

3/19/2021 Wellness Meeting Summary

March 19, 2021 @ 7:30 AM

Attendance

Laura Adams, PTA Co-President

Dr. Elana Elster, Principal

Alison Gardy, Wellness Chair

Jodi Mafdali, Special Needs Coordinator

Agenda

- I. Debrief of Wellness Day on March 16
- II. Discuss What We've Learned for Wellness Day 2022
- III. Ideas/Plans for Other Wellness Activities before the end of the 2020-2021 School Year

Summary

Check-in

During our check-in, we each shared an experience that made us feel well, relaxed, and happy over the past month. Laura Adams' family is getting a new foster puppy today!

I. Debrief of Wellness Day on March 16

- A. In total, Wellness Day had 23 virtual presenters -- most of them MS54 parents and parent alumni or friends -- plus several faculty members leading outdoor exercises in the park with half of the 6th graders. Dr. Elster said the day had gotten "rave reviews," and comments kept coming in about positive experiences. Some highlights:

1. Dr. Elster heard from Andrew Bergen that after hearing the presentation from neuroscientist Dr. Erich Jarvis on "Singing In the Brain: The Need for Science and for Diversity in Science," all the 8th graders wanted to do was to continue the discussion. Dr. Jarvis's personal stories about being a person of color in science were especially moving, and his discussion on the importance of science provoked discussion,
2. Lisa Yellin's "Body & Soul: A Virtual Spa Day of Self-Care, Including Fitness, Skincare, and Relaxation Techniques," also achieved the goal of the girls feeling refreshed, cared-for, and loved. The discussion focused on self-acceptance, self-care, and getting distance on what social media says girls' bodies should look like.
3. In-person students went to the park and had a Field Day of fun-competitive activities. Dr. Elster supplied hot chocolate for all participants.
4. Dr. Michael Eskin was moved by how earnest and engaged students were in a discussion of "What is Prejudice?" They discussed mobbing, cancel culture, among other topics.

- B. Alison created and distributed post-event surveys for presenters, teachers, and students.
1. Presenters -- [Wellness Day 3/16/21 -- Presenter Survey - Google Forms](#)
Of 14 respondents to date, the vast majority described students as “very much engaged” or engaged. Many felt successful over Zoom. Many credited the teacher facilitators they were paired with as being important to the success of the presentation. Many felt they had gained insights into presenting by Zoom that they would carry into 2022 if schools are still using Zoom. Many presenters also said they were moved by how engaged and caring Booker T. students were about issues beyond their immediate lives.
 2. Teachers -- [Wellness Day 3/16/21 -- Teacher Survey - Google Forms](#)
Of ten respondents to date, they all described students as “very much engaged” or engaged. All indicated that they had played a role in facilitating the workshop. Many had ideas about how to incorporate what they learned in the presentation into the school day, and many had ideas for additional Wellness activities.
 3. Students -- [Wellness Day 3/16/21 -- Student Survey - Google Forms](#)
Waiting for responses.

II. What We’ve Learned for Wellness Day 2021:

One suggestion for the presentation on the menstrual cycle -- call it “Girls Growing Up -- What You Need to Know” so as to make it less awkward.

III. Ideas/Plans for Other Wellness Activities before the end of the 2020-2021 School Year

1. Wellness Faculty Lunch at the end of an in-person day -- Dr. Elster
2. Paid professional development for teachers to do a Wellness PD. Ms. Mafдали and five other MS54 teachers attended a two-day PD workshop on self-care with a husband-and-wife couple who work directly with children. They offered some meditation, a personal smart goal, and tips. They were light, fun, personal, and really enjoyed their work. The second day was to check in to make sure the group was implementing their Wellness activities. Ms. Mafдали said the teachers really liked it.
3. Lisa Yellin could lead other workshops for girls on self-care and body image. She has offered to lead them once per week. Alison will help get supplies.
4. Pizza Lunch (or SweetGreen lunch) for classes in the courtyard.
5. Dr. Elster and Alison prepared for our School Wellness Council conversation with PK Bekanich. In context of the pandemic, we prioritized Wellness activities that illuminate and mitigate mental health issues.