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Marshfield schools adopt PeaceBuilders

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When students return to school in the fall, bullying prevention will be on the curriculum. During their June 7 meeting, school committee members approved the adoption of PeaceBuilders, an inclusive school climate program based in California recommended by Assistant Superintendent Scott Borstel for implementation in the Marshfield Public Schools.

The recommendation was the result of 10 months of exploration by the Safe School Committee as it attempts to meet requirements of Massachusetts General Law. Schools must provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the district's curriculum, which Borstel said is currently lacking in Marshfield.

Marybeth Funder, the school district's director of comprehensive health, had presented the program at the school committee's at May 24 meeting. Funder described the program as both an unfunded mandate and "evidence-based," which is a requirement.

"This is not a typical curriculum," she said. "It is a community program based on building themes such as 'praise people,' 'give up put-downs,' 'seek wise people,' 'notice hurts,' 'right wrongs' and 'help others.'"

Funder continued by citing a pledge taken by students similar to the Pledge of Allegiance and said some districts had expanded the program into the community. Younger students will recite the PeaceBuilders Pledge, and older students will recite a more-advanced version of the pledge known as the PeaceBuilders Challenge.

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