

Mindful Minutes:

A simplistic yet highly effective journey towards a healthier and happier culture in our schools.

A thorough description of what is being proposed:

Mindfulness can be defined as “a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.”

It is probably the most simplistic, minimal cost investment in our health and well-being. We spend time and energy on other means to our health that consist of a variety of side effects that are often more detrimental to our health such as medications that can cause loss of sleep, loss of appetite, weight gain/loss, irritability as well as more severe symptoms such as depressions and suicidal thoughts.

Mindfulness is a scientific evidence based practice that speaks for itself. It has been proven that regular mindfulness practice can change the makeup of brain matter.

Refer to articles/resources below:

(<https://consultqd.clevelandclinic.org/evidence-based-mindfulness-what-science-tells-us-about-mindfulness-meditation-and-its-benefits/>)

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2015/02/09/7-ways-meditation-can-actually-change-the-brain/#51006d2a1465>

The benefits of mindfulness are endless and more and more research is supporting the multiple advantages of mindfulness, particularly in schools and use for educators.

Refer to the following: <https://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/research/>

This proposal is the concept of conducting “mindful minutes” on a daily basis within the school day. Mindfulness can be implemented at anytime, anywhere, it is simple and relatively inexpensive. Mindfulness practices can be utilized across all

curriculums anywhere from Algebra, Physical Education, Science, History and Special area courses and Special Education. There are no discriminations when it comes to mindfulness. It doesn't matter what culture, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or age,.....mindfulness can be implemented! There are no barriers to mindfulness. The practice can include students, teachers, staff, administration, parents and community members and anyone who is willing to participate. The benefits are endless and align with the Ken-Ton District's movement forward relating to the Social and Emotional goal of "Provide the necessary staff, support and structures so students will display improvement in social-emotional wellness."

Families and Community Members alike will be welcome to join and participate in the initiative via family wellness evenings that will introduce and engage concepts of mindfulness along with other interactive wellness related experiences. The District can host things such as a Wellness Fair that include like-minded services in our community that promote health and wellness and provide education regarding available resources. This would include but would not be limited to businesses in the area of nutrition, fitness, and mental health professionals while engaging families and community members in what is being implemented in our classrooms on a regular basis through mindfulness education.

Wellness events and staff development could introduce community partnerships in these areas that would link daily mindfulness practices to other area resources.

Staff development days can be utilize to share and implement best practices in mindfulness which would address the Social/Emotional Wellness movement and our attempt in a culture change across the district.

Concrete descriptions of the individuals/daily tasks involved

The ideal model would be much like our PBIS model where all staff and students would be willing participants. Daily Tasks would include, simple.... daily practice! This model is currently being implemented at Franklin Elementary with voluntary participants who practice daily for anywhere between 1-5 minutes. Franklin Elementary could be utilized as the current "pilot school" as shown through the current data collected (refer to the power point presentation.) Each day students and staff

members in select classes have chosen to participate in sessions. Students are guided with mindful practices that focus on breathing, goal setting, self-awareness, character building, gratitude, respect and other values that are emphasized on a classroom, school, district and community level. Much like riding a bike... we can stand up in front of a classroom and teach children how to do it for 187 days a year, but unless they actually get on the bike and ride it, they have no experience with it and will not understand the benefits. Mindfulness is the same concept. In order to understand and feel the effects, one must engage in regular practice.

Projected costs

The cost to the KenTon District is minimal. There are a variety of free resources that can be utilized. However, the most effective results will come from guidance/coaching on how to implement mindfulness daily. The district should assign a district wellness coordinator who can oversee the implementation of mindfulness in the schools. By using a "Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child" model, the District can address physical as well as social emotional wellness through mindful based activities. This can be designed much like the model of "coaching" or a "TOSA" in the District. Again, with a well-trained wellness coach, cost will be limited. Unlike other "trainings" that the District has invested in, this concept would be implemented on a day to day basis. As far as time constraints, mindfulness can range from as little to as much time as allotted for. Any practice is better than NO practice! Mindfulness can be integrated in classrooms at community based programs, in the cafeteria, on buses, at faculty meetings and through administration by role modeling mindful based activities. Much like the pledge of allegiance, mindfulness can be used to set the intention of the day, meeting, classroom theme, subject area, or simply setting the tone for the week. The coordinator/wellness team can help design a curriculum of mindful activities that aligns with all other District initiatives including food service, transportation, attendance, academics, physical education, health services, family engagement, community involvement, employee wellness and social emotional climate. The practice should be expanded to administration and utilizing mindful minutes before meetings etc...

This would be developed with input from all departments under the wellness coordinator by using a team approach.

There are a number of free resources available for teachers to utilize in order to incorporate mindfulness within their classrooms.

<https://www.mindfulschools.org/resources/explore-mindful-resources/>

<http://www.mindfulteachers.org/p/free-resources-and-lesson-plans.html>

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/lists/meditation-apps-for-kids>

<http://www.learninglotuses.com/mindfulness-apps-in-the-classroom/>

Implementation timeline

With the movement of Social/Emotional wellness in the District and the recent Mental Health Curriculum passed down from NYS, what better time to implement the concept of Mindfulness?? KenTon can become the model district for others to follow. Projection should be completing the 2018-2019 school year with Ben Franklin Elementary as it's pilot school and then expanding to every school by the 2019-2020 school year. Mindful "minutes" can be implemented in the Middle and High School levels as see fit in the schedule. If we can't afford 2 minutes a day, we are neglecting the concept of

"Providing our students with the supports, tools, and diverse opportunities needed to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world" which is the very own mission statement of the KenTon school District.

