

SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH

IN THE RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH IN THE RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Creating a House that Smiles
Optimizing School Culture and Climate Through
Relationship-Based Practices



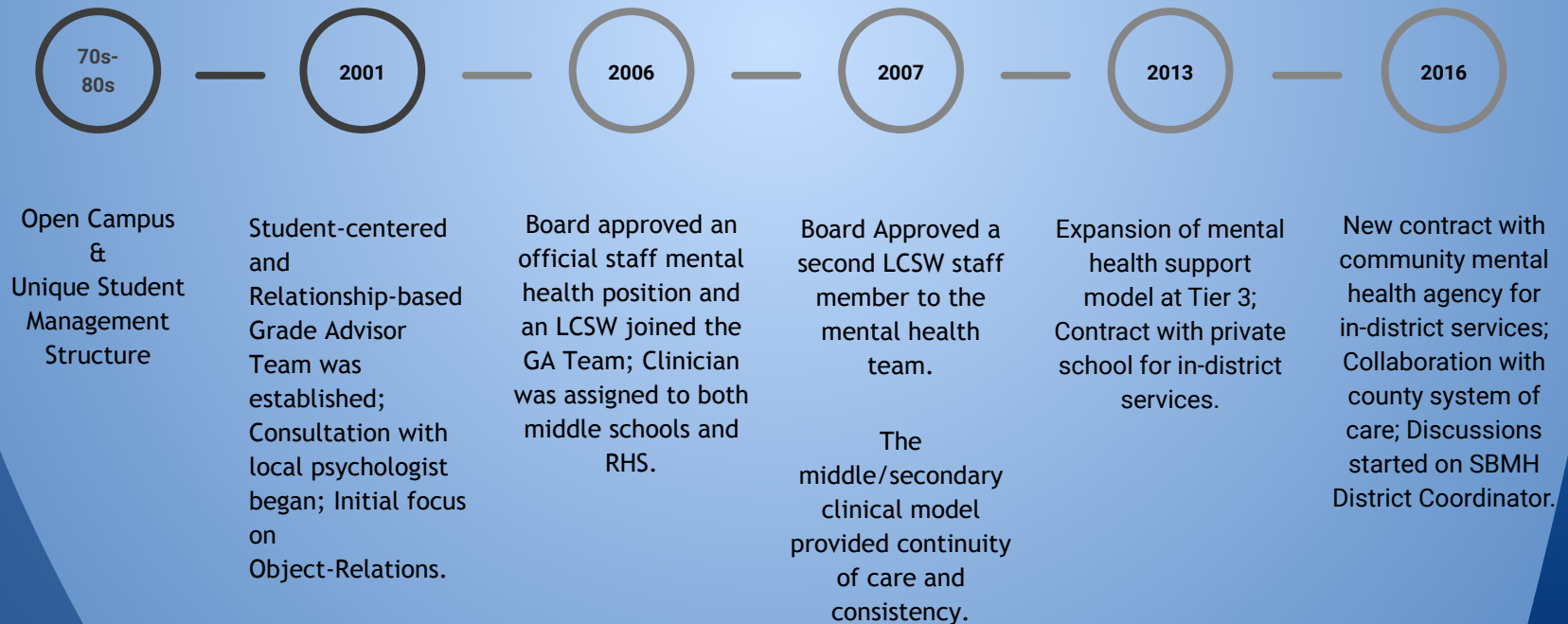
Beall Phoenix
Assistant Principal
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**The Attuned School Clinician:
Attachment-Based Clinical
Practice in Schools**

LAUREN M. DEPINTO, MSSW, LCSW (DSW CANDIDATE)
25TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON ADVANCING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH
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A General Timeline of the Development of Our Model



Our Mission

General Aims/Goals:

- Increase positive connections between adults and students at all levels and learning at Ridgewood High School.
- Strengthen our capacity to provide prevention, intervention, and postvention (at all three tiers of service) in the form of meaningful student involvement and interaction - responding more positively to student need with an emphasis on working WITH students as opposed to working for them.

