

## Board Development Topic: Understanding Staff and Student Mental Health

### Date of Board Meeting:

March 2, 2023

### Strategic Priority:

- High Quality Teaching and Learning
- Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities
- Effective Policy and Procedures
- Healthy, Sustainable Physical & Social Environments

### Quality Indicator(s):

QI 1.1 Facilitating environments where students feel a sense of belonging and have high levels of intellectual engagement.

QI 5.6 Modeling behaviours that promote a safe and open work environment and high employee morale.

### Information for the Board (10 fast facts):

1. **Well at Work Report**-The Well at Work report summarizes the findings of the Well at Work Advisors Deeper Dive analysis for the Good Spirit School Division. GSSD is a community of learners that are committed to a process of ongoing reflection with a focus on continuous improvement. The Division engaged in this process to understand their current state of workplace wellness, obtain an overview of employee wellbeing data assets and gaps, and provide options for future direction. Details of the report will be shared with the entire division in the first volume of the Staff Wellbeing Newsletter.



2. **GSSD Workplace Wellness** – GSSD has moved forward with the Well at Work initiative. Surveys were completed by all staff in August 2022; it targeted staff from each area of GSSD and participated in a focus group to provide more in-depth data. This will be used to move forward with wellness initiatives in the future. A wellbeing committee has been established with representation from the division office, unions, non-union employee groups, and the Board of Trustees. A draft Terms of Reference has been developed, and the committee will use the report as a guide to determine their next steps. The Terms of Reference will be added to the suite of appendixes for Board Policy 8 – Committees of the Board. Additionally, the Division supported committee members to attend the Summit on K-12 Workplace Wellbeing in November 2022.
3. **Well at Work Conference - November 8-9, 2022.** GSSD staff attended the Pan-Canadian Summit in Edmonton on November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, including Lois Smandych, Trustee, Quintin Robertson, GSSD Director of Education, Kyla Christiansen, GSSD Community School Community Health Coordinator, Jason Trost, HR Superintendent, Karla Sastaunik, CUPE President, Stuart Wilson, GSTA President, Fallon Prince,

LCS In-school Administrator, Jay Cee Brass, Indigenous Community Worker. Highlights from the Summit included:

- Well-being results from a foundation of trust
- All players in an organization come as equals as it relates to well-being. Everyone must have a voice.
- Self-care must be built into life – work life integration vs. balance.
- Mastery – autonomy – sense of purpose and generosity are vital to well-being.
- Relationships over logistics – heart and head of workplace well-being
- Communication must be multi-directional and continuous.
- Concept of wellness must be a group concept – no one can make you well. Moving away from the individual to the collective.
- Change management – input must come from the grassroots level.
- Move from talk into action.
- The best way to predict the future in an organization is to create it.

- 4. Mental Health Capacity Building Program**-The Mental Health Capacity Building Initiative (MHCB) is a pilot project in Saskatchewan taking place at Dr. Brass School in Yorkton. It is a partnership between Good Spirit School Division and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA). Mental Health Capacity Building is funded and led by the SHA with support from the Ministries of Health and Education. The MCHB program works to provide programming and support to students, schools, families, and communities in building their mental health and wellness capacity. The initiative works to provide support, resources and education around mental health and wellness and reduce the stigma attached to mental health. Amie Dzuba was hired as the Wellness Promoter and Michelle Goulden as the Coordinator. The MHCB supplements supports at the Tier 1 (whole school/whole class) and Tier 2 (small group) programming that must connect to curriculum outcomes with evidence-based programming.
- 5. Administrative Procedures** – Administrative Procedures (APs) that support staff and student well-being are supported while others are revisited and updated to reflect a focus on wellbeing of students and staff. These include AP 340 (Attendance of Students), AP 354 (Drug, Alcohol, Substance Use Intervention) with the change of name reflecting the supportive approach of the AP, AP 319 (Gender and Sexual Diversity), and planned work this year with AP 220-1 (Parent Acknowledgement), AP 220 (Alternative Educational Services), as well as an AP regarding inclusion.
- 6. Mental Health First Aid Training, Education and Support** – Two employees were trained to facilitate Mental Health First Aid for adults who work with youth. GSSD is committed to training a cross section of GSSD staff each year. Additionally, we have offered the program to Mental Health 20 classes to train youth. Grant money from the Ministry of Education has been accessed to provide continued Mental Health First Aid training to a cross section of GSSD staff. This training supports staff who work with youth to identify, intervene, and refer to appropriate resources for youth struggling with mental health impacts.
- 7. School Counsellors/Educational Psychologists** – Good Spirit School Division has prioritized school counsellors and educational psychologist and champions the work they do in providing mental health supports for staff and students. Professional Service Providers (PSPs) support implementation of programs in classrooms that teach Social Emotional Learning (SEL) such as FRIENDS, Zones of Regulation, BE SAFE Kit and WE Thinkers. Curriculum Consultant Kyla Christianson has coded curriculum outcomes for some of these programs for outcomes and indicators, to support classroom teachers in meeting curriculum outcomes.
- 8. Strategic Planning** – The inclusion of goals that position mental health and wellness in Good Spirit School Division’s strategic plan highlights the importance of staff and student wellness. These goals include staff and students feeling welcome and a sense of belonging at school/work and staff and students developing mental fitness.
- 9. Mental Health Symposium** - A cross section of GSSD staff attended the Provincial Mental Health Symposium in May 2022. The MHCB team are planning to attend this year’s symposium on May 9-10, 2023. The Mental Health Capacity Building initiative will be highlighted at this symposium and the Dr. Brass MHCB initiative will be included in this presentation.

10. **Mental Health Collaboration, Referrals and Supports** – School Counsellors regularly collaborate with local Mental Health therapists for referrals, programs, and information. An example of this collaborative manner to support youth is the Teen Boost program, which is delivered in schools virtually by Mental Health workers and supported by School Counsellors.

Respectfully submitted,

Quintin M. Robertson, Director/CEO  
Good Spirit School Division