

Tewksbury Public Schools

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Dear Tewksbury Public Schools Parents and Guardians,

As a school district, we continually strive to meet the social and emotional needs of all students. In addition, we also need to respond to State driven mandates that are designed to enhance meeting those needs. In March 2016, the Massachusetts Legislature passed House Bill, No. 4056, which outlines the requirements for public schools in the Commonwealth to engage in substance abuse prevention and education.

From section 15 of that Bill:

"a verbal screening tool to screen pupils for substance use disorders. Screenings shall occur on an annual basis and occur at two different grade levels".

The Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) program screening process will be incorporated into our annual state mandated screening program. This year we will screen all seventh graders at the Wynn Middle School and ninth graders at TMHS (parent opt out available). All screenings will be conducted confidentially by a member of our District SBIRT Team in private one-on-one sessions. SBIRT screeners will utilize the CRAFFT II screening tool, the most commonly used substance use screening tool for adolescents in Massachusetts.

Students who report that they are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced by the screener. The screener will provide brief feedback to any student who reports using substances, or who is at risk for future substance abuse. If needed, we will refer students to our counseling staff for further evaluation. This program focuses on harm prevention and does not generate disciplinary action. Results of the screening will not appear in the students' school record. As with any school screening, you have the right to opt your child out of this screening. Please contact your school nurse if you have any questions about this program or if you wish to opt your child out of this screening. Additionally, this screening is voluntary and students may choose not to answer any or all of the screening questions.

You will receive further instructions concerning dates the screening will be conducted from your child's principal. We encourage all parents/guardians to talk to their child about substance abuse and please note that our nursing and counseling staff are available to you as a resource.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Malone
Superintendent of Schools

CJM/gj

TPS Mission Statement:

To educate and challenge all learners in the Tewksbury Public School Community while supporting their development as well prepared and productive members of a diverse global society.