Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress

Purpose

The Nine Mile Falls School District School Board is committed to preventing and addressing secondary traumatic stress for District personnel by supporting mental health in the workplace. Everyday school staff work with students experiencing trauma and loss. As a result, teachers, school counselors, administrators, and other school staff many experience secondary traumatic stress. When secondary traumatic stress is left unaddressed, it may lead to staff turnover, burnout, adult chronic absenteeism, and health issues that negatively impact everyone in the school community.

Policy: 5515

Secondary Traumatic Stress

The Board acknowledges that secondary traumatic stress, also called compassion fatigue, is a natural but disruptive set of symptoms that may result when one person learns firsthand of the traumatic experiences of another. Symptoms of secondary traumatic stress may include feelings of isolation, anxiety, dissociation, physical ailments, and sleep disturbances. In addition, those affected by secondary traumatic stress may experience: Changes in memory and perception; alterations in their sense of self-efficacy; a depletion of personal resources; and disruption in their perceptions of safety, trust, and independence.

Policy Statement

The District will promote a positive workplace climate is inclusive of all members.

The Board hereby establishes a district-wide workforce wellness committee with the following functions:

- Share secondary traumatic stress, stress management, and other mental health resouces and supports available through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Educational Service District, and the School Employees' Benefits Board;
- Share links to a secondary traumatic stress self-assessment tool and any associated resources;
- Keep the Board apprised of committee activities.

The District will assess district-level and school building—level implementation of this policy. The assessment will include input from representatives of the District's workforce. The District will provide appropriate resources and when necessary training to schools and staff for continuous improvement.

Cross References:

3112 – Social Emotional Climate

5203 - Staff Assistance Program

Legal References: 28A.300 RCW

28A.400 RCW

Management Resources:

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