

Student Support Teams

How staff is looking after students' mental health

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On Mondays your dean, counselor, psychologist, and nurse meet to discuss different students. They then go through a list of students who are on their radar and need assistance.

Their time may take anywhere from a short few minutes if there is a quick solution to maybe a half hour if a student needs more attention. The Student Support Teams, or SSTs, allow for another level of response for anything from mental to physical health to dealing with an abundance of absences.

"Our SST, I would argue, is kind of like a way that as a school we try to triage based on the last name of a student's alphabet," school psychologist Andrew Russell said.

Every student has a student support team based on their last name, but not every student is discussed. This system tries to find the best solution to a student's problems,

whether that means outside help or a course adjustment, the SSTs can provide a space where students' needs are met.

"I think anything that's impacting a student's success in school can come up in the student support team, and we do our best to solve those issues with our expertise," counselor Nick Peterson said.

The purpose of these teams is to decide whether or not a student needs help from the school or if they need outside aid.

"It's a way for us to kind of filter through and then we can get it to the right level of response," Russell said.

The teams are not meant to simply talk about students behind closed doors. They allow the people who are available at school to come together and collaborate to meet a student's needs.

"We truly do want to support kids in any

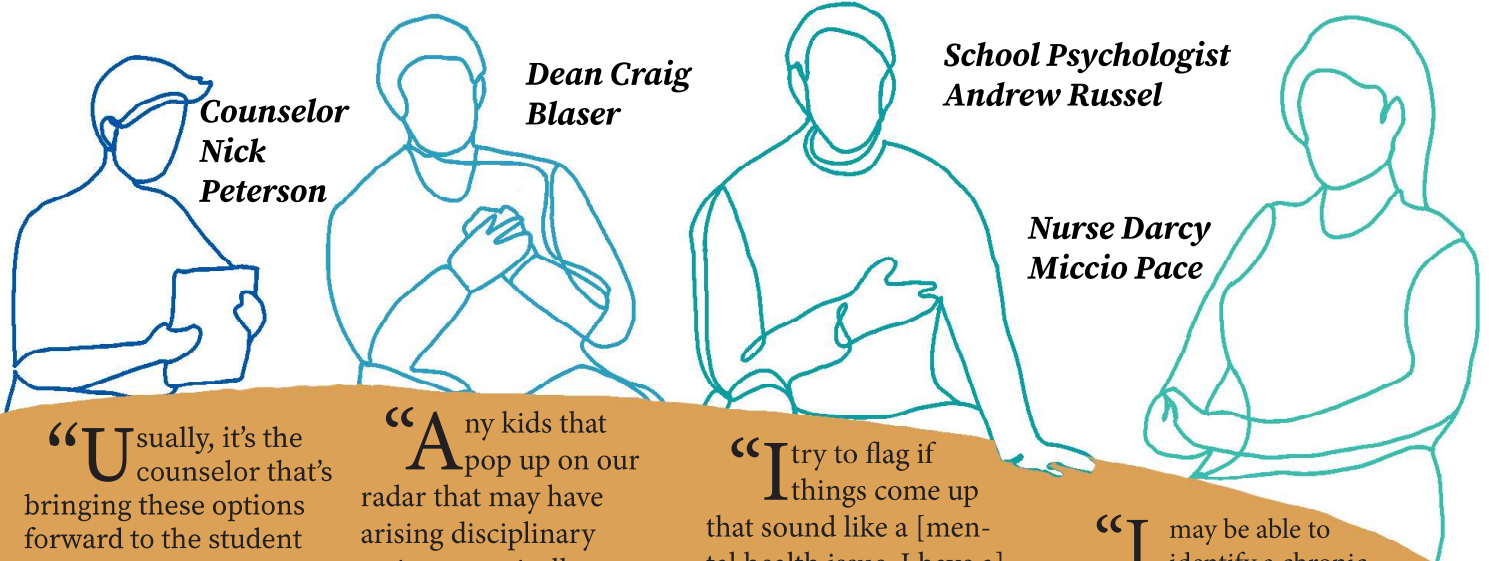
way that we can, so it's always nice to just bounce ideas off of each other, even if it may not involve the dean's office," Dean Craig Blaser said.

Since no two students are alike, the SSTs work to meet each individual's needs.

"We just go through the names on the spreadsheet and each student gets the discussion that they deserve until we can resolve their problems," Peterson said. "Sometimes we spend a lot of time on one or two students, and sometimes it can move quicker, depending on the problem."

The people in the support teams want to analyze a student's entire history, not just one bad day.

"We advocate for our students," Peterson said. "We bring up the concerns and we try to make sure it's holistically discussed so we can bring the best options to our students."



**Counselor
Nick
Peterson**

**Dean Craig
Blaser**

**School Psychologist
Andrew Russel**

**Nurse Darcy
Miccio Pace**

"Usually, it's the counselor that's bringing these options forward to the student and helping with whatever logistics are next, whether it's dropping a class or whether it's connecting them to proper accommodations or sending the family with outside resources or things like that."

"Any kids that pop up on our radar that may have arising disciplinary action or typically attendance - that's usually one of the warning signs that a kid might need some more support."

"I try to flag if things come up that sound like a [mental health issue. I have a] pretty good knowledge of diagnostic categories when it comes to mental health."

"I may be able to identify a chronic health condition that the student is dealing with. Usually we're the first place that they come. Sometimes we have kids who just have chronic stomach aches. Over time, you start to have to think, 'is it really a medical condition or is it anxiety?'"

