

MINUTES:5/13/2021 SPC REGULAR MEETING

3:30 - 4:30 PM

Big Piney High School Library

Present:

Melinda Bobo, Coalition Chair; Priest-Rector, St. Andrew's Church, Pinedale
Aaron Preece, Coalition Vice Chair; Counselor, High Country Behavioral Health
Annie Adams, Caseworker, Dept of Family Services
Deputy Ryan Day, SCSO, School Resource Officer
Eric Makelky, Principal, Pinedale Middle School
David Shaw, Principal, Skyline Academy
Norma Clements, Counselor, Big Piney High School
Melissa Mitchell, Counselor and Special Education Director, SCSD#9
Jeff Makelky, Principal, Big Piney High School
Mardy Sleight, QPR Gatekeeper trainer: community member
Sherri Redden, Big Piney town council member and SCSD#9 employee
Dr. Brendan Fitzsimmons, County Health Officer
Tessa Miller, SAFV Task force Prevention Specialist
Bill Lehr, Marbleton Senior Center board member; QPR Gatekeeper trainer
Robert Galbreath, reporter, Sublette newspapers
Trisha Scott, coalition coordinator

Purpose of meeting:

Hear from schools about mental health and substance use trends observed in the 2020 - 2021 school year. Hear prevention requests and needs for 2021-2022 school year.

Discussion on trends this year:

Vaping: Principal Makelky (SCSD #9), Officer Day, and Principal Shaw agreed that vaping is still a serious problem among students. More boys than girls are vaping. Less vaping is happening on campus at SCSD#9 due to the vape detectors and the consequences for getting caught. There have not been any incidents since February. Mr. Shaw reports vape detectors at Skyline are not as effective at deterring use at Skyline and that they have better luck catching vaping with random checks. Principal Makelky (SCSD#1) reported no vape incidents at Pinedale Middle School this school year.

Officer Day reported that the vape pen companies continue to create new delivery systems that look different so it's very hard to tell what you're looking for. Officer Day is patrolling the parking lot to discourage parking lot vaping. This seems to be working. Officer Day brought up EVALI, the lung disease caused by vaping, he said that the CDC has not been tracking EVALI numbers in the pandemic. Vape users are 3 times more likely to contract covid.

All school staff reported their observation that kids don't perceive that vaping is harmful.

Marijuana: Dr. Fitz asked if they are catching kids vaping cannabis? Yes, one incident this year at SCSD#9. Officer Day reported that kratom, which is legal, is being seen in Pinedale, not in Piney. Effects of kratom are similar to THC. DRE is trying to make it illegal, like Spice. Officer

Day reported he has seen (confiscated?) dab pens in Pinedale at Skyline, not yet seen in Big Piney.

Alcohol: Most present from SCSD#9 agreed that alcohol is always the biggest issue with kids in the community but not on campus. There have been no alcohol violations interfering with school sports this year, no MIP's this year at Sub9.

Mr. Makelky from Pinedale Middle School reported no incidents with alcohol, tobacco, drugs this year.

Mental Health: Both Mrs. Clements and Mrs. Mitchell reported no increase in their caseloads this year, which surprised them. They reported an increase in issues related to anger and anxiety. "Kids are looking out for each other more", by reporting harassment, bullying, and when they are concerned that another student is having suicidal thoughts. Question: What changed in kids to have them reach out more for help and to report? What is working? Answer: "They know something will be done".

Mr. Makelky (SCSD#9) reported that the Big Piney guided reading teachers see kids 4x a week every week for 4 years and it is an informal time for teachers and kids to get to know each other and make trusting relationships. That helps kids feel more comfortable reaching out and asking for help for themselves and others. Also increases a sense of belonging.

Mr. Makelky - Pinedale Middle School - reported an increase in need for mental health support and services for students this year at PMS. Speculation from school staff that students MH needs are related to parent economic stress.

