

Counselor's Corner

August 2019

- **Struggling Students and Failure Policy:** Ms. Weber and Mrs. Rubemeyer worked together to make revisions in the 2019-2020 student handbook to reflect suggested changes in the middle school failure policy. Changes include a list of interventions that will be offered to remediate failing students throughout the school year and guidelines for summer school attendance should a student not achieve passing grades in any of his/her four core courses. The new policy also includes details for involving parents/guardians early in the school year to prevent student failures. Mrs. Rubemeyer will present the updated policy to appropriate stakeholders for approval.
- **Professional Development:** Ms. Weber participated in a variety of professional development trainings in August to prepare for the upcoming school year. Ms. Weber was trained in the Reading Mastery program, so she can serve as a qualified sub if any of the regular RM group leaders should have to miss a day. This process will provide continuity for the students through a trained substitute who can keep the groups moving despite absences. Ms. Weber also joined the middle school staff in their PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) training. This training is vital to managing routines and student behavior, and Ms. Weber will assist the middle school teachers in implementing this program with the students.
- **Trauma-Informed Resources for Staff:** Ms. Weber will continue to provide current research and resources to staff to help them create "trauma-informed classrooms." She presented an introduction to trauma-focused teaching to all new staff members at their orientation in August, and she will build on the professional development she offered last year for all staff by presenting at the first early release day Sept. 5 (tentatively). Ms. Weber hopes to help the staff continue to grow together as a team to create a safe, consistent, and empathic learning environment for our students.
- **School-Based Therapy:** Ms. Weber will meet with John Ross, the director from DCCH, to finalize plans for our school-based therapy this year. Southgate will have a new therapist this year, and we are hopeful that we will be able to provide two days of services as opposed to the one-day per week we had last year. This extra day would allow the new therapist to work with twice as many students and their families. As a reminder, Southgate partners with DCCH to provide a licensed therapist to work free of charge with students in need who are covered by Medicaid.