

South Lane Mental Health teams up with School District

By Zach Silva
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

At the schoolboard meeting on Monday, August 14, a memorandum of understanding was signed between South Lane Mental Health and the South Lane School District to continue therapy at schools throughout the district.

"It's groundbreaking because it formalizes the relationship that we've been building over the last five years," said Valeria Clarke the Assistant Executive Director at South Lane Mental Health. "It is nothing new, this is really what we've already been doing. They pledged to provide us space and some computer access and we pledged to provide therapists who will do the work we promised they would do."

More than anything, the relationship over the last five years has been about a consistent commitment to serve the students of the district. While students come and go, Clarke was insistent that the therapists and services provided need to be consistent and this was something that she promised South Lane superintendent Krista Parent.

"Children rely on relationships and connection. And children develop into healthy adults when they have healthy attachment. When you've got a therapist that is popping in and out and is not available or is there one year and gone and then a new one is there and gone and a new one. You don't develop good relationships, that's not the way to do it," said Clarke.

Over the last year, this program worked with 189 children ranging from kindergarten to senior in high school. The program can look different at different grade levels, with therapy being focused on play, one-on-one discussions or group discussions, but works to help mold healthy students.

"[Adolescents] are really wrangling with changes that are happening in their worlds and in their minds they want to check in with people that aren't their parents. They're getting to the age where that is appropriate to do. They're exploring their outer world," said Clarke.

Goals for the upcoming school year

At the latest school board meeting Superintendent Krista Parent laid out her goals for the upcoming 2017-18 school year. They are as follow:

1. Successfully Manage the Bond Process

This work includes working with the new pool and the building of Harrison Elementary School to make sure things go as close to as scheduled as possible

2. Chronic Absenteeism

Parent noted that the district is looking at creative ways to solve this problem to make the number of students who are chronically absent to go down. This work includes looking at programs around the country and state that have been successful in this.

3. 100% of diploma students reaching the essential skills in reading and 98% in writing and mathematics

This is not a new goal and is one that has been achieved in the past. But with each new year brings new students and a continued pressure to make sure these students are achieving at a higher level.

4. Get Graduation Rate to 76%

The graduation rate for the district has continued to climb and Parent is hoping that it can keep going up. Last year CGHS had one of the highest graduation rates in the state.

5. Administrative Council Work

Parent noted that she is working with the Administrative Council to give the most effective feedback to teachers that they can use in their classrooms. Last year the district worked with a group out of Boston called Research for Better Teaching and will be partnering with them again. The group also read "Readers Eat Last" and will be looking at the strategies from the book "Getting Better Faster."

6. Participate and co-facilitate the school board's work with the scholarship program Oregon Promise Scholars grant

This scholarship in association with the Oregon School Board Association would work to create a project that raises community engagement and focuses on student learning and achievement.

Fresh faces: 13 new teachers in South Lane



Name: Brenna Fairchild

College: Western Oregon University (undergrad), Pacific University (Masters)

Years Teaching: Seven

Position: Bohemia Elementary School, 5th Grade

Quote: I began teaching by subbing in South Lane and it quickly became my favorite place to work. I then taught for a year in Eugene before moving to Chennai, India where I taught 3rd grade for four years. After India, I moved to South Korea and taught 4th grade for two years. This is my eighth year teaching and I am so excited to be back in Oregon and teaching at Bohemia. 5th grade was one of my most favorite years in elementary school and I can't wait to meet my students.

Name: Alicia Sparer

College: Harris-Stowe State University (undergrad) and University of Mississippi (Masters)

Years Teaching: Two

Position: Lincoln Middle School, Science

Quote: I am excited about collaborating with my fellow teachers and the administration at LMS to create memorable learning experiences for children. I am also excited to use the beautiful areas of and around Cottage Grove to get kids excited about science.



Name: Nick Loeb

College: University of Vermont

Years Teaching: Four

Position: London School, 6th-8th Grade

Quote: I chose London because I like small schools with a focus put on individual students education. I am most looking [forward] to getting to know the students and the community the school is in.



Name: Taylor Boxberger

College: University of Oregon (undergrad and Masters)

Years Teaching: Two years as a substitute

Position: Cottage Grove High School

Quote: I am excited to be back at the school where I attended high school and have coached track and field for the past two years. It will be fun to work with some of my old teachers and to be a teacher at the school where both my brother and sister will be attending (though I am not sure that they are just as excited). I grew up in Cottage Grove, so I'm excited to serve the community that has provided so many amazing opportunities for me.



Other New Teachers: Harrison Elementary School - Lindsey Alsup (Owls Nest) and Ryan West (Special Education). Bohemia Elementary School - Samantha Beach (2nd Grade), Joey Cavaner (2nd/3rd Grade) and Lacey Geiszler (Kindergarten). Kennedy High School - Amy Cooper (OdysseyWare). Latham Elementary School - McKenna Gibeau (2nd Grade), Courtney Guisti (4th Grade) and Amy Struthers (3rd Grade).

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