



Education Team Monthly Meeting
November 18, 2021
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Virtual Meeting on Zoom Platform

Meeting Notes

Attendance

This meeting of the Education Team continued to focus on some of the key topics originally planned for the Summer Institute. The September kickoff featured presentations by Commissioner Teresa Lubbers (Indiana Commission for Higher Education) and Dr. Katie Jenner (Indiana Department of Education). This November meeting explored approaches being taken with social/emotional learning (SEL) to address mental health issues that existed prior to the pandemic but have become more critical during the past year.

Online attendance for this meeting was approximately 60 at its peak.

Call to Order & Welcome

Peggy Buffington and ***Mark Sperling***, Education Team Co-Chairs for K-12 and Higher Education, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and introduced the agenda items for the meeting. They noted the continuing importance of mental health as an issue for both K-12 and college students as we navigate the ever-changing challenges presented by the pandemic. Presentations from the November meeting will be available on the READY NWI website at www.readynwi.com. Below are a few highlights and points of emphasis from the presentations.

Social/Emotional Learning Needs & Approaches in the K-12 Environment (Cynthia Mose-Trevino, Lake Ridge Schools & Debbie Matthys, Hobart Schools)

Cynthia Mose-Trevino and Debbie Matthys, READY NWI members who have worked on SEL and trauma-informed approaches over many years, collaborated on a presentation of current challenges and approaches with K-12 students in the current environment. The full presentation can be found on the READY NWI website. A few key points included:

- The current statistics on mental health issues are staggering – a national emergency has been declared by three major national mental health organizations;

- A priority is looking at the many alternatives to expulsion of students, as the goal is to keep students engaged and accountable;
- It is always important to emphasize the need to “be present in the moment;”
- We need to keep civil rights implications on our view screens, as mental health is a disability requiring accommodation under ADA;
- Trauma indicators should continue to guide our actions as we look for root causes of students’ behaviors;
- We must also work on the mental health of our teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff – we are all human and dealing with multiple issues in balancing work and life;
- The MTSS (multi-tiered system of supports) structures help us in prioritizing appropriate levels of support: Tier 1 – whole school; Tier 2 – small groups; Tier 3 – one-on-one.

The full presentation provides deeper insights and connections to other sources of assistance. You can also contact Cyndi (ctrevino@lakeridgeschools.net) or Debbie (debbiem@hobart.k12.in.us).

<i>VR-FUTURES Study (Matt Wells, Purdue Northwest)</i>

Matt Wells, Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships and Engagement at PNW, informed the group about a program named VR—FUTURES (Virtual Resilience for Understanding Trauma and Utilizing Regulation to Envision Success) that has implications for our work with students. A detailed description can be found on the READY NWI website. A few key features of the work are:

- Virtual Reality (VR) and related technologies have been shown to be successful in treating post-traumatic stress for veterans;
- The program is examining whether modified, trauma-informed approaches can achieve similar success with traumatized children as they have with veterans;
- The program includes development of tools aimed at empowerment and resilience for children experiencing trauma;
- The program will combine a virtual reality life game embedded with academic learning supports and SEL learning activities;
- Through the game experience, students will learn to tell their own stories, developing coping strategies to help mitigate the effects of stress;
- PNW’s Center for Innovation through Visualization and Simulation (CIVS), the School of Education and Counseling, and the Department of Psychology are partnering with the University of Southern California and a community organization in Indianapolis to assess outcomes and efficacy of the approach.

In addition to the information on the READY NWI website, you can contact Matt Wells directly at Matthew.Wells@pnw.edu.

Indiana University Northwest East Asian Studies Center (Diana Chen Lin, IUN)

Diana Chen Lin, EASC Gateway Coordinator, presented information on the mission and services of IUN's East Asian Studies Center. The mission includes providing greater understanding about East Asia to both IUN students and in content integrated into high school curricula. In addition, the Center introduces opportunities to the community and businesses in connecting with East Asia. Details about services of the Center, upcoming classes, and timelines are included in the PowerPoint that is posted on the READY NWI website. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Center directly at iunes@iun.edu or Diana atdchenlin@iun.edu.

Announcements & Adjournment

Announcements included:

- The READI grant application for our region has been submitted to the IEDC at the state level for funding consideration up to \$50 million, which includes some funding for support of READY NWI – we may know where we stand by the time of our December meeting
- Our December meeting will focus on the impact of the READI funding plus information related to community-wide mental health efforts
- Let us know if there are focus areas you would like to have at our Education Team meetings in January through May of 2022

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Next meeting will be ***Thursday, December 16, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.***

An agenda will be sent out about a week in advance. We will continue on our Third Thursday schedule for the remainder of the school year with meetings continuing as virtual until further notice.

Please contact ***Beki Vogelpohl*** (rvogelpohl@cwicorp.com) or ***Shaun Sahlhoff*** (ssahlhoff@cwicorp.com) if you have questions or comments, updates on members to be added or deleted, or ideas for content for our meetings for the remainder of this school year.

