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Principal  
Barack Obama School for Social Justice

September 2022

Dear Parent,

Barack Obama School for Social Justice, along with 50 other secondary schools in Westchester County, is continuing a Student Assistance/Project SUCCESS Program for the 2022-2023 school year. This program is funded by the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports through the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, the school district, and by corporate and private donations. The program will provide alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and other drug prevention activities and counseling for students including support for students and families experiencing COVID related concerns, bullying situations, and/or problem gambling. It is anticipated that this combination of services will accomplish the following goals:

1. prevent substance use and social and emotional problems among students
2. reduce the incidence of substance use and social emotional problems among students
3. improve school performance and attitudes toward school and support social emotional skill development

Carol Flores, LCAT, MS, is returning as the Student Assistance Counselor at Barack Obama School for Social Justice. She will be working full time in the district and will have evening hours available to meet with parents and community groups. Ms. Flores has a Master's Degree, experience working with adolescents and specialized training in prevention and early intervention strategies with adolescents at risk of having substance or gambling related problems. She is being paid and supervised by Student Assistance Services Corporation and the school.

Ms. Flores will be meeting with students individually and in small groups for education and prevention activities to correct erroneous perceptions about substance use, to support social and emotional health, and to teach students skills to identify and resist social and situational pressures to use substances or participate in other unhealthy behaviors. Parent meetings corresponding to our prevention program will also be offered. Ms. Flores will be available to see students who are using substances, vaping, gambling or have personal, peer, school, or family issues that could increase their risk of using substances, developing mental health problems, and/or being involved in bullying situations. If you would like to

Speak to the Student Assistance Counselor about your child or another student, please call her directly at 376-8177 ext. 4191. All calls will be confidential.

Ms. Flores will also provide multi-session educational programs for students who are vaping or under the influence of substances at school or school sponsored activities. When students are not in the school building, Ms. Flores will provide all program services remotely including confidential counseling through telepractice.

We are hopeful that these programs will show promising results. Data will be collected to assess the overall effectiveness of the program in preventing and reducing risk factors for alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, and problem gambling.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions about the program.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hara

Principal

Safety Tips: The Surgeon General declared adolescent vaping an epidemic, and Westchester is not immune. Recent data indicate that almost all youth who vape are using products containing nicotine or THC concentrates. All products that are vaped carry risks related to lung, heart, and gum health. Also, please monitor the use and storage of all prescription and non-prescription medications in your home to reduce misuse by youth. Unused medications can be returned at the Hastings Police Department, 7 Maple Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706, (914) 478-2344.