Module 5: Utilizing Parents as Stakeholders (McCay)

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**Introduction**

**Heights Middle School does an outstanding job of involving family members in students’ health planning. Because the school employs a fulltime registered nurse, the quality of health services and the involvement of family members are both high. What Heights needs to do next is take some of its informal relationships—already used by the nurse—and turn them into formal partnerships to improve student health services further. Heights has a secret weapon for ensuring its success in this endeavor: parents, who are also professionals in vital industries. Especially because of its small community size (under 50,000 residents), educators must think creatively to ensure community members will volunteer their time for a school endeavor. If Heights Middle School can move its health practices forward with formal, parent-based partnerships and develop a student health center on campus, then the school will decrease the few serious health concerns it currently has for students and staff.**

**Interagency Health Meeting Agenda**

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| **AGENDA**  **ITEM** | **TALKING POINTS** | **RESEARCH RATIONALE** |
| Current School Health for Students and Staff | * 107 students with 504 health plans (723 students) * 2 students with cancer * 38 students with diabetes * 58 students, who are obese (less than 10%) * 53 chronically absent students, who do not have 504 health plans * 2 staff members with chronic illnesses * 0 obese staff members, 0 cases of staff diabetes * 2 staff members, who are cancer survivors | * The health demographics are maintained and updated monthly with progress reports by the school nurse, who provides monthly updates to the school data team (Holt, 2018). * All health concerns are addressed within the school by the school nurse ; the nurse partners with external stakeholders to ensure students have proper care and proper Medicaid billing (if applicable) (Holt, 2018). |
| Current Partnering Agencies | * San Juan Regional Medical Health Center currently provides diabetic testing materials to the school; the hospital also provides emergency materials (glucose tablets, glucose shakes, etc.), which the nurse is legally allowed to administer during an emergency. * Students are required to bring their needed medical supplies and/or medications to school in their prescription bottle with proper directions for administration. * Parents must sign a required waiver for the nurse to provide medications, even OTC medications. | * New Mexico state law requires a signed parent permission/waiver for the administration of any medication to students, and the law also allows only limited emergency treatments beyond doctors’ prescriptions and life-saving emergency care (Holt, 2018). |
| Current Mental Health Services | * Heights currently employs two licensed counselors; one counselor meets with students for mental health counseling, and one meets with students/families about educational needs and mental health counseling (as needed). * Counseling services are free to students and staff members. * The educational counselor serves on all 504 health plan meetings and all behavioral IEP teams to ensure continuity of care. | Students may sign up to see a counselor as needed, and they will be called down that day; students may also request regular counseling sessions, which are then scheduled to avoid learning conflicts (Mead, 2018). |
| New Partnerships | Heights would like to develop formal partnerships with other service providers in the community to ensure continuity of care; up to this point, we have only met with outside providers on a case-by-case basis:   * Catholic Family Services * Pinon Family Health Center * San Juan College Behavioral Health Center * Presbyterian Hospital * Presbyterian Mental Health Center   Partnering with these service providers will lower school expenses and provide quality care for students.  Heights would like to establish a true Heights Health Center where students can receive their health care at little/no cost. | “One of the several benefits of SBHCs is that the kids get care they need in a confidential, comfortable environment that they are already used to” (Child and Family Agency, 2014). |
| Inviting Family Participation AND Community Participation in Planning new Partnerships | * Jill Adair, head of nursing at Presbyterian Medical Center, is also a parent, and has agreed to serve on our planning team. * Are any parents here, who would like to serve, as well? We have a sign-up list in the back. * We will send out a digital newsletter with a digital sign-up for parents, who could not attend tonight. * Who else should we be asking? | While community involvement can be low, accepting the “anemic” response to invitations is accepting the status quo (Vollmer, 2011).  Heights will strengthen its chance of success by trying to involve parents, who are also agency leaders/employees (Gardner, 2018). |
| Strategies for Success | * We need to invite more parents, who are also community leaders/employees. * Who should we be asking? | “Meet with complainers” and new parents to begin a list of potential volunteers from the professional sector (O’Donnell, 2018). |

**Conclusion**

Heights Middle School has dreamed of opening a health center on campus for seven years, but due to other pressing educational needs, the school has always waited “one more year” to pursue the dream. Now that educational maters like grading, curriculum, and instructional practices are well in-hand, the school has an opportunity to make the dream a reality. With the help of dedicated parents, who are also leaders in the medical and mental health fields, the school has a higher chance of success than most campuses. Planning a meeting with interested stakeholders and utilizing the agenda prepared will help the school begin the process of actualizing their vision for a healthier student body.

References

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