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Wellness, preparedness key to a safe learning environment

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The tragedy in Parkland, Florida was followed by inspirational scenes of high school students across the country taking a stand for school safety. The tragedy and students' articulate expression of the change they want to see must prompt us to continue doing all we can to provide a safe learning environment.

In Glenbard District 87, we make every effort to keep our students and staff safe. We have security plans in place, we review safety procedures with students and staff, and we work closely with our partners in local law enforcement.

We all can contribute to the goal of providing a safe learning environment. We encourage our students to tell a trusted adult if they see something wrong, whether in school, on social media or elsewhere. The mantra of "see something, say something" is key to increasing safety.

Social Emotional Learning

Our students' social emotional well-being is another element of a safe learning environment. Young people may be managing a wide range of challenges, including:

- Social/emotional challenges
- Dependency on alcohol or other drugs
- Family matters, such as divorce
- Mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety

Our school psychologists, social workers and other student services personnel provide a variety of social emotional supports and can assist families and provide resources to support students' overall wellness.

Let's look at some of the ways we address students' well-being:

- **Social Emotional Learning Competencies** – We focus on students' social emotional learning competencies of:
 - Self-Awareness
 - Social Awareness
 - Self-Management
 - Responsible Decision-Making
 - Relationship Skills
- **Semi-annual Youth Leaders Community Forum** – brings together our assistant principals for student services and a variety of professionals who work with our students outside of the school day, including representatives of youth

counseling services, faith-based organizations, DuPage County agencies, sender schools, YMCAs, libraries, park districts and more.

- **Wellness Committee** – A group of faculty and community volunteers focused on supporting goals related to student nutrition education, physical activity and social and emotional needs, as well as wellness programs for staff.
- **Live Life Well Week** – focused on mindfulness activities related to students' responsible decision making, self-awareness and self-management, as well as activities for self-care and getting involved at school.
- **Glenbard Parent Series** – In November, Brenda Nelson presented *Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning: An Approach for Sailing the Rough Seas of Adolescence*, and in January, Shimi Kang presented *The Myth of Normal: Understanding Anxiety, Depression and Addiction*.
- **Illinois Youth Survey** – This survey provides local, relevant data to assist with school planning on health and social issues.
- **Wellness Expo** – Important part of our September health fair

With more than 8,100 students in our care, we draw upon the collective experience, wisdom and unique perspectives of a diverse group of community partners to provide a safe learning environment. Parents and guardians are key partners in this work. Thank you for your continued support of our students, faculty and staff.