STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE PROMOTION OF
SCHOOL WELLBEING

Anatolia College 1886

Table of Contents

Why is school[1] community wellbeing important?

Schools have immense influence on the development of youth and although their primary focus is the acquisition of academic skills, their mission is also to provide a community in which all members feel cared, connected, and accepted, in which students are empowered against life adversities (Aldridge, & McChesney, 2018).

It has been supported that a considerable number of children and adolescents globally (approximately 10-15%) face difficulties that are related to several issues including anxiety, depression, behavioral disorders, academic and school adjustment difficulties, school failure, substance use and delinquent behavior, among others (Erskine et al., 2016). Further, the increase of violence in schools is alarming.

In addition, crisis events and adversities at a local, national, and global level – e.g. the wildfire in Eastern Attica in 2018 or the recent COVID-19 global health crisis – have a significant impact on all members of the school community and affect the wellbeing and mental health of

[1] The term "school", when used in this document about Anatolia, refers to all divisions and school levels that operate under the Anatolia umbrella, unless otherwise specified.

teachers, children and families (Hatzichristou et al., 2019; Hatzichristou et al. 2021,2022; Shoshani & Kor, 2021).

Not only is wellbeing promoted as an important educational aim in and of itself but there are also positive associations between learner wellbeing and higher academic achievement. Findings indicate that there is an important link between academic success and students' perceptions of school climate which can predict their school performance (Buckley, Storino, & Sebastiani, 2003). Studies further suggest that a less positive school climate is associated with low levels of school engagement, low academic incentives and reduced performance (Voight & Hanson, 2012). Conversely, research suggests lower learner wellbeing is associated with an increased risk of academic underachievement (van Batenburg-Eddes & Jolles, 2013).

Wellbeing is a complex concept that comprises several domains including academic, physical and psychosocial aspects. For school wellbeing to be promoted, protective factors need to be enhanced, while at the same time risk factors need to be reduced. For the purposes of this report the major domains of wellbeing addressed are the social (relationships with self and others), the emotional (socio-emotional), the physical, the academic (motivation, engagement, accomplishment purpose) and the occupational or financial (related to faculty and staff).
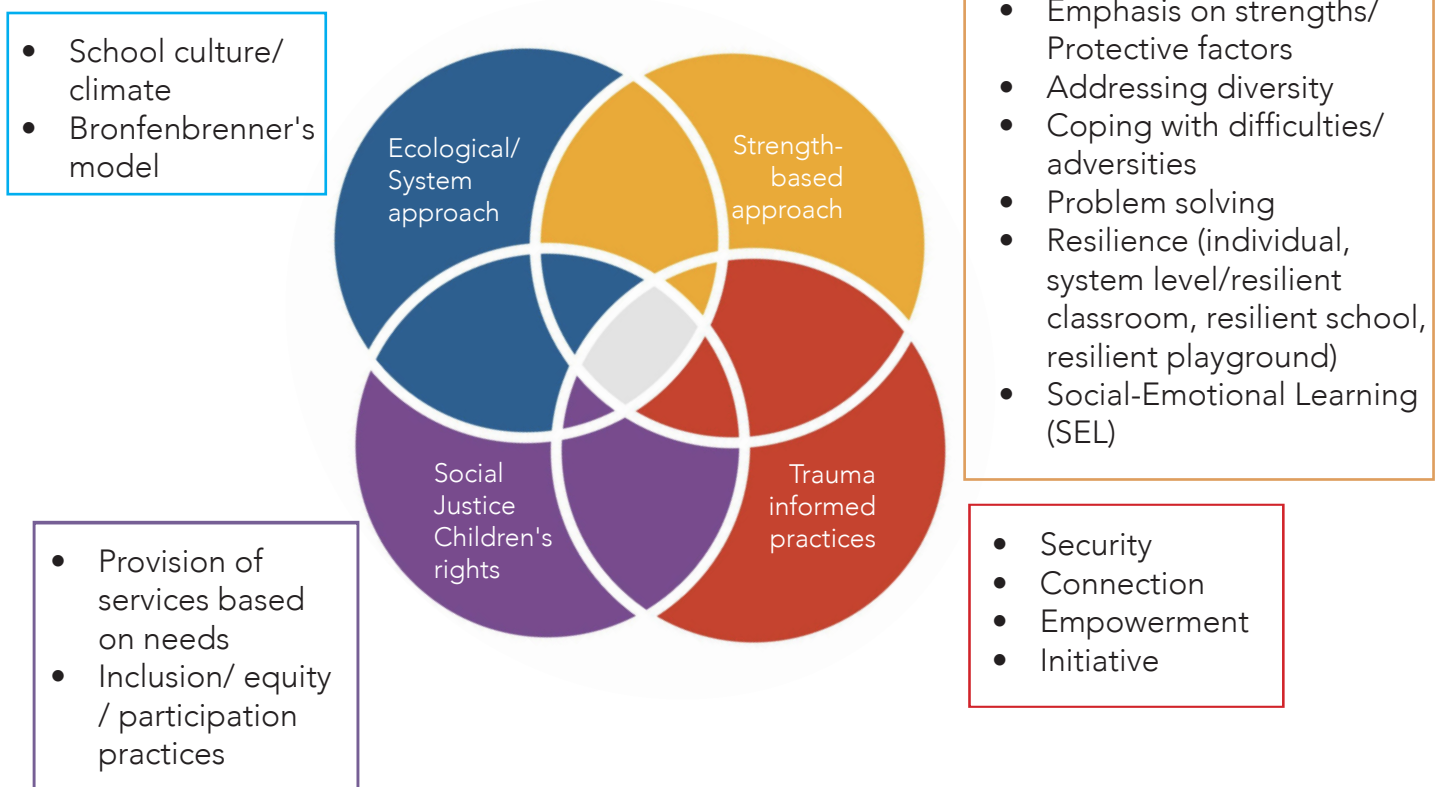
Conceptual Framework:
Connecting School Psychology theory, research, training and practice

