Allowing flexible and personalized learning environments to meet individual learning and support needs.

Relationships — Teachers are creating a supportive environment by being approachable, kind, and understanding.

What are some areas of opportunity?

Accessibility — Counsellors often have long wait times or are difficult to access. Many students are not comfortable seeking access in a visible/public setting.

Confidentiality — Ensuring support is delivered in a private and confidential manner. Many students do not understand the limits of confidentiality.

Information Sharing — Ensuring students are continuously informed about mental health resources and support systems throughout the school year.

Relationships — Establishing consistency across school experience regarding positive relationships with teachers.

Moving Forward

- Sharing student voice and parent feedback to individual schools.

- Utilizing multiple data points to continue to develop and inform strategic direction for mental health.

- Continuing collaborating with BC Children's Hospital Health Promotion in Schools team to further identify and leverage district drivers of mental health

THANK
YOU