

## ► COUNSELING TEAM

There are people in each school building that students and their families can connect with for mental health support.

- Each elementary school has a school counselor and school psychologist.
- Each middle school has two school counselors and a school psychologist.
- F-M High School has seven school counselors and a school psychologist.
- There is one district psychologist that supports all schools.
- Six family-school liaisons support students in all of the buildings.

Each of the three roles—school counselor, school psychologist and family-school liaison—has an important impact on the emotional health and well-being of students. There is some overlap in services and some distinctions between each role as well. Regardless of titles, counseling staff members seamlessly work together as a team, both within the schools and districtwide, regularly consulting with one another to support students and families.

## ► WHO TO CONTACT

Any student who needs mental health support, or a family member concerned about their student, should reach out first to the student's designated school counselor, whose contact information may be found on the district website. The school counselor will determine what supports are necessary and either help the student directly or refer them to another counseling staff member or an outside resource that could meet the identified needs.

## ► COUNSELING STAFF CONTACTS

✦ **Enders Road Elementary School**  
315-692-1501

✦ **Fayetteville Elementary School**  
315-692-1601

✦ **Mott Road Elementary School**  
315-692-1701

✦ **Eagle Hill Middle School**  
315-692-1401

✦ **Wellwood Middle School**  
315-692-1301

✦ **Fayetteville-Manlius High School**  
315-692-1801

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Counseling staff members participate in a variety of mental health training. Some examples of topics covered include:

- ✓ Anxiety and stress management
- ✓ Suicide and self-harm
- ✓ Coping with grief and loss
- ✓ Identity and gender expression (LGBTQIA+)
- ✓ Understanding and managing emotions
- ✓ Common mental illness among children and adolescents
- ✓ Eating disorders
- ✓ Strengthening relationships
- ✓ Substance use and abuse
- ✓ Impact of divorce on students and families



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SCHOOL DISTRICT

8199 East Seneca Turnpike  
Manlius, NY 13104



Supporting students' mental health is what our counseling staff members do all day, every day. Regardless of the issue a student is dealing with, emotion is involved. Whether a kindergartener is arriving at school for the first time or a high school student is trying to figure out what life looks like after graduation, each experience carries a variety of emotions. Helping students recognize their feelings and how to manage them is the foundation of our counseling team's work.

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# Supporting Students' Mental Health

- EDUCATION
- CONNECTIONS
- RESPONSIVE SERVICES

[www.fmschools.org](http://www.fmschools.org)







**There has been a national conversation about students’ mental health, and Fayetteville-Manlius School District students are facing many of the same challenges as their peers from across the country.**

The district has a number of initiatives in place to support the emotional health and wellness of all F-M school community members.

This brochure is designed to give you a snapshot of our counseling team’s roles and activities. While our team members have a variety of responsibilities, they all support the emotional health and well-being of our students and staff in three primary ways: educating, making connections, and providing responsive services.

The counseling team is committed to the district’s vision of promoting all students’ personal success, which includes their emotional health. During this school year, we will be sharing more information on our website and with you directly around emotional health and wellness and the resources available to you and your family.



**EDUCATION**

Educating students about their mental health is important so they can effectively express and manage their emotions in ways that support their overall well-being. Students should also be able to identify when and how to seek help.

**ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE AWARENESS**

- High school counseling staff partner with health and physical education teachers to teach students about emotional wellness, suicide prevention and managing stress and anxiety.
- Middle school counseling staff talk with students about such topics as practicing positive decision-making, identifying and using coping skills and creating healthy relationships. They teach lessons on self-awareness, communication skills, mental health, anxiety, depression and suicide awareness.
- Elementary classroom lessons focus on teaching skills for learning, empathy, emotion regulation and problem solving.
- High school students have participated in suicide awareness programs provided by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention each of the past three years.
- During parent nights and orientation programs, counseling staff encourage students and families to define success in their own way and strive for a healthy life balance.
- Parent night presentations have been offered that focus on such topics as anxiety, depression, suicide prevention and eating disorders.
- During the 2019-20 and 2021-22 school years, counseling staff collaborated with teachers to organize and facilitate two community-wide book reads. Parents, educators and other community members came together to discuss the texts, which focused on parenting and emotional health.
- Counseling staff in each school help coordinate and lead Wellness Day activities that focus on relieving and managing student stress and anxiety.



**CONNECTIONS**

Building connections between students and their school is important so they feel comfortable and safe. There is a direct relationship between a student’s feelings of physical and emotional safety and their ability to learn and thrive.

**STRATEGIES THAT FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS**

- Counseling staff host orientation programs for students and their families when students transition to kindergarten, middle school and high school.
- School counselors introduce themselves to students in classrooms, small groups or individually so students know who they are, how they can help and how to contact them.
- Family-school liaisons work directly with families—sometimes at students’ homes—to create a positive, supportive relationship between home and school. They frequently connect families to outside agencies and organizations.
- During the 2021-22 school year, there were nine therapy dogs working in the district performing a variety of services, such as greeting students in the morning, visiting classrooms and spending time with students who were having a difficult day. The program is poised to expand as there are several more dogs in training.
- School counselors advise student clubs, coach athletic teams, chaperone field trips and attend school events and activities so they can engage with students and their families beyond the school day.



**RESPONSIVE SERVICES**

It is important to be able to identify and respond to students’ mental health needs so that they feel supported as they meet the daily challenges that arise in and out of school.

**ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT WELL-BEING**

- Counseling team members at all levels meet with students and serve as the “first responders.” They listen non-judgmentally, assess the situation, consider signs, symptoms and risk factors, give reassurance, share information/resources, encourage self-care, consult with parents, teachers, administrators and provide referrals to outside professionals.
- A 20-minute Wellness Break is included in every high school student’s schedule. Students report that they use the time to eat, relax, check their phones, do homework or study for afternoon classes, talk to their friends and begin homework from morning classes.
- At the elementary and middle schools, school counselors hold support groups for students during lunch periods so there is no impact to students’ academic schedules. The groups focus on such topics as stress management, identifying feelings, how to be a friend, self-esteem building and coping with divorce in their family.
- The district has piloted a screening tool to assess student mental health. Based on results, students are provided varied levels and intensity of support, such as individual or group meetings, referrals to outside therapists and/or enrollment in mentoring programs.