Schools need to consider how to best build and promote/facilitate school community wellbeing. To that end, the conceptual framework that is adopted and is described next integrates basic contemporary theoretical approaches in the field of school psychology. These approaches contribute equally to the development of interventions for the promotion of school wellbeing, and they include the ecological/systemic approach, the social justice children's rights perspective, the strength-based approach, and trauma-informed practices (figure below). The conceptual framework is a synthetic approach consisting of interrelated domains with basic principles that are prerequisites for promoting well-being at an individual and at a system level (Hatzichristou et al., 2020, 2019).

Conceptual Framework/ Approaches School Psychology theory, reasearch, training and practice

- School culture/ climate
- Bronfenbrenner's model

Ecological/ System approach

Strength-based approach

Social Justice Children's rights

Trauma informed practices

- Positive development in all areas (physical, psychological, emotional, academic/ educational-learning)
- Emphasis on strengths/ Protective factors
- Addressing diversity
- Coping with difficulties/ adversities
- Problem solving
- Resilience (individual, system level/resilient classroom, resilient school, resilient playground)
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Provision of services based on needs
- Inclusion/ equity / participation practices

- Security
- Connection
- Empowerment
- Initiative

1.2
Whole-school approach to promote mental health and wellbeing

The key considerations of a whole-school approach are related to:

- the educational level and need for age-appropriate differentiations,
- the inclusion of all school members rather than a sole focus on students,
- the inclusion of preventive programs in addition to intervention programs,
- the need for interventions to be evidence-based, and
- the significance of partnerships and collaboration.

Specifically, the activities that will be developed and implemented will be based on the conceptual framework and are characterized by the following key features:

Multi–component/ age/ school level
Interventions are multilevel and age-appropriate, addressing the similar and differentiated needs according to their respective educational level

All members of the school community
Interventions and activities are inclusive of all members of school communities and address all students, teachers, administrators, parents, transportation personnel etc.

Continuum of support (multi-tier system)
The design of the activities is based on a multitier perspective to cover the needs of all students, from primary prevention to the support of students with increased difficulties or disabilities. Building resilience, social and emotional skills, care, and support, are important for the development of effective interventions that promote children's mental health and wellbeing (Soni, Shikha and Noufal Hameed, 2018).

Evidence-informed/ evidence-based/ outcomes-focused
The need to develop evidence-based interventions is widely stressed in the literature. Assessment processes ranging from the assessment of need to monitoring of progress and to the evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions are an integral part of all interventions and form the basis for the development and improvement of provided services.

Partnerships/ collaboration
The significance of partnerships and collaboration among all members of school communities, and specialties will ensure the co-constructive process of development and evolution at a local, national, and international level.

