

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **WHAT IS THE WELLNESS INITIATIVE?**

The San Francisco Wellness Initiative is a collaborative effort to support student health and well-being. With leadership from the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF), Department of Public Health (DPH) and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the initiative is building on existing resources to improve the way government agencies, the school district and community-based organizations work together to address student health needs.

**well-ness** *n.*

The condition of good physical and mental health, especially when maintained by proper diet, exercise, and habits. (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition 2000.*)

### **WHAT ARE THE WELLNESS PROGRAMS?**

The Wellness Programs are school-based resources dedicated to improving the health, well-being and educational outcomes of all students. Through both on-campus programming and community-based partnerships, the Wellness Programs provide students with coordinated health education, assessment, counseling and other support services.

The Wellness Initiative, in collaboration with school site administrators, manages and funds Wellness Programs in 15 high schools in SFUSD:

#### **HIGH SCHOOLS**

- Phillip & Sala Burton High School
- Downtown High School
- Galileo Academy of Science and Technology
- International Studies Academy
- June Jordan School for Equity
- Abraham Lincoln High School
- Lowell High School
- Thurgood Marshall Academic High School
- Mission High School
- John O'Connell School of Technology
- San Francisco International High School
- School of the Arts/Academy of Arts & Sciences
- Wallenberg High School
- Washington High School
- Ida B. Wells High School

### **WHAT KINDS OF SERVICES DO WELLNESS PROGRAMS PROVIDE TO STUDENTS?**

The programs provide free, confidential services, including behavioral health counseling services; support and empowerment groups; reproductive health services, and information and referrals to health resources in the community.

*Partnering to support student health and well-being.*

## **WHO PROVIDES THESE SERVICES?**

The core staff at the Wellness Programs includes a site coordinator, school nurse, behavioral health counselor, community health outreach worker, and a team of student outreach workers. However, the programs were developed to take advantage of adolescent health services provided throughout San Francisco. Wellness Programs therefore bring community-based organizations onto campuses to provide additional services and link students to public and private health care providers throughout the city.

## **WHY WOULD A STUDENT NEED WELLNESS SERVICES?**

All students may benefit from wellness services. From general health questions to support groups to individual counseling, the Wellness Programs help students address a broad-range of health needs. In particular, the programs help youth who may be experiencing problems with substance abuse, depression, self-esteem, dating violence, gang involvement, sexuality, sexual identity, family life, grief, or their health, including pregnancy or sexually-transmitted diseases. The services provide students with an outlet for talking about issues they are facing and equip students with skills and knowledge to be able to make healthy choices throughout their lives.

## **WHY IS STUDENT WELLNESS IMPORTANT?**

Student wellness is a cornerstone for learning and educational success. Since the Wellness Programs began in 2000, there have been measurable improvements in student health and academic success. As a result of receiving Wellness services, students report that they feel better about themselves, get along better with family and friends, are better able to cope when things go wrong, and come to school more often. In addition, students report taking steps to improve their own health including reducing their use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

*Source: 2007-08 Wellness Initiative Profile, ETR Associates*

## **HOW DO WELLNESS PROGRAMS IMPACT SCHOOLS?**

Wellness Programs promote a school-wide health focus by supporting staff and faculty involvement in campus health issues. Specifically, the Programs:

- Educate teachers and staff about adolescent health issues;
- Provide special activities to improve staff and faculty well-being;
- Coordinate school-wide health awareness and education events; and
- Offer technical assistance to teachers interested in including supplemental health and wellness information and/or guest speakers in their classrooms.

## **WHO FUNDS THE WELLNESS INITIATIVE?**

The 2010-11 annual budget for the 15 Wellness Programs is over \$4.5 million. DCYF contributes \$3.3 million annually to fund the core staff of the Wellness Programs. SFUSD, through the Public Education Enrichment Fund (PEEF), allocates over \$725,000 annually. The district also leverages grant funding to support additional nurse days at each of the sites. DPH leverages Medi-Cal and Mental Health Services Act (state funding) to support behavioral health service hours at the sites. A grant from the Metta Fund supports services at two sites. Many schools also allocate funds from their site budgets to support additional nurse days and other services at their sites.