



Health and Wellness
Healthy Relationships Subcommittee

The PPSD Healthy Relationships Subcommittee strives to help PPSD improve the health of students, deliver exemplary sexual health education, and raise awareness and understanding about inclusivity; positive, violence-free relationships; and safe, supportive environments for all students and staff.

- The PPSD Healthy Relationships Subcommittee is one of the 3 subcommittees that comprise the district Health and Wellness Committee. All RI school districts are required by [RI state law \(16-21-28\)](#) to establish a district wellness committee as a subcommittee of the full school committee (school board).
- District wellness committees are chaired by a member of the full school committee and will make recommendations regarding the district's health curriculum and instruction, physical education curriculum and instruction, and nutrition and physical activity policies to decrease obesity and enhance the health and well-being of students and employees.

PPSD Healthy Relationships Subcommittee Goals

- 1) Define, communicate and build awareness about Healthy Relationships Subcommittee and the work the Subcommittee is involved with or promotes.
- 2) Increase the presence and engagement of stakeholders, including Health teachers, parents, families, students, and school/district administrators.

MINUTES

Health and Wellness Healthy Relationships Subcommittee Meeting

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-25 issued by the Governor of Rhode Island, the Providence School Board held this meeting remotely. A recording of the meeting is available upon request.

March 16, 2021

CONVENE MEETING

1. Co-chair Hoopis called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm

Subcommittee Members Present:

Penelope Pare, PPSD & Co-Chair

Lisa Hoopis, Sojourner House & Co-Chair

Solight Sou, PPSD

Colleen McCarthy, PPSD

Shael Norris, SafeBae
Jillian Fain, City of Providence
Rosemary Reilly-Chamat, RIDE
Yeimy Bakel-Morrel, DayOne
Aleiah Gardner, Day One
Sounivone Phanthavo, DOH
Karin Wetherill, RIHSC

APPROVE AGENDA

1. Approve Agenda as presented
A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented
MSV – Pare, McCarthy (8-0) MOTION APPROVED

APPROVE MINUTES

2. Approval of June Minutes – December 15, 2020
A motion was made to approve the minutes
MSV – Pare, McCarthy (8-0) MOTION APPROVED

Subcommittee members sequentially Bakel-Morrel, Phanthavo, and Wetherill join the meeting

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

3. Welcome and introductions
Co-Chair Pare welcomed attendees and introductions were made
4. Subcommittee Goals and Mission Statement
Co-Chair Hoopis briefly discussed the subcommittee's mission and goals.
5. Healthy Relationships Update
Co-Chair Hoopis asked Sou for an update on possible supports the committee can offer to HPE educators who do not have a classroom and are teaching lessons to students on the floor. Sou explained that she reached out to Director Donna O'Connor and was told that this was a school issue, not a district issue. Hoopis asked if Sou could follow up with school leaders on this matter because some might not even be aware that HPE educators had no classrooms.

Action Item: Sou will inquire about contacting school leaders regarding unused classrooms for HPE teachers and provide an update at the next meeting.

Co-chair Hoopis requested transparency and accessibility of the current health curriculum. The subcommittee co-chairs have drafted a formal request to Director O'Connor to discuss the challenges in obtaining the curriculum for review and to identify supports for educators along with recommendations for updates and standards-based compliance.

Sou stated that at a recent Parent Advisory Committee meeting, she was informed that an ES parent had asked if the health curriculum was available online and if female students were being taught about menstruation. The parent also requested if there were tools to support parents with conversations about reproductive and sexual health at an elementary school level since girls were reaching menstruation earlier. Conversations with Director O'Connor relayed that providing parents with this information was the responsibility of individual schools and that they can request that information from teachers and principals. Sou expressed concern that many parents might not be able to access this information, or even know how to ask for it.

Reilly-Chamat stated that there is a requirement for the curriculum to be on the district's website. Sou requested that this be made clear in conversations with Central Office regarding the health curriculum and added that PPSD's website is currently being revamped and many parts are under construction. Reilly-Chamat mentioned that there could be legal repercussions if a parent has exhausted all local channels through the district and contacts RIDE's legal department.

Action Item: Sou or co-chairs will clarify and relay this information to Director O'Connor.

Co-Chair Hoopis reminded the committee that addressing such matters is the mission of the Health & Wellness committee and one of the many reasons such committees were established. She reiterated that the committee exists to offer support to students, educators and schools through materials and professional development. She expressed prior challenges community organizations have had with PPSD in offering such supports because of district policies. Hoopis added that these particular challenges are specific to Providence, and not with other districts which her organization works with. Sou explained that existing policies were placed to protect student data and to better align district goals for successful partnerships and provide Providence with the necessary supports and that the district is in the process of undoing these barriers to better introduce needed partners.