2
Wellbeing - vision

Our vision is to develop a school community in which students feel safe, learn, grow and develop their personal strengths while building the necessary skills that will allow them to become impactful in a changing and competitive world. At the same time, the principles of respect to diversity, of equity, of justice and inclusion are embraced inside and outside the classroom. Creating an environment where the academic, physical, socio-emotional, and financial wellbeing for all members of the community - students, teachers and staff - is a priority for Anatolia and has led us to embrace a holistic wellbeing approach.

3
The wellbeing model and strategy

The model

To foster for the Anatolia community the present plan introduces **a comprehensive wellbeing model suitable for the needs and complex structure of the institution.** A wellbeing model that aims to extend or strengthen services and support mechanisms already in place or introduce new areas of focus in some or all the divisions and units of the institution, following documentation and progress monitoring of their effectiveness.

Furthermore, it is suggested that from this point onward the wellbeing perspective should inform, as a strategic priority, all major policies and initiatives pertaining to school or campus environment, natural, cultural, and interpersonal.

The principle areas for action - Goals

There is already in place an essential network of services and provisions throughout the institution that directly or indirectly supports the wellbeing of students, faculty and staff **(see here).** Admittedly these services or mechanisms were introduced in a piecemeal, unplanned, and not necessarily uniform way, as each need surfaced. The recent addition of Pinewood International schools to the Anatolia umbrella offered one more reason to review and possibly realign policies and resources.

The present plan aims to unify and further develop this network into a purpose-built network of preventative, diagnostic and intervention mechanisms that is as advanced and forward-looking as possible for an educational institution.

Goal 1
Plan and provide continuous support, engagement, and training of all stakeholders on wellbeing

To achieve this goal, we must:

- Plan and implement initiatives aiming to **raise awareness** of the prominence of wellbeing and make its implications understood throughout each school year.
- **Educate all members** of our community (students, faculty/staff, and parents) on how they can promote their own and students' wellbeing.
- Provide **continuous professional development** opportunities for staff on mental health and wellbeing.
- Seek to actively **engage parents** in students' learning and the promotion of their wellbeing, through Info sessions/ Workshops/ Webinars and individual consultation, where needed.

Goal 2
Aim to imbue school culture with the notion of wellbeing as a central, all-pervading value

To achieve this goal, we should plan to:

- Establish a whole school **wellbeing policy.**
- Revisit and gradually revise existing documents and policies so that they are informed by and consistent with the strategic priority given to wellbeing.
- Aim to increasingly **embed wellbeing into the curriculum** (in-class and out-of-class) by:

1. Developing, evaluating and continuously improving the SEL curriculum (Social & Emotional Learning including Self Awareness, Self Esteem, Problem Solving/ Conflict Resolution, Bullying, Social Media, Sex Education, Addictions etc) for all grades from K-12
2. Strengthening the role of the class advisor as a point of reference for every student
3. Training more students to act ever more efficiently as wellbeing ambassadors with every year that passes
4. Bring in and sustain an increasing number of interdisciplinary and cross divisional projects.
5. Taking steps to reduce school anxiety, often linked with excessive or pointless homework and/or exams, particularly when it manifests itself in the primary school.
6. Establishing clear rules and routines for behavior outside the classroom

Physical activity

Physical health (including the absence of disease or illness, physical activity, diet, and sleep) is crucial to wellbeing, and a deficit in any area of physical health can have a significant impact. Robust evidence suggests that there is a link between physical activity and wellbeing—this is a key area that schools and interventions should explore" (Taylor, L., De Neve, J., DeBorst, L., & Khanna, D., 2022).

We should support the multiplicity of physical activity opportunities either as part of the mainstream curriculum or as a co-curricular option. We could further signify the importance of physical activity for wellbeing by:

• Making optimal use of campus space and common areas with a view to promoting students and faculty/staff wellbeing; Making use of the whole campus – not only the classroom - as a learning opportunity through emphasis on extracurricular activities/ clubs/ sports/ tournaments/ competitions

• Recognizing and promoting the value of physical activity and creativity, arts and play, and consequently aiming and planning to move learning outside; learner-centered activities leading to problem solving and self-discovery, combined with a healthy engagement with risk (supported risks).

• Planning purpose-built outdoors learning activities throughout the year, and at the same time equipping and maintaining the best and safest outdoor equipment for use by students.

