

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Randall Booker, Superintendent

SUBJECT: PUSD Wellness Center – Student Leadership Programs

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I. **SUPPORT INFORMATION**

For over a decade, the Piedmont Unified School District has successfully operated a Student Wellness Center, which has assisted 6th – 12th graders and their families to meet the challenges of adolescence while fostering resilience and self-advocacy for all students. In addition to offering free, confidential, on-campus counseling and referrals for students and families to vital community resources, the Wellness Center has also facilitated Leadership Programs in which students work with peers to improve school culture and climate.

The Wellness Center has a long history of providing a safe, non-judgmental environment where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their physical, emotional, and social well-being. Students seek assistance for a variety and range of issues: academic stress, parent/child communications, peer relationships, anxiety, depression, grief, loss, and substance abuse.

Led by PHS Counselor Amanda Carlson, the Wellness Center has provided opportunities for students to engage in Peer Education and Leadership programs that significantly enhance overall student health and community. These include peer mediation, peer advisement, and Youth Educator programs at Piedmont Middle School and Piedmont/Millennium High Schools.

Peer Advisors

Peer Advisors are Piedmont High School Juniors and Seniors who meet weekly during lunch, and for three weekend retreats. These students teach the Every 15 Minutes drinking, driving and decision-making curriculum in the 9th grade Physical Education classes. In addition, they work with 10th grade Social Psychology classes to teach curriculum on relationships, drugs, alcohol and decision-making. Peer Advisors also serve as mentors to these younger students and extend their understanding of the curriculum to influence peers and keep one another safe beyond the school day.

Youth Educators

Youth Educators are PHS Juniors who teach drug, alcohol, and decision-making curriculum to 8th graders. Youth Educators serve as freshmen orientation leaders for their 8th grade students as they transition to high school. The Youth Educators' service includes intensive training and involves a commitment to model safe, non-drinking, non-drug use behavior. Youth Educators teach seven one-hour lessons in the 8th grade English classes.

On November 13, 2015, PHS Students Nathaniel Pedan, Tyler Ellis, Emilia Rivera, Elizabeth Bjork, and Julia Pappas represented the Piedmont Unified School District Wellness Center at the Northern California Safe and Healthy Schools Conference.

The conference was designed to offer quality training and information on topics and model programs to prevention professionals and educators. PUSD Wellness Center presented on Positive Peer Pressure: combating bullying, drugs, alcohol, and harassment. These are issues middle and high schools face on a daily basis. The top preventative strategy is through Peer Leadership programs, which are designed to promote positive peer pressure.

## II. **RECOMMENDATION: PRESENTATION**

PHS Counselor Amanda Carlson and student representatives from the PUSD Wellness Center Leadership Programs will present on the positive impact of the Peer Advisor and Youth Educator programs at PHS, MHS, and PMS.