

# GCSSD Coordinated School Health

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This newsletter has been designed to give students, staff, parents, and the community important information and updates regarding the GCSSD Coordinated School Health Office. I hope you find this newsletter helpful.

GCSSD Faculty, Staff, Students, Parents, and Community,

It is hard to believe that we are in the last month of school for the year! It has been another busy year, but we have accomplished many things in leading students, staff, parents, and the community in becoming healthier.

Please see inside this month's newsletter for more information on CSH events, health observances, Here 4 TN – Employee Assistance Program, Nutrition, and Physical activity.

Hope you all have a healthy end to the school year and a great summer! If I can ever be of assistance to you, please let me know.

Thanks,  
Amy Richardson  
GCSSD CSH Coordinator



## Important Dates

**May 3 – Immunization Clinics for preregistered students and staff**

**May 4 – Mental Health Awareness education at SGCHS**

**May 5 – Mental Health Awareness education at GCHS**

**May 12 – Health Council Meeting**

**May 13 – CSH End of Year Report and District Application Due**

**May 13 - Sports Physicals at SGCMS**

**May 18 – WRAP meeting**

**May 19 – CPR Hands Only training in Wellness classes at GC**

**May 20 – CPR Hands Only training in Wellness classes at SGC**

**May 31 – Second Harvest Backpack Program grant due**

**June 1 - Online Professional Development will be available**

**June 10- 12 - TN Teen Institute (TTI) Staff Training Dates**

**June 12 – 17 – TN Teen Institute (TTI) Camp at UTM**

**June 20-24 - "Active Students, Active Learners: Virtual PD Week"**

# April Highlights

## Mock Crash

Mock Crash was held at both high schools in April before Prom. A mock crash is a staged event that uses real vehicles and actors where alcohol is the reason for the crash. Emergency (police, fire, ambulance, etc.) personnel respond to the scene as if it were real. These are conducted for the seniors only around prom time to raise awareness of the dangerous and deadly effects of drinking and driving.



## Blake McMeans speaks at SGCHS



Blake McMeans was once one of the nation's top-ranked high school tennis players until one tragic incident changed the course of his life forever. At the age of 17, Blake's world was suddenly rocked by the unexpected death of his father. Shook by grief, Blake turned to alcohol to numb

the pain. On the night of Nov. 10, 1994, Blake went drinking with his future fraternity brothers just off UT's campus, then got into his car to drive home. Just after 2 a.m. and just ½-mile away from home, Blake drove his car into an embankment, hitting trees along the way and flipping his car three times. Once emergency personnel arrived at the scene, Blake was immediately airlifted to UT medical center, where doctors and surgeons fought to keep Blake alive. For nearly four months, Blake remained in a coma. At nearly every point during his recovery, Blake's chances of living – much less significant gains in physical and cognitive progress — seemed highly unlikely. Despite the odds, Blake survived the initial trauma and began slowly learning how to conduct routine activities, like lifting his head, blinking, and swallowing all over again. With each new day, Blake continues to accept the challenge of working hard to improve physically, mentally, and cognitively. He works out at the YMCA several times a week and continues to make small, steady gains in his motor development. The same fortitude that once helped make him a tennis star and the inner strength that helped him survive his accident is now being channeled toward another purpose.

Now, Blake is back at center court in a whole new way. Through his nonprofit, the Blake McMeans Foundation and Promise Tour, Blake educates young adults about the dangers of drinking and driving in the hopes of preventing them from making the same life-altering mistake he did. Since the launch of the Blake McMeans Foundation in 2007, Blake has spread his message far and wide to tens of thousands of students across the region, encouraging them to make a promise not to drink and drive. Today, Blake McMeans is one of the true champions of drinking and driving prevention in the state of Tennessee, and his passion and commitment to the cause fuels a statewide effort in providing awareness opportunities that stress the importance of making strong, healthy choices throughout life.



## AAA Prom Promise



Everyone wants prom night to be memorable. It's a rite of passage—a celebration of the end of high school and the beginning of adulthood. Unfortunately, one decision can make this special night memorable in all the wrong ways.

AAA PROMise is a program offered by AAA – The Auto Club Group – to keep teens and others safe on the roadway during prom and graduation season by raising awareness of the dangers of distracted-, alcohol- and/or marijuana-impaired driving.

AAA PROMise asks teens to make the responsible decision never to get behind the wheel impaired and to make sure their friends do the same. Parents should reinforce with their teen that nothing is more important than their teens safety. If a teen needs help getting home and reaches out to their parents, AAA will be there to tow the family vehicle home, free of charge, AAA Member or not.

