

## Safety Committee Meeting - January 19, 2016

The meeting started with introductions shared around the room.

**Susanne Gruending**, who is part of the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team, handed out to the group a copy of a letter from Robert Evans from the VT Agency of Education (School Safety Liaison Officer), addressed to Superintendents and Principals in the state, regarding After Action Summary and Vermont School Safety Incidents. The letter spoke about Threat Evaluations, Communication, Evacuation, Command and Control, Accountability, Family Reunification, and Psychological First Aid. Resources were listed at the bottom of the letter to enhance more awareness about crisis response plans.

Vermont School Crisis Planning Guide

[http://vem.vermont.gov/preparedness/school\\_crisis](http://vem.vermont.gov/preparedness/school_crisis)

Introduction to the Incident Command System

<https://emilms.fema.gov/is100b/index.htm>

Guide for Developing a High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans

[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/rems\\_k-12\\_guide\\_508.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/rems_k-12_guide_508.pdf)

**Matt Whalen**, Prevention and Wellness Director of the Essex CHIPS Program, presented the many factors that are involved with the organization. The CHIPS program is 30 years old this year. It targets 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders, and is funded by support from local individuals, families, businesses, and partner organizations. Essex CHIPS also contracts out some of its services.

**CHIPS** stands for **C**ommunity **H**ealth **I**nitiatives and **P**rograms for **S**tudents.

There are several programs offered by the organization. One is the **Teen Center** which is a space provided by Essex Junction, which also funds 24% to the program. CHIPS focuses on promoting risk and protective training. Youth receive instruction on “What are your external assets and what are your internal assets, and how do these give you strength”. The Center promotes constructive use of free time, gives a connection to an adult in the community and offers a positive peer influence. The Center provides for a healthy youth coalition. First and foremost, this program is for the safety of the children. Past activities included a texting and driving presentation, hungry heart screening, youth focus groups, and a prom and graduation safety informational campaign.

In addition to the activities within the building, groups of students do several different things throughout the year. They plan substance-free events for their peers, for example. CHIPS also helps plan activities for all students and offers safety presentations to younger students. They have weekly meetings and do all their planning with having fun in mind.

There is a tobacco use prevention program. CHIPS has received tobacco use prevention funds from the state. VT earmarks these funds for smoke free parks and open air spaces. They work with landlords on the benefits of declaring their housing “smoke free”. Landlords get financial rewards from the state for declaring their housing smoke free.

CHIPS works with the VT funded Chittenden County Network on substance abuse prevention to help kids quit smoking or using drugs. The mission is to strengthen the collective impact of efforts across

Chittenden County to support healthy communities and prevent substance abuse. They promote youth engagement and host youth-led leadership retreats.

There is a prescription drug takeback day coming on April 30<sup>th</sup> nationwide. This is when the public can bring unused/unwanted prescription drugs to the Essex Police Department for disposal. This exercise is usually done twice a year.

Other sides of Essex CHIPS are:

**The Tween Center** which engages activities, promotes healthy snacks, and is a great opportunity for our youth to have adult and peer interactions. This program takes place Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. It also provides a leadership council where students plan the meetings. The group meets monthly and offers a great leadership opportunity.

**Alternative Spring Break Program.** Above The Influence is a national campaign that is being localized to the Essex Community. Essex CHIPS is spearheading the efforts, working with local youth and schools to implement ATI in the community. Essex youths are working to promote healthy lifestyles and substance-free events.

**The Mentoring Program.** This is done at ETSD schools. Not currently at CCSU schools. This is an adult interaction with a student on a one to one basis once a week.

**The Adventure Orientation Program.** This is an adventure based, experiential learning program, designed to ease the transition from middle to high school.

**IBM Lego Camp.** This is a robotics camp that provides an interactive hands-on summer science camp experience for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. There is a fee.

Matt Whalen can help anyone get involved in any of these programs. Most all programing is free.

More information about Essex CHIPS programs can be found by visiting: <http://www.essexchips.org/>