

Ambitious Goals Make Ramsey a Better Place

Innovative and new approaches are the key.

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GLANCING BACK, I think all of us in Ramsey should be thrilled with the progress we've made towards our goals during the current school year. As a reminder, our goals consist of: (1) developing a profile of a graduate, (2) teaching for understanding, (3) achieving excellence through equity, and (4) enhancing the student experience. These are ambitious and complex goals that involve innovative and different approaches to education. One specific area I would like to share is how we are enhancing the student experience by increasing attention to student wellness.

We believe that school should be a safe and supportive learning environment within a broader school community, and should educate the whole child by focusing on issues such as character, wellness, and service to others. To help accomplish this, the Ramsey Child Study Team (CST) and guidance members are providing professional development to our teachers to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of behavioral health issues among children and teens. This training will help staff develop the tools and support strategies that promote overall well-being. In addition, we have started the process of revising and

updating curriculum to include mental health awareness and training, the development of a distinct section on the district's website of local, state and national resources as it relates to the different aspects of wellness, and the establishment of a district-wide Mental Health Day in May with a coordinated set of activities.

We recognize the need to provide assistance on what goes on outside the classroom. This year's Parent Academies are focused on providing resources for parents to help assist their children at home. We've already hosted the authors of *What Made Maddy Run* and *Where You Go to School is Not Who You Will Be*, books that deal with challenges and complexities that students are facing. Upcoming Parent Academies will include teen panels discussing the role social media plays in their lives. I strongly urge community members to attend. All information can be found on our website.

I'm also proud to write that the school district has been an active participant in the Ramsey Stigma Free initiative. The response from our staff has been amazing. A district-wide T-shirt day was held in December, and on that day over 160 staff members wore "Ramsey: Proud to be Stigma Free" shirts. Others wore green to spread awareness and support. Future events and activities are planned for our students and parents.

While there is still a lot of heavy lifting and work to be done, I know that we're on the right track. The goals we have set for ourselves are purposely ambitious; Ramsey deserves the best and that's actually what our staff is delivering. ↪