Goal 3
Three-tier support for all

- Provide a **continuum of support** for students. Formulate a three-tier prevention/ intervention scheme that moves from support schemes for all, to prevention/ intervention schemes for those groups identified as more at-risk, to individual support for the few most in need.

- The services available at all levels should include, but are not limited to:
    1. Individual and Group Counseling to students, followed up consistently
    2. Management of behavioral and/or social incidents including conflict, bullying and intrapersonal difficulties
    3. Management of acute psychological cases including self-harm, suicidal ideation
    4. Crisis Intervention/ Trauma Informed Practices
    5. Psychoeducational Assessments
    6. Career Counseling (where applicable)
    7. Parents' consultation, when required
    8. Consultation open to Teachers and Administrative staff

Goal 4
Afford optimal care for students with learning disabilities/ difficulties

Develop further the support for **students with learning disabilities/ difficulties** providing at every level:

- Educational Assessments
- Essential assistance to the teacher on: awareness and detection of the various disabilities and techniques for differentiation in classroom
- Teacher assistants, where necessary
- Pull out services in groups or one- to –one
- Systematic cooperation with parents

Goal 5
Special focus on monitoring and securing the wellbeing of children in the early ages (PK, K and 1st & 2nd grades

Early childhood development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior and health. The child's experiences shape its capacity to learn, to get along with others and to respond to daily stresses and challenges. It is well-established that the prevention of learning difficulties enhances wellbeing. It is therefore important to:

- Provide the resources for early detection and systematic monitoring and recording of young children's school readiness, potential difficulties (cognitive, social, behavioral) and their resilience or response to daily stress (e.g., Primary prevention acts such as teacher training and specialists' provisions and secondary prevention acts such as use of screening and diagnostic tools).

- Provide the necessary resources for subsequent intervention in the case of difficulties Class-wide interventions that can reduce the incidence of learning problems as well as individualized learning plans fall within the possible resources.

Goal 6
Monitor faculty wellbeing and create an occupational framework that safeguards and advances it

Faculty wellbeing is inextricably linked with student wellbeing and achievement in learning. Therefore, it is important to:

- Regularly perform a needs assessment, monitor and implement policies that aim to increase **job satisfaction** and progressively improve working conditions. High levels of job satisfaction are positively associated with teachers' self-efficacy, motivation and commitment to teaching (Collie, Shapka and Perry, 2012).

- Embed in the school schedule opportunities for **teacher collaboration.** Collaboration between teachers signals a healthy working climate, which is a vital ingredient of social wellbeing (Viac and Fraser, 2020). helps build networks where teachers can access knowledge and mobilize skills (Collie and Martin, 2017; Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006).

- Further increase opportunities for professional development and learning: Teachers' participation in professional development activities, including induction and mentoring programs, classroom observation visits and conferences, retreats, provide teachers with the skills, knowledge and expertise needed for effective teaching. This is conducive to teachers' cognitive wellbeing (Viac and Fraser, 2020).

- Build and sustain a strong mentoring scheme for new faculty and staff aiming to create an increased sense of belonging in employees, thus building social capital. The mentorship should be geared to supporting induction and transition into new roles, to promoting institutional collaboration and knowledge sharing, to developing skills thus enabling staff to realise career development plans.

- **Offer consultation** to teachers and staff on students' academic, behavioral and/ or family issues and on classroom management practices.

Goal 7
Systematic assessment and documentation

Establish a systematic way through surveys, questionnaires, focus groups and other tools to assess how the school environment is perceived by the members of the community and to identify areas of focus (needs and strengths).

- Increase the regularity and/or timeliness **of data collection**, and ensure consistency in questionnaires and variable definitions across waves.

- **Address research questions** relevant to the four major domains of the wellbeing model in the school community and document their results through:

  (a) practitioner inquiry (action research) or
  (b) through collaboration with academic centers interested in relevant research.

- Create and maintain a systematic database that will collect all data from all divisions and integrate, compare, and contrast them, so that each year new targets can be set for the advancement of specific goals for each of the wellbeing domains, based on the evidence provided.

Goal 8
Actively develop partnerships and share best practices with the wider community

- Promote partnerships and collaboration at a local, national and international level through sharing best practices and implementing novel programs to enhance wellbeing. Build a network with:

  1. University Departments/ Laboratories/ Individual faculty members
  2. Other schools internationally that implement wellbeing plans
  3. State Agencies/ Hospitals/ National & International Associations
  4. Mental Health Professionals

- Get actively involved, at the level of action research, if possible, with the **IBO initiative on wellbeing** launching September 2023 aiming to "learn and innovate together (with schools) .... with the ultimate goal of enhancing student wellbeing through relevant and evidence-based practices".