By making the AAA PROMise, teens commit to making the right decision when it comes to the use of substances – alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs – and driving, as well as distracted driving.



## Safe Driving Information

Safe Driving Information was given out at GC and SGCHS to educate students on the importance of safe driving. Special thanks to Reduce TN Crashes for their assistance and supplies in this endeavor.



## Organ Donation Awareness

Sharon Pakis from Tennessee Donor Services gave interested students information on registering as organ donators at SGCHS and GCHS. Students were encouraged to talk to their families about this as it is a very personal decision.



## Staff Submissions

Last month I requested classroom success stories involving Coordinated School Health components of Health Education; Health Services; Nutrition; Physical Education; Healthy School Environment; School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; Student, Family, and Community Involvement; and School Staff Wellness to include in future newsletters.

Here are 2 of those submissions:

**Mrs. Dill, SGCHS English/Theatre Teacher:** "In theatre, we incorporate family involvement by allowing parents to sign up to help and, in turn, they receive a free ticket to one of the shows.

We also have a motivational Monday where students participate in choreographed musical numbers that is more of a workout! This lasts between 15-20 minutes and they have a 5-minute cooldown at the end.

In theatre, we are also able to express our feelings more openly when we participate in improv games. These games can range from a loud, whole-class game to scene work that is serious and tackled serious issues. This helps with the mental health of students and creates a safe space where they can release their frustrations and emotions without judgement."



**Mrs. Anna Moore, SGCMS 7th Grade Math Teacher:** "This month my students did unit rate problems on bell work. Each trip to the grocery store students bought only fruits and vegetables. We discussed the cost per pound of fruits and vegetables and how a healthy lifestyle is a choice. It may be cheaper to buy the Oreos but in the long road, you will be better off if you make heart healthy food choices."





## May Health Observances



Celebrate Screen Free Week 2022 by unplugging for one day, shutting off your phone at dinner time, spending more time outdoors, or taking the whole week to only use screens for work and school. Take time to enjoy some serious offline fun!

### IOI SCREEN-FREE ACTIVITIES

#### At Home

1. Listen to the radio.
2. Write an article or story.
3. Paint a picture, a mural or a room.
4. Write to the President, your Representative, or Senators.
5. Read a book. Read to someone else.
6. Learn to change the oil or tire on a car. Fix something.
7. Write a letter to a friend or relative.
8. Make cookies, bread or jam and share with a neighbor.
9. Read magazines or newspapers. Swap them with friends.
10. Go through your closets and donate items to Goodwill, the Salvation Army, or a local rummage sale. Have a garage sale.
11. Start a diary/journal.
12. Play cards.
13. Make crafts to give as gifts. Try a new craft.
14. Do a crossword puzzle or play Sudoku.
15. Save money: cancel your cable TV!
16. Learn about a different culture. Have an international dinner.

17. Teach a child some of your favorite childhood games.
18. Study sign language.
19. Write a letter to your favorite author.
20. Cook dinner with friends or family.
21. Make cards for holidays or birthdays.
22. Play chess, bridge, or checkers.
23. Play charades.
24. Have a cup of coffee and a conversation.
25. Repair or refinish a piece of furniture.
26. Make a wooden flower box.
27. Wake up early and make pancakes.
28. Read a favorite poem. Read poems by poets new to you

#### Outdoors

29. Learn about native trees and flowers in your area.
30. Plan a picnic or barbecue.
31. Go bird watching. Learn the names of local birds.
32. Walk the dog. Wash the dog.

33. Plant a garden. Work in your garden.
34. Take a nature hike.
35. Feed fish or birds.
36. Watch the night sky through binoculars and identify different constellations. Observe the moon.
37. Learn to use a compass.
38. Take photographs and then organize them into an album.
39. Do yard work.
40. Go camping.
41. Take an early morning walk.
42. Climb a tree.
43. Watch a sunset; watch the sunrise with a friend.

#### Around Town

44. Attend a community concert. Listen to a local band.
45. Visit the library. Borrow some books.
46. Visit a local bookstore.
47. Visit the zoo.
48. Visit the countryside or town. Travel by bus or train.
49. Attend a religious service.
50. Go to a museum.

