

MERKEL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Joseph O'Malley, Superintendent

Minutes for the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meeting on 1-18-23

The Merkel ISD Student Health Advisory Council met for the third time during the 2022-2023 school year on January 18, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. in the Merkel ISD Administration Conference Room.

The following members were present:

Joseph O'Malley, Superintendent
Kelli Pedone, MHS, BSN, RN - District RN and SHAC Coordinator/Co-Chair
Daniel L. McDuff, RN, Parent/Co-Chair
K'rin Young, MMS Principal
Will Kates, Athletic Director
Brin Reed, MISD Food Service Director
Rachelle Rister, RN, MMS Nurse
Nicki Salas, LVN, MES Nurse

The following students were present for the MHS and MMS student input on school health:

Merkel High School:

Jack Travis - Athletics
Avery Chacon - Athletics
Austin Porterfield - Band
Jozlynn Gollihar - PE

Merkel Middle School:

Breeah Young - Athletics
Levi Gorman - Athletics
Dakoda Arp - PE
Bethany Bates - PE

Students and SHAC members ate lunch provided by the school district and then the meeting was called to order at 11:40 a.m. by Mr. O'Malley.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed by the SHAC members. No changes or questions.

Mr. O'Malley led the discussion with the MHS and MMS student representatives regarding school health. High school students felt that a health class offered in the 9th or 10th grade would be beneficial to include a variety of topics, such as a review of sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition and healthy eating to include BMI and how to gain or lose weight in a healthy way based on body type. The students at both campuses voiced the need for education on social media etiquette and long-term effects on their future. The students expressed that this training should include cyber-bullying and showing respect for others.

A high school student representative recommended doing a survey to determine who needs the education and as a way to select targeted groups for education purposes. Mr. McDuff recommended that high school students be mentors to middle school students and educate them on some of these topics, such as social media, because the younger students look up to them. Coach Kates suggested the curriculum Teen Leadership as a way to incorporate these different topics into one class.

The student representatives went back to their campuses with an adult chaperone.

Staff wellness update provided by Kelli Pedone. A survey was sent out on preferences for StepBet to staff and parents. Forty-five people responded with nineteen “yes”, thirteen “maybe” and thirteen “no” for participating in the Spring StepBet. The majority of people were fine with either a StepBet hosted game or Merkel ISD hosted game. The next StepBet game is January 23rd through March 5th. KitFit taught by Kenzie Aguilar has 12 people signed up this month.

Kelli Pedone presented the opportunity to participate in a pilot program through TASA, who is partnering with Apple and Concentrix Catalyst, to develop a wellness app built for teachers and school leaders to support the mental and physical health of educators. Several SHAC members are interested in participating. Mr. O’Malley will sign up the district and send out information regarding specifics of the program that runs from January 30th through May 15th.

Kelli Pedone opened the conversation about school menus and the need for accurate carbohydrate counts for diabetics to ensure their safety. Nicki Salas and Rachelle Rister gave their input based on personal experience with diabetics on their campuses. Brin Reed stated that there is not an easy way to get carbohydrate counts on a daily basis for exact food items based on brand and portion size. Mr. O’Malley recommended that Brin Reed contact the nutrition department at Region 14 ESC and set up a meeting with the registered dieticians, the school nurses in the district and Brin Reed, Food Service Director to come up with an easy way to get accurate nutrition information. Brin Reed will set up a meeting in the near future.

Brin Reed notified the SHAC committee that the summer food waiver was approved, but the district does want to do the summer feeding program for students.

Nicki Salas, elementary nurse, asked about a Communities in School employee for the elementary campus because she feels that would be beneficial for students with mental health concerns and provide them a private, one-on-one person to talk with about their feelings. Mr. O’Malley said that at this time that is not in the budget because it is costly to provide this service in partnership with Communities in Schools, but it is something that could be a possibility in the future.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 5, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. at the administration building.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.