



November 21, 2023

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Approval of Cambridge Public Schools Youth Mental Health First Aid Plan

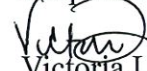
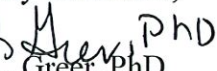
Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the Cambridge Public Schools Youth Mental Health First Aid Plan in response to School Committee Order #23-148

Details: Anticipated Plans for Year 1:

- Offer Youth Mental Health First Aid as a choice course for staff within Cambridge Public Schools. This self-selected group will allow us to evaluate the interest level, engagement, and knowledge level of our staff to determine future offerings.
- Collaborate with DESE and Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) to provide training opportunities for Cambridge Public Schools staff. Prioritization will be given to staff working with students in Grades 6-12, particularly staff who directly work with students across multiple classrooms and/or grade levels (ex: assistant principals, deans of students, interventionists, athletic coaches, specialist teachers, and family liaisons).
- Investigate the possibility of having a small group of Cambridge Public Schools staff from a variety of disciplines/roles within the district to become Youth Mental Health First Aid trainers so that we, as a district, can further build our capacity to provide in-district professional programming through this train-the-trainer model.

The activities listed in the Year 1 plan will be reviewed and evaluated to determine the plans for the following two to five years. Future years of this multi-year plan may include coordination with community partners to host Youth Mental Health First Aid training for student leaders, families and caregivers, and school staff.

Respectfully submitted,

  PhD
Victoria L. Greer, PhD
Superintendent of Schools



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Date: November 8, 2023

To: Victoria L. Greer, PhD
Superintendent of Schools

From: Kim Huffer, LICSW
Director of Social-Emotional Learning

Re: Motion C23-148

Youth Mental Health First Aid is an eight hour education program which introduces participants to the risk factors and warning signs of mental health challenges in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to engage with an adolescent who is struggling and connect them to support. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily focused on adolescents between the ages of 12-18. The course is geared towards individuals who regularly interact with youth, including caregivers, educators, and community providers.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is an 8 hour course with two hours of asynchronous online work and six hours of live in-person or virtual training that is completed in one session. Space within the training is limited to approximately 15-30 participants based on the number of instructors. This past year, the district's health educators completed Youth Mental Health First Aid to support them in their work with students around understanding mental health and wellness which are units within their curriculum. The district would like to expand the offerings of Youth Mental Health First Aid. Providing learning opportunities for staff will require a multi-year training plan in collaboration with DESE and Cambridge Health Alliance.

Anticipated Plans for Year 1:

- Offer Youth Mental Health First Aid as a choice course for staff within Cambridge Public Schools. This self-selected group will allow us to evaluate the interest level, engagement, and knowledge level of our staff to determine future offerings.
- Collaborate with DESE and Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) to provide training opportunities for Cambridge Public Schools staff. Prioritization will be given to staff working with students in Grades 6-12, particularly staff who directly work with students across multiple classrooms and/or grade levels (ex: assistant principals, deans of students, interventionists, athletic coaches, specialist teachers, and family liaisons).

- Investigate the possibility of having a small group of Cambridge Public Schools staff from a variety of disciplines/roles within the district to become Youth Mental Health First Aid trainers so that we, as a district, can further build our capacity to provide in-district professional programming through this train-the-trainer model.

Anticipated Plans for Years 2-5:

The activities listed in the Year 1 plan will be reviewed and evaluated to determine the plans for the following two to five years. In year 2 and subsequent years, the goal is to offer Youth Mental Health First Aid as a choice course for CPS staff. Future years of this multi-year plan may include coordination with community partners to host Youth Mental Health First Aid training for student leaders, families and caregivers, and school staff.