<https://screenfree.org/>

## May Health Observances Cont.

### National Physical Fitness and Sports Month



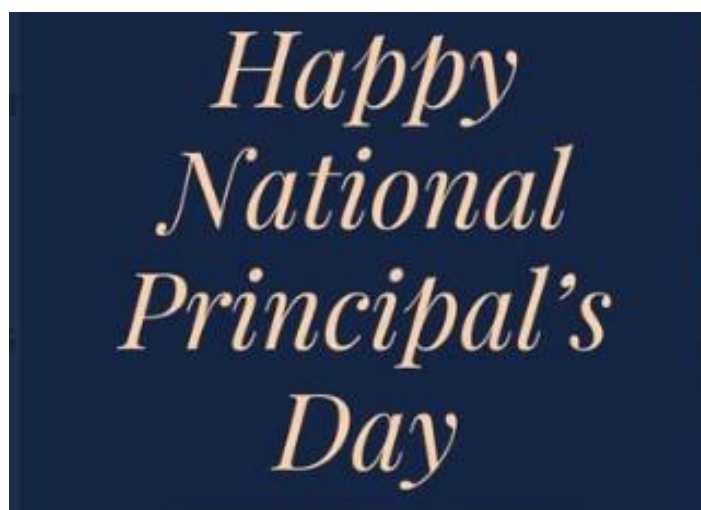
May is National Physical Fitness & Sports Month! The President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition is excited to encourage everyone to go play and #MoveInMay. Grab a ball, hit the track, pick up a racket, take a dive, or whatever else inspires you to play. There are so many ways to get active in sports. Choose 1 and have fun!

Physical activity is key to maintaining health and well-being. Getting active can improve fitness and reduce stress, reduce risk for many chronic diseases, and ease symptoms of anxiety and depression. Youth sports can help kids and teens get active and develop leadership, time management, and relationship-building skills.



GCSSD CSH thanks School Principals and Teachers for being healthy role models.

### SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' DAY – May 1



On May 1, remember to take the time to thank the educational leaders of the school on School Principals' Day. Throughout the school year, these educators assume the commitment to lead our young people to a prosperous future. They support and guide quality teachers and staff resulting in productive learning environments for our children.

### TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK – May 2-6



Teachers change the lives of millions of children every day, and their work and impact extend far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. They play a pivotal role in our children's lives, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and discovery and making a difference in their well-being and long-term success.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSE DAY



School nurses are one of the first lines of medical professionals to ensure the health and mental well-being of school going children and young adults. They are also responsible for monitoring that children in schools are achieving their developmental milestones as well as ensuring that their lives outside the school are safe and healthy.

School Nurses within GCSSD have a high return to class ratio which helps our students to be able to learn academically while having their physical needs met. They also assist with yearly health screenings and immunization clinics among other day to day activities of helping students stay healthy.

This year and every year, GCSSD CSH is very thankful for School Nurses who help to accomplish CSH goals and bridge the gap between health and academics.

## Mental Health Month



According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one in five children and adolescents experiences a mental health problem during their school years. Examples include stress, anxiety, family problems, depression, and alcohol and substance abuse. Serious mental health problems, such as self-injury and suicide, have increased among youth. Unfortunately, many students across the country do not receive the help they need.

Mental health is an important subject for all educators, who are often the first within the school to recognize when their students are struggling. Education professionals recognize the impact that mental health has on learning and achievement and that good mental health is just as important as general health for academic success. They realize that there are steps that can be taken to help students with mental health issues. The first step is typically to contact the school counselor, who has the ability and expertise to educate staff, parents, and students on symptoms of and assistance for mental health problems; to promote social and emotional competency; to provide counseling; to help insure a positive, safe school environment; and to teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making. Community-based mental health services are another option for students attending GCSSD. Therapy can be delivered on-site during the school day by trained mental health professionals from local agencies, to remove barriers such as transportation and scheduling conflicts and provide more ease of equitable access.

During May, GCSSD joins the national movement to become more conscious of mental health by focusing on Mental Health Awareness Month. We work together to fight stigma, provide support and education, and advocate for programs that lift students, staff, and families with mental health concerns.

<https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities/Improving-Health/Mental-Health-in-Schools>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/mental-health/school-psychology-and-mental-health/comprehensive-school-based-mental-and-behavioral-health-services-and-school-psychologists>

<https://www.mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>



## Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month



Megan Sanford – GCSSD Prevention Specialist

**The Gibson County Special School District has successfully operated a State of Tennessee Abstinence Education Grant since 2011. The goal of our abstinence education program was to provide comprehensive, evidence-based, and medically accurate services to students in grades 5-12. In order to accomplish this goal several objectives were established: deliver the state approved Real Essentials curriculum to student in all five middle schools and two high schools; reinforce abstinence decisions by building relationships between participants/staff in small group settings; provide service learning opportunities; and lastly, encourage the participation of parents through parent information sessions and/or workshops.**

**As a result of this program we are improving the previous statistics of Teen Pregnancy Rate of 15.2 per 1000 Females, aged 15-17, in 2014 to a rate of 13 per 1000 Females, aged 15-17 in 2019. That is a decrease of 2.2 in 5 years.**

