



# The Mental Health and *Wellness* Issue

“As our students continue to recover from the various challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we must focus on not only their academic needs, but their overall wellness including social-emotional health.”

**Marianne Litzman**  
Superintendent of Schools



STOMP Out Bullying

“Start with Hello” Week

The Freestyle Connection

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

In our schools, we always

# STOMP Out Bullying

- Anti-Bullying Pledge
1. Help those who are being bullied.
  2. Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied.
  3. Try to include those who are left out.
  4. Treat others respectfully.
  5. Tell an adult.
  6. Refuse to bully others.

In October, students at Dutch Lane Elementary School joined others across the country to STOMP Out Bullying during their observance of National Bullying Prevention Month. The goal was to raise awareness of the existence and impact of bullying on children of all ages. Students also took an antibullying pledge. Later in the October, Dutch Lane students wore orange to show unity for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. Morning announcements throughout the month of October included a "kindness challenge." This helped provide the students with suggestions on how to combat bullying.

## Kindness is a Chain Reaction

In September, Hicksville Middle School students participated in Start With Hello Week, an important social and emotional learning program to reintroduce students to the power of connecting and helping one another. The three components of the Start With Hello program are See Someone Alone, Reach Out and Help, and Start With Hello. Through this program, the students engaged in skills they need to continue a school culture of inclusion and connectedness. This program teaches students how they can help their peers in fun, simple and meaningful ways. Some of the small but powerful actions that students took part in throughout Start With Hello Week included wearing decorated name



tags and introducing themselves to someone new or someone they didn't know. Students also created ribbons out of green construction paper and displayed them outside of classrooms. To close the week, students participated in mix and mingle opportunities, as well as wore green to show their support of the program.



## Character Education at Fork Lane

Fork Lane Elementary students and staff in Hicksville were wowed on November 3rd by a bicycle stunt show held on the school's basketball court. The BMX stunt show known as The Freestyle Connection promoted bicycle safety, healthy living choices, accomplishing goals and character education and held the attention of all for close to an hour at the recent assembly.

The assembly showcased BMX bike riders performing ground and ramp riding stunts as part of the school's Arts in Education program. The audience learned about different types of tricks and flips including a flatland, box jump and ultimate quarter pipe. The Freestyle Connection owner and BMX rider Jon Dowker talked about the importance of bicycle safety as fellow BMX rider Chris Przywara pointed out the safety gear he was wearing.

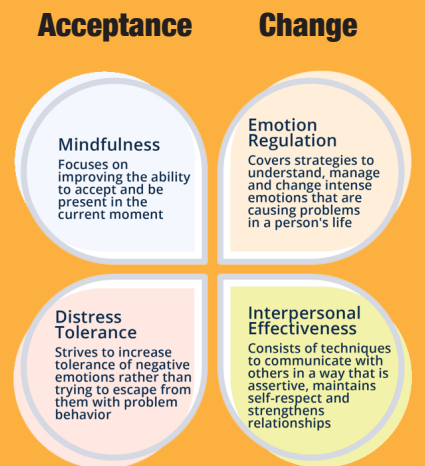


Throughout the show in between jumps and feats, the main message stressed was the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The bikers also told students that the practice and hard work needed to master bike stunts can be equated to how much studying it takes to learn content and prepare for tests. Dowker interwove several analogies relating to goal setting and achieving dreams. He went on to share that there are many ways to be successful in life by attending college or mastering a trade, but the key to success is always to work hard and make good choices.



## What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy?

As we are witnessing increasing rates of emotion dysregulation in adolescents, students are presenting with increased behavioral issues both at school and at home. Parents are experiencing greater challenges in managing their child's emotional needs, and maladaptive behaviors such as avoidance, school refusal, self-harm, isolation, anger outbursts and substance use are subsequently manifesting. Fortunately, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based therapy model that uses Acceptance and Change strategies to promote emotional well-being, decrease emotional and behavioral problems, and increase effective coping skills.



## Hicksville Public Schools

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# Mental Health Resources

In this issue, there is a pull out insert with a listing of resources and statistics that will help keep our community informed and safe. Use your mobile phone camera to scan the QR Codes located on the insert to take you directly to the websites listed.

## Mental Health and Wellness throughout Hicksville

**HHS Natural Helpers** Our Natural Helpers presented a \$400 check to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

**5K Run/Walk** The Special Education & PPS Department represented Hicksville Public Schools at the Planting Fields Arboretum.

**Student Nutrition** The district has partnered with Whitsons Culinary Group, and they are working hard to offer innovative menus and service by offering nourishing selections prepared fresh.

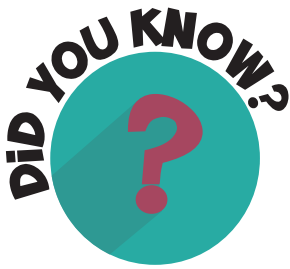
**Lee Ave. Kindness Board** Students post their kindness messages on the bulletin board at their school.

**Kindness Wall at the MS** At the MS, students posted their support on the Kindness Wall.

**MS Health Walk** Hicksville Middle School students participated in A Health Walk to benefit the American Diabetes Association.

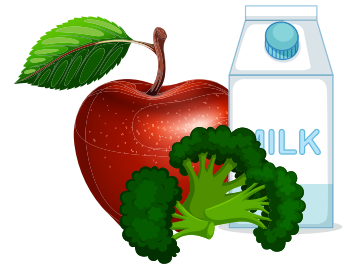


# Wellness in Our Cafeterias



## Additional Food Offerings

If your child wants something extra with their daily lunch, they can ask a cafeteria worker for a fruit, juice, milk or vegetable. These items are always available. They may also purchase a second lunch if funds are available in their lunch account.



HPS Food Services Website



## What's New!



My School Bucks App



## FD Meal Planner Website & App

FD MealPlanner is Whitsons mobile platform that brings menu planning, nutrition information, meal ingredients and real time allergen information to the fingertips of students, parents and school district staff. You can access FD MealPlanner either online or you can download the FD MealPlanner app to your mobile device free of charge by visiting the App Store (for iOS devices) or Google Play (for Android devices).



In 2022, students were provided lunch cards with their own student ID number and a bar code for scanning their information to make getting through the lunch lines faster. This enables the students to have time to eat before recess.

## New Serving Lines

In 2023, Hicksville Public Schools will be installing new food service lines at all elementary schools that will make it easier for your child to see all the options available to them. In addition, steam trays will be installed to keep food hot so food tastes its best by locking in temperature and moisture.



# Student Wellness Policy



Scan to the QR code to read the Board of Education Student Wellness Policy #5405.



Parents, students, food service professionals, physical education teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, the general public, and the school board shall be provided with the opportunity to participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy. To do this, the district shall designate each building Site-Based Team as an advisory committee, and invite participation via notices in school publications; staff and student announcements, handbooks and memos; the district website; and outreach to school-associated organizations interested persons and those with valuable expertise.

The district shall inform and update the public (including parents, students and others in the community) about the content and implementation of this wellness policy by:

1. posting this policy (and any updates) on the district website and in each school lunch area,
2. referencing the policy and its availability on school publications and notices, and
3. providing information about new and ongoing wellness policy activities to parents, staff and students via established communication channels.

Students and their families are encouraged to attend Wellness Committee Meetings.

## Who to Contact?



If you have a question or concern, please contact your school building's principal, your school's Site-Based Team, or Hicksville's Food Services Department at 516-733-2280.

# Mental Health Resources

## 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline



## Behavioral Health Helpline and Mobile Crisis Intervention Team



## Mental Health Association of NYS



## 211 Long Island