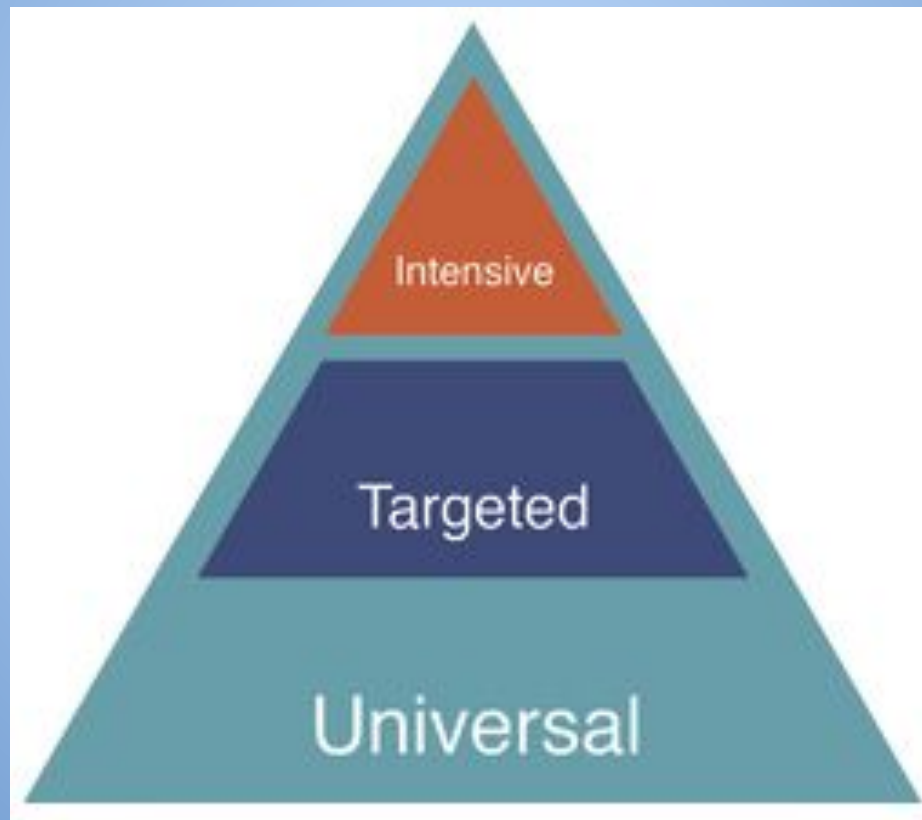
Listening as THE Form of Intervention...

Students “tell” their “stories.” Stories help both the student storyteller and the adult listeners make meaning of our lives, our work, and our purpose. Good stories have tremendous healing power.

Adapting and Applying Dr. Dan Hughes' PACE Method to our Work In Schools

- PACE stands for PLAYFULNESS, ACCEPTANCE, CURIOSITY, EMPATHY
 - **Playfulness** - an open, ready, calm, relaxed, and engaged attitude.
 - **Acceptance** - unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe, and loved. “Hate the sin, love the sinner.”
 - **Curiosity** - without judgement, children become aware of their inner life.
 - **Empathy** - a sense of compassion for the child and his/her feelings.

Multi-tiered System of Supports



School-Based Mental Health & Well-Being During School Re-entry and COVID-19: The Mission

- Continue our focus on school culture and climate - emphasizing relationship-based, trauma-informed practices, and trauma-sensitive classrooms (virtual or in-person), self-care, and resilience-building.
 - **Supporting Wellness, Balance, & Connection for Students and Staff**
- Organize and provide Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and School-Based Mental Health and Counseling (SBMH) supports across the district via tiered continuum of support (MTSS)
- Develop a virtual platform in order to expand outreach to students and families and clearly communicate plans to support students' social and emotional, mental, and behavioral health needs.
 - **RPS School-Based Mental Health & Wellness Website; Virtual Wellness Speaker Series**

Student Support Services

Direct Student Services:

Provided by: Guidance Counselors (all grade levels)/Child Study Team Members (all grade levels)/Crisis Intervention Counselors (6-12)/Grade Advisors (9-12)

School-based assistance and support is offered as needed (or as requested) to students at every level in virtual or in-person settings, including individual or small group

For those students needing more intensive support we can offer services (Tier 3) through our partnership with Care Plus, NJ (6-12)

Indirect Student Services:

Consultation

Collaboration

Communication

Referrals & Community-Linkage

Care Plus, NJ Partnership

Covid-19 Specific Supportive Practices at All Tiers:

- Wellness Check-In for grades 6-12; K-5 will be rolled out this week
- K-5 implemented a Grade Level Captions SEL program that is facilitated by elementary guidance and specialists
- Small group/teacher team meetings (grades 6-8) and Department meetings (9-12) on adjusting and recovering from traumatic events and utilizing a trauma-sensitive classroom framework (On-going)
- Interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure all students are monitored and screened for any additional support services as equitably as possible using pre-existing groups such as: I&RS (Intervention & Referral Services) and MHIC (Mental Health Intervention Committee)
- Consultation to district supervisors to support the trauma-sensitive training initiative for both students and staff
- Staff Check-in's designed to encourage the importance of self-care, healthy adjustment, peer support, and adult social-emotional wellbeing

Covid-19 Specific Practices Continued:

- Development of an RPS School-Based Mental Health & Wellness google site (In Development)
- Virtual Mental Health and Wellness Discussion and Psycho-Education Series (In Development)
- Peer Counselor Training specifically focused on student relationships and mental health awareness
- Leadership Training for Athletic Captains
- Municipal Alliance-funded programs on sexual assault awareness and student leadership development