

Youth Marijuana Prevention & Education

YMPEP Regional Partners Meeting

Meeting Summary, January 9th, 2019

Support and Backbone Staff: Matt Shellhart – CHOICE, Madi Tanbara - CHOICE

In Attendance: Stephanie Leitz – *Wahkiakum County School District*, Ginger Hake – *Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services*, Emily Killeen – *Lewis County Public Health & Social Services*, JP Anderson – *Lewis County Public Health & Social Services*, Isaac Wulff – *Lewis County Public Health & Social Services*, Jennifer Simmons – *Thurston County Public Health*, Beth Mizushima – *Grays Harbor Public Health & Social Services*, Jackie Smith – *Pacific County Health & Human Services*, Meredith Hickey – *Youth & Family LINK*, Alison Smallwood – *Mason County Public Health*, Erin Wick – *ESD-113*, Stacy Mueller – *ESD-113*

I. Welcome and Introductions

Matt welcomed the group, facilitated introductions, and provided an overview of meeting objectives:

- Review Work Plan Strategies
- Looking Ahead in Wahkiakum with Stephanie Leitz
- Activity 1 & 2
- Questions, Next Steps, Reminders

II. Review Work Plan Strategies

Matt facilitated the group in a review of the YMPEP strategic plan to discuss what changes need to be made and what efforts are tangible, given OSPI's recent policy revision.

- Sill maintain focus on suspensions, steps will be different, how to better support school districts in the region with the policy change.
- Initial sense of panic from educators, seemed to be taking an option off the table
- Districts had already been moving away from zero tolerance.
- Create the opportunity for community input and feedback on re-writing policies.
- ESD—Support districts in their efforts to implement changes (community forum, feedback)
- Districts will form policies for hearing at a board meeting, may use other forums.
- Opportunity for public health partnership with CPWI sites.
- Parent involvement and support for alternatives within districts.
- Instead of YMPEP purely focusing on the policy, utilize community networks to provide support for schools to better understand what options are available.
- Assist districts in goal-setting, convey the message of wanting students to be engaged in their own academic and future success.
- Work with school connections, CPWI site in 5-year plan.
- In conversation with ESD-112, Matt emphasized identifying gap schools that do not have the resources, often schools in more remote locations. I.e. Cowlitz County middle school w/o CPWI coalition or support resources available.
- Funding loop issue – schools that have the capacity and resources continually receive funding.
- Identify gaps, focus efforts on suggestive ideas that could work for that district.
 - Matt: Map out what schools, provide support through calls, in-person visits.

Youth Marijuana Prevention & Education

- Schools may be non-compliant to OSPI's zero tolerance policy change until they are caught and face consequences.
- Matt: Part of YMPEP's work is to ensure schools are on the same page about policies and guidelines, so that students are not having to re-learn a new policy.
- Increase compliance based on how YMPEP approaches schools.
 - YMPEP is not taking on a law enforcement role, rather we are providing support & alternatives because what has historically been practiced by schools has led to worse outcomes, increased spending, etc.
 - Provide education piece to districts on the science behind policy change, and what we know now about effective response to youth substance abuse.
 - Emphasis on early intervention & assessment, keep kids in school while also ensuring they are healthy and safe.
 - Use storytelling to convey impact, include student voice.
- Create an online forum to share what is happening in each school district around policy, a "one-stop" site for educators, administrators, and staff to reference.
 - Include resources all in one place, include districts' policies to share for inspiration.
 - Format as a live document where items can be added at any time.

III. Looking Ahead in Wahkiakum with Stephanie Leitz

Stephanie Leitz, principal of Wahkiakum High School, shared insight from an administrative perspective on what's to come for Wahkiakum School District's policy.

- Focus on creating a safe, inclusive environment, including anti-bullying efforts.
- Continual challenges with substances, particularly vaping, among students.
- Suspension tends to alienate kids from the classroom and their peers, does not build relationships, often times kids will go home and use.
- Sit down w/the student and have a conversation about what is going on instead of reprimanding them.
- Create a plan with stents and their parents to improve behavior at school and home.
 - What is causing you to not feel included? Why do you feel this way?
- Building connections and relationships serves as a protective factor.
- Make kids feel valued, let their voices be heard, build respect for school & peers.
- Wahkiakum has an ongoing mentorship program, where students meet with a peer or adult mentor consistently for check-ins.
- Identify kids in most need of intervention who may not have core support.
- Important to continue work around trauma informed care & ACEs.
- Implement early prevention measures vs. intervention.
- Support students in finding purpose and passion.
 - Find reasons for caring about school and seeing the bigger picture beyond substance use, life in a small town – future and career goals.
 - Provide perspective through guest speakers, off-site field trips to the city.

Youth Marijuana Prevention & Education

- WIAA, an organization which oversees high school sports, has their own handbook with strict guidelines on substance use.
- Athletics are often a large part of a student's identity and social life, as well as motivation to maintain their academics.
 - Suspension or expulsion from sports leaves students feeling excluded, often times out for the season or done altogether for substance violations.
 - Marijuana/Alcohol and Tobacco group is provided as an option, however the rules are not very forgiving.
 - Certain protocol must be followed for a student to be reinstated in athletics and it can be a long, difficult process.
 - Share menu of alternatives with school athletic teams & extracurricular groups.

IV. Activity 1 & 2

Matt led the group in activities to review articles regarding responses to substance use in schools. Article 1, from *Seattle Weekly*, is an overview of policy changes in Seattle schools with the philosophy of keeping kids in the classroom. Article 2, from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, is another state's approach to alternatives to suspension.

Activity 1 (Seattle School Policy)

- Training staff and administration in trauma informed care.
- Support schools in addressing stigma.
- Staff may not be on board on board due to their personal belief system – convey significance of YMPEP's approach.
- Piloting at school an alternative model.
- Frame alternative responses as options that have already been available.
- What does the universal solution look like?
- Resource: Adults that care about kids, but may not know how to help, may support in addition to a trained professional.
- Develop skillset for communicating support.
- Utilize resources within the school.
- YMPEP – Organize and facilitate training.

Discussion Points

- Further define responsibility roles in YMPEP Strategic Plan.
- Response can vary due to time commitment, classroom management, comfort level among staff – some staff may not be trained in substance use.
- Gather firsthand account to barriers from school staff, no current survey.
- Identify schools that are ahead of the curve.
- When is it necessary to involve law enforcement?
 - Response varies widely between districts.
- YMPEP funding can possibly go towards youth peer mentorship program.

Youth Marijuana Prevention & Education

Activity 2 (Pennsylvania DOE School Alternatives)

- Partners noted the alternative of mini courses, including a webinar/online tool could be an effective alternative for students.
- Other liked alternatives included:
 - Parent involvement
 - Restitution w/ a restorative justice approach
 - Form close relations with the community.
 - Positive reinforcement through support.
 - Formation of coordinated behavior plan.

V. Questions, Next Steps, Reminders

- Next call-in meeting will be February 13th, 2019.
- Let Matt know if you are interested in window clings from DOH (packs of 25).
- Matt is working with Gay City to coordinate a two-day bus tour training.
 - 3 hours long (2 hours + Q&A time)
 - Free to attend, covered by DOH, YMPEP funding can cover venue costs.
 - Required for YMPEP partners, as it is part of the cultural competency/humility training. Other agency staff are also welcome to attend.
 - Open up training to coalitions, schools, and other community partners.
 - The group decided March would be the best month to have the training.
 - **Action:** Matt will send out Doodle poll to determine a specific date.