

SAPP Network News

June 2003

A Retrospective View

It has been an emotional year. The budget crisis and all the repercussions that it entails have been trying for all of us. As change and loss settle in, we (teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff) demonstrate resilience. It is more important than ever to take good care of ourselves and try to maintain balance in our lives. The SAPP Office has tried to walk our talk: the talk of resilience, positive climate, safety, healthy coping mechanisms, and the like.

Our year has been full and productive. Collaborations - community, school, and agencies - have been at the center of our efforts. One highlight has been the joint effort with the Equity Office to implement the ADL anti-bias curriculum, while infusing concepts and skills from the "Bully-Proofing Your Schools" curriculum. Thanks to the teacher and administrative leaders who made this happen, engaged in the learning, and gave us their implementation ideas, wealth of resources, and enthusiasm.

The Peer Education collaboration continues to be a highlight with our trained high school students talking to middle school students about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The high school students continue to amaze me with their wisdom, honesty, and powerful stories.

The Substance Abuse Task Force continues to make strides (not limited to the Youth Sub-Committee). The Parent Sub-Committee, with the help of the Circle of Concern Committee, Foundation for Boulder Valley Schools, Boulder High, Monarch, Platt, Southern Hills, Baseline, and Burbank, brought in Dr. Michael Bradley. Suffice it to say, Dr. Bradley's message aligns with the mission and vision of the SAPP Office. As Larry Brentro says, "In order to develop respectful youth, we must have awesome respect for youth."

Here is an update from Katy Fleming on the Health curriculum initiative:

Thanks to the contributions of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members, the twenty-year-old BVSD Health Education Curriculum is breathing a new life. In February, the BVSD Board approved the newly created K-12 health education standards and benchmarks as part of a comprehensive health education program. This document, created through the efforts of teachers and the Health Education Partnership, defines what students should know and be able to do with regards to health education knowledge and skills by the end of fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Next steps will include writing the essential learning results (what students need to know by the end of each grade level), selecting learning materials, and training teachers. The Partnership hopes to begin actual implementation of the new curriculum at the secondary level this fall and at the elementary level in Spring, 2004. When complete, the BVSD K-12 comprehensive health education program will assist students to maintain and improve their health, prevent disease, and reduce health-related risk behaviors. Studies of similar programs have found comprehensive health education to be an effective method of reducing alcohol and other drug use, violence, smoking, unhealthy sexual behaviors, and preventing the adoption of other high-risk behaviors. These behaviors have been linked to graduation rates, class grades, test performance, attendance, drop-out rates, aspirations toward post-secondary education, self-esteem, and school success in general. For more information about the BVSD Health Education Program, contact Katy Fleming at (303) 618-9246 or by e-mail at katy.fleming@bvsd.org.

I think it is clear from this update why Katy and I form our own department of prevention initiatives within BVSD.

Next year, SAPP plans to offer staff development opportunities. Since we have not had a "SAP" (Student Assistance Program) team training - that is, a "child response team" or whatever you may call it - for many years, I hope to offer one next year, along with bully-proofing, suicide prevention, and threat assessment (with Secondary Education) trainings. As always, we are open to your suggestions and comments.

I say it every year, and it may be more fitting than ever: have a safe, rejuvenating summer.

Lisa Cech