- Design and initiate a summer school program specifically promoting wellbeing activities for students K-12 from the broader community. This will also give us the opportunity every year to train people from the wider educational community to 'apply' SEL:

- Building the curriculum and redesigning it every year based on feedback and results.

- External staff training so that individuals involved in education get specialized training in SEL.

Services offered / Evaluation – Metrics

These are the general parameters we shall be looking at to assess progress and set further goals in accordance with the wellbeing strategic plan.

4.1 In the Primary division:

a. Systematic screening practices (Kindergarten and 1st grade)

b. Systematic monitoring of students' at-risk progress both in general class as well as in individualized assistance for 1st and 2nd graders (starting September 2023)

c. Wellbeing Questionnaire (5th-6th graders)

d. SEL Assessment and monitoring questionnaire for teachers (all grades) and students (5th and 6th grades)

e. Exit questionnaire (6th graders/ parents & students)

4.2 In the Secondary division:

a. Systematic screening and monitoring of students at risk and/or with learning disabilities/difficulties

b. Wellbeing Questionnaire

c. SEL and Projects' Assessment and monitoring questionnaire (teachers and students)

d. Wellbeing Ambassadors Monitoring and Questionnaire

e. Clubs and co-curricular activities questionnaire (all grades)

f. Boarding students' questionnaire

g. Brief exit questionnaire for each grade.

4.3 In the Tertiary Division:

a. Wellbeing Questionnaire

b. Statistics related to the number and profile of the students accessing individual appointments

c. Statistics related to the number and profile of the students participating in wellness initiatives

d. Study Abroad Exit Questionnaire and Graduation Questionnaires

e. Track and project mental health trends by systematically reviewing health questionnaires with self-reported issues.

f. Monitoring the health and safety reports and collecting regular data from Residence Life staff to track trends related to student wellbeing.

g. Monitor the number of students taking psychology courses as a free elective, specifically courses such as Psychology 215: Positive Psych or Psychology 270: Health, Stress and Adaptation. At the tertiary level, students can choose to take a course as a free elective that supports their wellbeing.

5
Projected resource needs

5.1
Human capital / new responsibilities

To be able to provide the above services it has been calculated that there is a need for further funding to the school's support services. The following positions could serve the emerging needs and could gradually, within a three-year scope, be fully used:

- Two - three full time learning support specialists
- One-two full time school psychologists
- One full time career counselor
- Further funding to expand the class advisor program
- Part time research - data analyst
- One administrative assistant (maybe shared with other office)
- Additional Nurse(s)

- Wellbeing project on-campus-coordinator to be appointed, flanked by a three-member team. In cooperation with our external expert the coordinator will oversee the implementation of the strategic plan throughout all divisions of the institution, organize the collection of data and feedback on its implementation work and supervise the work of specialists involved in the deployment of the plan.

- A multimedia specialist to support in a part-time capacity the production of material and programs mentioned in 5.2. below OR funds to cover outsourcing of the production and maintenance of the listed resources.

Documentation & Research

- Electronic recording and monitoring of wellbeing data/ surveys/ questionnaires

- Creation and continuous monitoring of a landing page within the organization's web page dedicated to the wellbeing policy, including wellbeing tips, our presentation, reports of activities and of the implementation of the wellbeing strategic plan

- Develop and produce appropriate educational material (e.g. educational videos, quizzes, webinars, summaries of findings for the non-specialist, and guidelines addressing the needs of all members of the school community and promoting wellbeing and resilience in the school and family context.

5.3
Facilities, redefinition of common spaces, outdoor learning

- Make sure that wellbeing is at the top of priorities in any future redrafting or revision of the campus master plan.

- Prioritize wellbeing in any refurbishing or redesigning of classroom spaces, making the necessary allowances in selecting the furniture, facilitating movement and lexibility in switching between individual and group work.

- Revisit the use of common spaces within school buildings with a view to turning them into social spaces.

- Make the best use of campus space for outdoor learning and play. Select and procure installations that are purpose-designed to promote outdoor learning.

- Provide training to teachers on the value of movement, play and outdoor learning, e.g. through interdisciplinary projects, so that they can start designing learning activities suitable for the respective student ages.

6

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