Would we tell ourselves that we "can't afford" or "don't have time" to put gas in our own car?? No, and that is because we would not be able to function or come to work without it. The same is the concept of self-care. A team wellness coaches (can be the existing wellness teams in each building. -Why reinvent the wheel??) should be given kickoff for 2019-2020 school year under the guidance of a District Wellness coordinator and a team who develops a curriculum as a resource guide. There are several free programs that can be accessed however, the District can provide a "tool box" for teachers.

For example:

**** daily themes****

Can include:

Mindful Mondays-

Two for Tuesday- Can be goal setting (ie- What are 2 things you would like to accomplish today??)

Wellness Wednesday- What have I done that is good for me today? What can I do that is healthy/good for me today??)

Thankful Thursday- Focus on someone/something you are thankful for? Focus on something about YOURSELF that you are thankful for (ie- feet, help me to walk/ my kindness-helps with my friendships)

Feel Good Friday- Focus on what is going well right now?

Existing building level teams such as PBIS can be aligned with Mindfulness Practices

For example: prizes would be related to mindful minutes- yoga mat, mindful journal, mindful coloring books, cards, games etc... with PBIS money and funding.

Ben Franklin's PBIS model is the following- **Safety, Respectful and Responsible.**

Mindfulness Practices can include:

Safe - What is something I can do today to be safe?

When do I feel safe?

Imagine a safe place in your mind- what does it look, sound, feel like?

Respectful- What can I do today to show respect?

When has someone else showed me respect?

Responsible- Imagine yourself being responsible.... What are you doing?

District Coordinator would work together with the building Wellness Teams.

For example, could use Mindfulness strategies to promote health and well-being.

Some Wellness mindful minutes could be:

What have I eaten today that is good for me?

What can I do today that is good for my body?

Did I help a friend today?

What did I do today to make my own day better?

Setting Goals:

Family Goals

Friend Goals (promote social emotional wellness)

Food Goals

Fitness Goals

Fun Goals

Anticipated outcomes

One hand washes the other. Daily practice of mindfulness will help with daily behaviors, attendance, focus, positive mindset, and overall social/emotional wellness.

See attached:

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/mindfulness-resources>

Current programs such as restorative practices and trauma informed can be under the mindfulness umbrella and can be overseen by a wellness coordinator to ensure implementation.

Mindfulness is currently being implemented in conjunction to Restorative Practices at Ben Franklin. We can use our "mindful moment" to reflect on circumstances that led up to situations and also how we responded to the situation.

Measures by which it may be evaluated for effectiveness

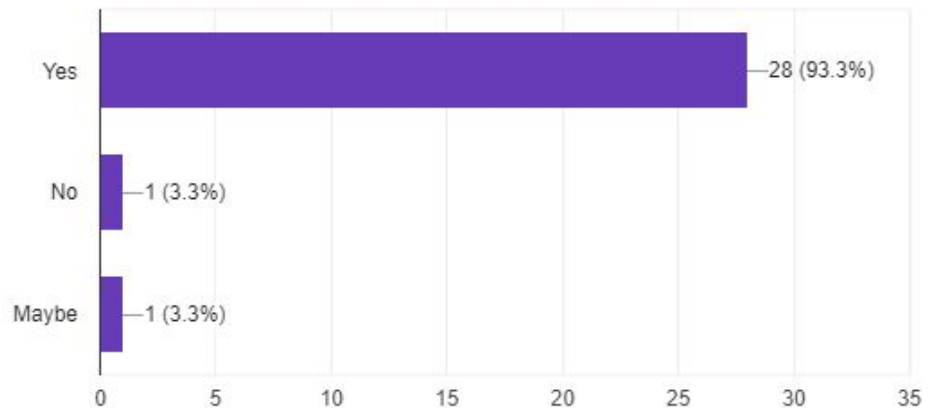
Pre and Post test from students as well as staff on social/emotional wellness should drive the mindful moments movement. This should include but not limited to asking objective questions regarding social/emotional wellness. A follow up survey should be used in conjunction with the YRBS that was used to assess needs/concerns. These questions should be geared towards what students are looking to gain to promote their own social/emotional wellness. Also, other data including discipline reports, attendance records, academic grades, data from the family support center and other documents and records.

See attached assessments regarding staff and student responses to the pilot at Ben Franklin Elementary:

Staff responses to a Wellness Mindful Moment event/day:

Did you find the wellness meeting useful?

30 responses



Comments: 12 responses

I wish we had this once a month!

GREAT JOB!!!!

let's do it again it was fun!!

Thank you - it was wonderful!

I vote for Mindful Mondays :-)

I have used GoNoodle with my kids (much more last year) and there are a good number of relaxation sessions!

Thank you!

I would prefer more movement and physical endurance in wellness. After school activities to stress relieve involving physical fitness is more of a stress relief for some.

I felt so relaxed after this morning! Until that bell rang! But I definitely feel this is something I could use in my life to help rid the negative! I tried being a lot more positive today with the kids!

Thank you!!!

That was truly wonderful! I haven't felt that relaxed in too long. Good topic and learned a good deal. Thank you!!

It was great! I can't really do this in my classroom because I only see small groups for brief periods throughout the day.

See the following links to the mindful minute pilot for students:

Pre and post survey of mindful minutes

Pre test

https://docs.google.com/document/d/129UHTMPwkVytXZLLQWbc_WGlW9toq3V9_8JAhdWtYHM/edit

Post test

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A-lfXS9OE9UCI4fe4Z3tVlfj39kTwXI2JImWwWQMnsM/edit>

Respectively submitted,

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