Notes on community economic stressors:

Most at the meeting had comments about the economic stresses related to housing due to the covid related real estate boom on both sides of the county. Tonia Hoffman reported that this has resulted in very reduced housing inventory for families that rent in south county (where buyers are buying up rental inventory), some SCSD#9 families are losing housing with no place to go. Families that want to buy or rent in north county are facing similar challenges due to housing shortage and high costs of housing. Aaron Preece noted that the High Country (HCBH) waiting list for counseling services is down from 60 on the waiting list at the beginning of April to 50 on the waiting list at this time. HCBH is working hard to hire new counselors but having difficulty due to lack of affordable housing for counselors.

Tessa Miller from SAFV reported that the state has received more than \$110,000,000 in federal funds for Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP) to support individuals and families with housing needs to prevent evictions and homelessness.

Tessa reported that the Sublette SAFV Task force is open until 6 pm Monday - Thursday to help people file the forms to receive these funds. The funds will also cover utilities. Can get retroactive rent back to March 2020, if necessary. Funds available through August 2021.

Call Tessa at SAFV for more info.

Further discussion on affordable housing: Melinda Bobo noted that it may be time to investigate a Habitat for Humanity chapter for Sublette County.

Notes on prevention needs for school year 2021 - 2022:

Those present agreed that prevention needs for next year for SCSD#9 should include:

- Providing a parenting class

- Providing training and mentoring to the students who are peer mentors.
- Educate parents on marijuana.

Notes on discussion on marijuana education: Trisha reported that the coalition has been working on getting educated on marijuana and especially on the high concentrate THC products available in Colorado since February. High concentrate THC has had a significant health impact on youth in Colorado. The coalition is preparing to advocate for youth prevention in the event that marijuana legalization is introduced again in the legislature. We don't want to be caught again like deer in the headlights. We were advised by Dr. Libby Stuyt, the addictions psychiatrist that we have been working with, to educate parents and also focus on 8-9 year olds. Officer Day disagreed with educating 8-9 year olds as that may get their interest up. More discussion needs to be had to find the right time and place and age to do effective education on marijuana. Meanwhile, the coalition is working on educating parents with social and print media on "How to talk to your kids about marijuana" using information from Children's Hospital in Colorado. Media will be available Friday May 21 and Trisha will share social media with Tonia to share with SCSD#9 parents and educators.

Discussion on parenting classes:

Mrs. Mitchell said there is a big need for parenting classes. What is needed for success? Noted in the meeting that the Bridges out of Poverty Getting Ahead class in Pinedale provided childcare, meals, and gift cards to participants and recently graduated 8 participants after 16 weeks of classes. Meals and childcare and gift cards have been a community collaboration. This may be a good model to follow to draw parents to a parenting class in Big Piney. Public Health can advise on curriculum and possibly provide classes in Big Piney, but cannot guarantee that they can teach the classes, yet, due to changing workloads. Trisha will be learning more and will share information with Mrs. Mitchell. To make this happen we may need to communicate over the summer to develop the necessary partnerships.

Discussion on peer mentoring and training for BPHS students:

Mr. Makelky reported that these kids are in place and just need more support, training, and mentoring to be more effective. Mardy Sleight and Bill Lehr advocated for QPR training for those students. Trisha suggested looking into peer mentoring programs like Sources of Strength. The Dept of Health also suggests Botvin Life Skills training for peers. Both can be paid for by the community prevention grant. Norma Clements mentioned a current program (I didn't get the name) that may provide a structure for more peer support that is already in place. More discussion needs to take place to find agreement about the most workable way to support peer mentors with training and guidance.

Discussion on QPR: Tonia Hoffman suggested reaching more students without taking class time by teaching QPR to the sports programs, which could be accomplished as part of one regular practice session. Bill Lehr suggested teaching QPR at the beginning of the 2021 - 2022 school year. Mr. Makelky (BPHS) expressed reluctance about the QPR presentation he received, saying the format needs to change to be more dynamic and more effective for students. Melinda recommended reaching out to Mrs. Wilkinson at PHS who has taught all 10th graders QPR to see how she has adapted the curriculum. Trisha will relay that information to Mr. Makelky.

Formal meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.