

Parents Council

O F W A S H I N G T O N

CONNECTING SCHOOLS • SHARING IDEAS • ENGAGING PARENTS

The Road to Well-Being: Empowering Our Students (2018-2019 Theme)

2019 BEST PRACTICES FORUM • PANELIST TAKEAWAYS FOR PARENTS

on

Promoting Student Well-Being

➤ ***Intellectual, Academic Well-Being*** - CORINNE FOGG, STONE RIDGE SCHOOL OF THE SACRED HEART

- Academic/Intellectual health and success will look different in and for every child. Embrace the student you have; focus on who s/he is, intentionally and explicitly seeing and celebrating her/him.
- Purpose matters. A child’s sense of purpose is essential to her/his happiness and satisfaction in life. Instead of asking your children what they want to be when they grow up; ask: *What problem do you seek to solve? Why are you doing this? Why does it matter to you?* Seek to cultivate a sense of purpose in each child.
- Cultivate intrinsic motivation. Share in activities that promote learning for learning’s sake. Practice failure; prepare children realistically for the world; prioritize ethical engagement and quality, not quantity, of activities.
- Avoid “pernicious cultural messages that make us question our own instincts” as parents: “1. You have complete control over your child’s development. If you don’t, you must be doing something wrong. 2. You can never do or be enough as a parent. [and] 3. Your child’s success or failure defines you.” (Simmons, R., *Enough As She Is*)
- Let him/her drive - even when you're scared.
- We are responsible, as adults, for realizing the interplay among physical, ethical, digital, social/emotional, cultural, and intellectual well-being.

Notes:

➤ ***Equity, Cultural Awareness, Global Citizenship*** - KIKI DAVIS, ST. STEPHEN’S & ST. AGNES SCHOOL

- Being equitable is different from being equal and being inclusive is more than being welcoming.
- Many of our schools were not created for their current demographic. In order to serve all students, it is important to re-evaluate systems and practices that may prevent us from being equitable and inclusive communities.

- Students Benefit Greatly From A School’s Formal Ethics Programming
 - ✓ Schools should set aside time and develop programs for ethics just as they do for academic disciplines (english, math, history, science, etc.).
- Students Benefit Even More From Informal Relationships With Ethical Leaders
 - ✓ School administrators, teachers, coaches, and staff members as well as parents all should view themselves as ethical leaders who are committed to serve as ethical mentors and models to our students. The ethical well-being of our students depends upon these meaningful relationships.

Notes:

➤ ***Mental, Emotional, Social Well-Being*** - PHYLLIS FAGELL, SHERIDAN SCHOOL

- Some of the most common myths about middle schoolers are that they crave drama, are trying to push adults’ buttons, and understand that perfection is unattainable. (Link to my article *Five Truths about Middle Schoolers*)
- Tweens today are more focused on identity issues--and there are more GSA’s and other affinity groups in schools--but they also must contend with more overt racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia. They are growing up with the fallout from #Metoo, and boys are worrying about how society views them. Kids today also have less freedom and greater mental health challenges. (Link to my articles *How Childhood Has Changed for Tweens* and *Six Ways Parents and Schools Can Tackle the Rise in Tween Suicides*)
- Parents can help their child identify effective coping strategies and vocalize when they’re using strategies themselves. They can ask the child to identify the adult they’d seek out in a crisis. They also can set aside time when tweens can just think or engage in unstructured, self-directed play.
- To foster critical thinking and interpersonal skills, parents and educators can walk kids through real or fictional ethical or social dilemmas.
- Schools can offer a variety of affinity groups to support kids’ emerging identities and normalize their experiences.

Notes:

➤ **Digital Well-Being** - BARBARA HUTH, COMMON SENSE MEDIA

Set Up Your Family For Success

- Decide why//when//what//where//who//how for technology use.
- Set expectations and discuss rules together.
- Encourage creation as well as consumption.
- Model the media behavior you want to see in your kids.
- In settings, turn off:
 - ✓ Autoplay (Netflix, YouTube & other streaming apps)
 - ✓ Notifications (on device and in app)
- Create “sacred spaces” or device free spaces at home.
- Set up a timer for tech “check-ins” to check social media, etc. so you don’t spend more time than you originally intend to.

What Families Can Do to Make Digital Well-Being a Habit by Elizabeth G. Galicia, Common Sense Kids Action

These simple steps can establish healthy habits and boost your family's digital well-being:

- Create screen-free times and zones. Help your kids take breaks from their tech by limiting screen time in bedrooms, while studying, or at the dinner table.
- Try parental controls. Set content limits that make sense for your family. Check the settings on apps your kids use to keep personal information private.
- Establish clear family rules. Decide together what kind of media and tech is OK -- and when it's OK to use it. A family media plan can help get everyone on the same page.
- Practice digital citizenship. Talk about what it takes to stay safe and be responsible online, including tackling real-life challenges like privacy and digital drama.
- Watch and play together. Choose quality, age-appropriate media to enjoy with your kids. Visit commonsensemedia.org to find TV shows, games, and more.

Notes:
