Wellness Policy Review

Benton Stearns Voyagers Program

2020-21

Benton Stearns Voyagers is a setting IV school program that provides educational and behavioral programing for students in the central Minnesota area. As part of our mission to work with students emotional and behavioral needs, we strive to promote a school environment that encompasses the needs of the mind and the body.

Voyagers is an educational setting that provides education that is appropriate for the needs of each student. In addition to traditional academics, Voyagers student participate in social skills training that lays a foundation for healthy lifestyle choices, positive social interactions, and healthy problem solving strategies. Students gain an understanding of their disabilities and how to manage the issues associated with living with a disability.

Voyagers staff value physical activity and understand the impact of the mind body connection on learning. In order to promote overall wellness, all students participate in daily physical education for 45 minutes per day. Outside of Phys Ed classes, students participate in short 3-7 minute activities that are used to help calm and redirect the body or to stimulate and prepare the brain for learning. These are scheduled daily during social skills classes. In addition to these activities, many students participate in an adaptive physical education class. Many students also have OT/PT involvement in their programming through the Individual Education Plan process. The Benton Stearns Education District OT and PT staff develop the exercises that are used in the motor room. They change the exercises at the stations every quarter. The OT/ PT staff and Voyagers staff record the exercises and the video is available for students to preview. Students are encouraged to access the room when they are becoming dysregulated. Students are also encouraged to walk the halls and stairs when they need a break in order to regain emotional control or to discharge pent up energy.

Benton Stearns Voyagers has no vending machines with food or drinks. We do not host any afterschool activities that sell food. We have no fundraising events that promote food items. We do not allow outside agencies access to the building in order to market to students.

2020-21 Leadership Team

Cynthia Pedersen Program Supervisor

Joe Mellgren DAPE Teacher, Intake Facilitator

Barb Butweiller Paraprofessional

Karie Belling Parent Advocate/ Administrative Assistant

Program Goals:

* To educate children in an environment that promotes health and wellness.
* Incorporate physical activity throughout the day in a variety of settings.
* Develop rewards that are intrinsic in nature and move away from tangible rewards.

Committee Recommendations for non-lunch food items:

* No sugary drinks to be served to students
  + Bottles of water may be served with a flavor packet
* Snacks must meet minimum standards for healthy snacks. Suggestions include:
  + Popcorn
  + Granola Bars
  + Veggie straws
  + Cheese Sticks
  + Fruit such as apples or oranges
  + Gogurts
  + Yogurt covered raisins
  + Peanut butter and celery sticks
* Snacks should be in single serve packaging.

Follow up for 2020-21

* Consider staff wellness due to high stress
* Consider Covid related stress for students and staff
* Target activities that encourage well-being of all
* Feeling safe leads to increased progress of students