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Shapiro Administration Visits Central Dauphin School District to Highlight Substance Use Prevention, Mental Health Resources Available to Schools

The Department offers a range of services to fight substance use disorder, from the Alcohol and Other Drugs Resource Guide providing information to schools on prevention programs, to the Just Five free online tool that enhances education and awareness about substance use disorder for free to all Pennsylvanians.

The major bipartisan bills Governor Shapiro signed yesterday further invest \$100 million to address mental health in schools across the Commonwealth.

Harrisburg, PA – Pennsylvania **Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Secretary Dr. Latika Davis-Jones** and **Department of Education (PDE) Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin** joined students today at [Central Dauphin School District](#) (CDSD) to highlight their evidence-based substance use disorder (SUD) prevention program and remind schools of the mental health resources available to students year round, including during the holiday season.

“Prevention really is our first line of defense in ensuring our children grow up to live healthy, productive lives and the Shapiro Administration is committed to providing critical supports and resources to our students, educators, and school communities,” said **Secretary Davis-Jones**. “Intensifying our primary prevention efforts and strengthening protective factors such as positive school climate, decision-making and coping skills, and how to process trauma is absolutely critical to address these risk factors which too often lead to misusing substances.”

During their visit, Secretaries Davis-Jones and Mumin participated in a student-led mental health activity that included muscle relaxation techniques to decrease stressors, breathing and progressive muscle relaxation work, as well as an activity on how to use positive messaging and develop coping skills.

“Students have to feel their best to be their best, and Pennsylvania’s schools are an important place where self-care and wellness can be modeled and practiced,” said **Secretary Mumin**. “The learners and educators at Central Dauphin School District remind us all, especially during the busy and stressful holiday season, that it’s okay to take some time to breathe, relax, and reflect—and to take care of their physical and mental health.”

They were joined by students from CDSD as well as members of the district's Student Assistance Program teams, school social workers, school counselors, community prevention and intervention providers, and others, including staff from the [Dauphin County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services](#).

The department oversees multiple prevention providers that facilitate [evidence-based programming](#) within CDSD and schools throughout Dauphin County. These DDAP-funded programs are designed to help students discover healthy alternatives and effective methods for handling their stress, develop new coping skills, and to learn how the body and mind work together to handle stress.

There are numerous programs occurring in CDSD including: Botvin Lifeskills and Too Good for Drugs which are both evidence-based, social-emotional programs that emphasize teaching skills such as decision-making, self-esteem, communication skills, peer pressure refusal skills, and providing information on the harms of substance use. In addition, the Caron Foundation facilitates *Project Connect* and *Care Together* which are vaping and cannabis cessation programs that teach students social-emotional skills and encourage them to make healthier choices.

"We are incredibly grateful for our community partnerships in supporting our CDSD students and their families with comprehensive mental health services," said **CDSD Superintendent Dr. Norman Miller**.

Shapiro Administration Student Mental Health Investments

In addition to investing in vital classroom funding at schools across the Commonwealth, the Shapiro Administration is committed to providing a supportive and safe learning environment for students. The major bipartisan bills Governor Shapiro signed into law yesterday invests \$100 million to address mental health in schools, including:

- \$90 million to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to provide a second year of School Mental Health Grants to school districts, charter schools, intermediate units and career and technical centers;
- \$5 million to PDE for training school-based mental health professionals; and
- \$5 million to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for grants to support school counselors, social workers, psychologists and nurses during their clinical internships.

Shapiro Administration Prevention Resources

The [Alcohol and Other Drugs Resource Guide](#) provides information that can help schools identify their needs, select prevention programs, and implement prevention programs. This guide outlines Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) programs, curricula, and supplementary programs. Best practices on choosing AOD programs involve usage of evidence-based, effective, and promising programs that are developmentally appropriate.

[County drug and alcohol offices](#) can provide prevention programs and materials that address numerous substance-related topics, and also help with selecting prevention programs that are the best fit for schools, parents/families, and communities.

School district data from the [PA Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) is an important resource for identifying student needs and the factors influencing student substance use. This information can be used to help guide the selection of prevention programs. The PAYS How-to Guide is a tool to help in analyzing PAYS data. Local county drug and alcohol offices and coalitions may also be able to assist in analyzing PAYS data.

[Just Five](#) is a free online tool to enhance education and awareness about substance use disorder (SUD). With just six short learning modules, it is a self-paced program that aims to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and provide education about SUD prevention and treatment which inspires conversations with family, friends, and communities.

The Get Help Now Hotline is a toll-free helpline that connects callers with treatment options and resources for themselves or a loved one. You can reach the Get Help Now helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). The helpline is available 24/7 – including on national holidays. An anonymous [chat service](#) offering the same information to individuals who may not be comfortable speaking on the phone is also available.

[You've Got a Friend in Pennsylvania](#) is an automated phone number that individuals of all ages can call to hear pep talks, jokes, and words of encouragement from Pennsylvania students. Callers can access the line at (717) 772-4737 and can select from menu options to hear advice, encouragement, and jokes from early elementary through high school students.

To learn more about the Shapiro Administration's efforts in combatting substance use disorder, visit ddap.pa.gov.

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