

School Name: Parkcrest Elementary

Principal: Navdeep Aujla

School Goal: To reduce student anxiety.

Date: May 1, 2017

SCANNING

What's going on for your learners in relation to your goal?

How are you supporting the diverse learning needs of your school population in relation to the goal?

Our emerging goal has been to support our students in being self-aware and be able to self-regulate in order to reduce anxiety. We have been supporting our students through teaching them to recognize their emotions. The RULER program is being used in several of the classes. In addition to this, we have been doing yoga to help students practice self-regulation strategies. Our school counsellor also does a great deal of work in all the classes on self-awareness and self-regulation.

WHAT DOES OUR FOCUS NEED TO BE?

What evidence identifies the focus? What targeted groups are addressed? Where will concentrating your energies yield the greatest effect?

Much of our evidence comes through teacher observations, parent observations and incident reports. If there is a concern about a student, this is addressed at a LSS Team Meeting and the referral is done to our counsellor. This helps us identify students that need tier 3 intervention. Our counsellor also makes an effort to connect with parents and provides a great deal of education to parents. We also use Climate Study data and Satisfaction Survey data.

SPECIFIC GOAL YOU ARE ADDRESSING:

How does your data inform next steps? What is contributing to this area of focus? How will students benefit academically, personally, socially?

Climate study data indicates 61% of students had either high or medium level of worries and anxiety. 60% of students reported having high or medium levels of sadness & depressed mood. This is inconsistent with school-wide observational data which indicates the number of students that exhibit behaviours indicative of anxiety is closer to 25%. Thus, our students who experience anxiety do not show behaviours that are observed by classroom teachers. Anxiety affects individuals differently, if students are self-aware and can recognize these emotions and have a toolbox of strategies to self-regulate, they will be successful academically, personally and socially.

CHECKING

Have we made enough of a difference? Feedback, data collection, data sharing, data analysis. How is the data informing / modifying practice? What has changed for your target groups?

Even bringing awareness to this topic has made a difference in the school because staff have started to look at behaviour issues through a different lens. Continuous education around anxiety has supported staff in recognizing anxiety and they have started to see it a common human condition and realize that a great deal can be done to reduce feelings of anxiety. Our target group has more strategies in their toolbox; students have been using the mood meter in almost every class and this has brought an awareness to the different things that affect emotions. Yoga sessions and teacher instruction has provided strategies on how to deal with these emotions. Parents have also been given the opportunity to attend yoga sessions and learn the strategies being taught to students so that parallel strategies can be used in the home.

NEXT STEPS:

What requires further attention? Where to next?

This is an on-going journey and we will continue with the yoga program through the support of the UBC Social Emotional Learning Lab. We have been implementing the RULER program over the last few years and with the support of the UBC SEL Learning Lab, we will make the connection between the mood meter and yoga. Students will plot themselves on the mood meter before yoga and after yoga to make a connection of how the yoga affects their emotions. In addition to this, staff was also introduced to the power of Gratitude. Practicing gratitude may be a preventative practice that helps to reduce feelings of anxiety. There is evidence to prove that gratitude practice can reduce anxiety. A daily gratitude journal and "letters of gratitude" have shown to be effective in changing one's perspective. A focus in this area may be effective in preventing and reducing anxiety in our students.

HOW AND WHERE CAN WE LEARN MORE?

What professional learning has taken place and what is needed/ planned? What resources and school/ district supports are you using?

Our yoga program this year was successful and a survey indicated that overall, most students enjoyed the program. Next year we will be doing the yoga program with the support of the UBC Social Emotional Learning Lab. One of the students associated with the lab is also a yoga teacher and will be doing a study in our school. Half the classes will be receiving yoga classes on a regular basis and the other half will not receive yoga support. At the end of the study, we will be able to assess how the yoga support affected student ability to be self-aware and also to self-regulate. One observation that needs to be made from this years' experience is that students need to be more explicitly taught the reason for the yoga classes and teachers need to help students make a connection between what is being done in yoga and self-awareness/self-regulation.

TAKING ACTION / WHAT ARE WE DOING DIFFERENTLY?

What is your implementation plan? Roles of key stakeholders? How are all 3 tiers supported? How will you monitor progress?

The implementation of this goal has been gradual and skill sets of teachers in implementing it has been varied. Teachers are now more aware of the need for students to be self-aware and be able to self-regulate. Staff has been seeking strategies for a "toolbox" that can be taught to students and over the last two years the focus has been to develop the teacher's toolbox so that appropriate strategies can be taught to students. Our school counsellor has been a key stakeholder in this process and provides tier 1, 2 and 3 intervention. He is going to every classroom at some time in the school year and providing six to eight weeks of lessons as deemed appropriate for the specific class. He is also providing small group support for students as well as one-on-one support. In addition to this, he supports families through e-mail, over the phone or meetings. He has also developed materials for many different areas and shares these resources with parents and staff. In order to provide teachers with on-going support in this area, our pro-d team also focuses either on RULER or other aspects of this goal at each pro-d day.

In order to monitor progress, we will continue to participate with the climate study and also use observational data.