Bakel-Morrel inquired how the subcommittee would offer the necessary supports. Co-chair Hoopis explained that reviewing the curriculum would offer opportunities to identify the types of supports that could be offered. Sou mentioned RIHSC's Adolescent and Sexual Reproductive Health Assessment Tool for School Districts to internally score and identify areas of need with the collaboration of other PPSD personnel. These conversations will provide a more accurate assessment for the goal of the committee.

Action Item: Co-Chair Hoopis will insert this statute into the formal letter to Director O'Connor and request a meeting.

Presentations

6. SafeBae - Peer Consent – slides presentation click [here](#)

Shael Norris is the Executive Director of SafeBae, a survivor-founded, student-led national organization whose mission is to end sexual assault among middle and high school students. It is the only national peer-to-peer organization of its kind and helps promote culture change by giving teens the tools to become activists and shift school culture through raising awareness about dating violence, sexual harassment and assault, affirmative consent, safe bystander intervention, survivor care, and their rights under Title IX.

The work of SafeBae began with the Netflix documentary "Audrie and Daisy" which featured the co-founder's own personal experiences with sexual assault in high school and the aftermath it had on the community. It resulted in youths being moved into action and wanting to do more in their schools and communities to raise awareness about sexual assault.

The organization created a tool, content and graphics along with their social media page in order to master the conversation in a relevant and meaningful way. It is estimated that through their content and presentations, approximately 5 million people have been reached. Centered on youth activism and with a majority of boards consisting of youths, SafeBae has resulted in this opportunity for student activism and opportunities to change the culture around sexual assault.

SafeBae has also held in person and virtual Consent Summits that equips students with information on how to report and who to report to and how to obtain additional information such as helping someone who is close to you through educating youths on Title IX rights. Previous summits, both in person and virtual, were attended by approximately 500 people.

Peer educator trainings are provided with quizzes included to keep youths involved and learning in a comprehensive, well rounded, and accessible way. The goal is to continue to grow this program and offer it to both adults and youths. Interactive, short film contents are embedded in the training and divided into modules with PowerPoint presentations as well.

Support is also offered to provide students with materials needed to start a school club and regional youth chapters, along with an app that will provide them with new ways to engage with the community and events nearby. It also has an anonymous reporting feature that students can access.

Another short film will be coming out this fall addressing male survivors. This short film was done in partnership with CBS.

A sexual misconduct policy reform guide was also created to further support students and guide districts. This policy reform guide was compiled in a trauma-informed way and through evidence-based research.

SafeBae also has utilized celebrities to help produce their work. These celebrities have ranged from actors, actresses and athletes and have attended prior summits.

SafeBae is currently working on a partnership with Department of Health which will specifically bring the peer educator training throughout the state of Rhode Island.

Co-chair Pare asked about representation and how to support youths of color or a part of the LGBTQ community. Norris explained that much of the work is through representation through the co-founders and board members and that all of SafeBae content is also represented in a very diverse manner and the modules are presented in a non-binary way.

Sou asked if the content is available in other languages. Norris stated that she is working on a grant to address this need.

Hoopis stated that in terms of next steps, the subcommittee can share out SafeBae's information and asked how could we best get out this information to the youths. She asked if communication needed to be in more than one language, and Sou said yes. She also suggested perhaps offering this during out of school time and through summer learning opportunities as well.

Wetherill asked if there was a way to offer this as a ready-made content to school leaders and support this training. She also asked how could one view the content and the link was shared in the chat (<https://safebae.org/get-involved/become-a-baebreaker/become-a-certified-peer-educator>). To access this information, adults and youths do have to register and there is an optional \$50 donation for adults.

Norris offered to share infographics that can easily be translated and shared out with the district.

Planning

7. PPSNE STARS

Co-chair Hoopis announced that youths from PPSNE's STARS (Students Teaching about Responsible Sexuality) program will join a future meeting to talk about their peer education program through Planned Parenthood of Southeastern New England.

Action Item: Co-chair Hoopis will reach out to Brittany Huffman, PPSNE, to invite STARS for a presentation and recruitment to the subcommittee.

8. Announcements

Co-chair Hoopis shared the letter to Director O'Connor in the chat for further feedback and announced that she would like to send this out by tomorrow.

Wetherill shared that she recently had conversations with a school nutrition staff member who also was alarmed by the statistics around sexual violence and applauded the preventative work that SafeBae provides.

Co-Chair Pare left the meeting.

Adjourn Meeting

9. Meeting Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm

MSV - Hoopis, Sou (10-0) MOTION APPROVED