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New Mental health in schools project helps kids achieve their DREAMS

Redcliff... The DREAMS (Developing Redcliff Educational and Mental Health Supports) program, an innovative school-based mental health initiative, will bring mental health and well-being supports to Kindergarten to Grade 9 students at I.F. Cox, Margaret Wooding and Parkside Schools.

“This project is truly unique because it brings together a number of people and professionals at the grassroots community level to help children learn how to self-protect their mental health from an early age,” says Ken Hughes, Chair, Alberta Health Services Board. “Teachers and other school staff, parents, health care professionals and community agencies and organizations work collaboratively to achieve this goal.”

The DREAMS project will give students access to individual and family counselling, before- and after-school programs and workshops, one-on-one time with success coaches or mentors who will help them succeed both inside the classroom and out, and other supports.

“The program also helps prevent mental health problems and promotes overall wellbeing for students, before crises occur,” explains Bob Wickens, DREAMS Project Coordinator. “The students acquire resiliency skills, which is the ability to bounce back from setbacks and cope well with adversity.”

Building resiliency during childhood and youth is important to good mental health as an adult. Research illustrates that resilient people are healthier, live longer, are more successful in school and jobs, are happier in relationships and are less prone to depression.

“We are proud to be involved with such an innovative project,” says Doug Nicholls, Superintendent, Prairie Rose School Division, “And we believe this program will become a model for how communities can address significant health issues, such as mental health, that benefit our children, youth and families.”

The Dreams program is one of 32 pilot projects in a province-wide Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools initiative. The initiative is led by the Alberta Health Services Board/Alberta Mental Health Board in partnership with Alberta Education, health regions and other partners and community agencies, with funding from Alberta Health and Wellness.

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