**This improvement will help with the following:**

**Giving birth during the teen years has been linked with increased medical risks as well as emotional, social, and financial struggles costs to the mother and her children.**

**Becoming a teen mom affects whether the mother finishes high school, goes to college, and the type of job she will get, especially for younger teens ages 15 to 17. Only about 50% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by 22 years of age, whereas approximately 90% of women who do not give birth during adolescence graduate from high school.**

# Action for Happiness Calendar: Meaningful May

**This month's theme is all about reflecting on what gives our life meaning.** Being a part of something bigger than ourselves or focusing on things that we value is key to our wellbeing. Take time to reflect on what you care about this month.

Meaningful May 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Do something kind for someone you really care about	2 Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do	3 Take a step towards an important goal, however small	4 Send your friend a photo from a time you enjoyed together	5 Let someone know how much they mean to you and why	6 Look for people doing good and reasons to be cheerful	7 Make a list of what matters most to you and why
8 Set yourself a kindness mission to help others today	9 What values are important to you? Find ways to use them today	10 Be grateful for the little things, even in difficult times	11 Look around for things that bring you a sense of awe and wonder	12 Listen to a favourite piece of music and remember what it means to you	13 Find out about the values or traditions of another culture	14 Get outside and notice the beauty in nature
15 Do something to contribute to your local community	16 Show your gratitude to people who are helping to make things better	17 Find a way to make what you do today meaningful	18 Send a hand-written note to someone you care about	19 Reflect on what makes you feel valued and purposeful	20 Share photos of 3 things you find meaningful or memorable	21 Look up at the sky. Remember we are all part of something bigger
22 Find a way to help a project or charity you care about	23 Recall three things you've done that you are proud of	24 Make choices that have a positive impact for others today	25 Ask someone else what matters most to them and why	26 Remember an event in your life that was really meaningful	27 Focus on how your actions make a difference for others	28 Do something special and revisit it in your memory tonight
29 Today do something to care for the natural world	30 Share a quote you find inspiring to give others a boost	31 Find three reasons to be hopeful about the future				

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together

<https://live.actionforhappiness.89up.org/sites/default/files/May%202022.jpg>

## Summer Nutrition Tips

By [HSS Nutrition](#)

<https://www.hss.edu/playbook/summer-nutrition-tips/>



**Stay hydrated to prevent dehydration.** More water, less caffeine. Dehydration causes muscle cramps and leads to electrolyte imbalances as well as dry skin. Aim for 8-12 glasses of water per day depending on your activity level, gender, and body size. If you are exercising for 60 minutes, make sure you are replacing your water stores by drinking 6 ounces of water every 15 minutes.

**Keep your food safe this summer.** Food safety is key during the hot summer months, especially when packing for the beach or a day in the sun. According to the FDA, cold food should be kept at or below 40°F and hot food should be kept at or above 140°F to prevent bacterial growth. Be careful with cross contamination; be sure to separate uncooked meats and seafood from other foods that may be consumed raw, such as fruits and vegetables.

**Eat the rainbow in a variety of ways.** Eat seasonal fruits and vegetables to take advantage of what's in season and eat colorfully! Freeze fruits as a snack; some good fruits to try are grapes, berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries), mango, and bananas. Try a new take on fruits and vegetables by grilling them on the BBQ.

Take advantage of what's in season:

- For veggies, try summer squash, bell peppers, tomatoes, or eggplant.
- For fruits, try cherries, pineapple, melon, berries, or peaches.

**Always be prepared with snacks!** If you are doing an outdoor activity for more than 1 hour, make sure you pack a snack to help fuel your time outside. Use the rule of at least 2 of the 3 macronutrients (carbohydrates, fats, and protein) for each snack. Some examples are cheese and crackers, cottage cheese and fruit, hummus and vegetables, homemade trail mix with dried fruit, nuts, and your favorite whole grain cereal.

**Spend the day outdoors.** Plan outdoor activities with your family or friends to spend time in the warm summer weather. Go for a walk in the park, get friends together for a sports game of your choice, or do some gardening. Choose activities that you enjoy or be adventurous and try something new.



### Benefits of School-Based Physical Activity

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence is important for promoting lifelong health and well-being and preventing a variety of health conditions. Schools are in a unique position, regardless of learning mode, to help students attain the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.

A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) can increase physical activity opportunities before, during, and after school.



#### Increasing youth physical activity:

##### Before and After School

- Walking or biking to and from school
- Intramural sports and clubs
- Extended day programs

##### In Physical Education

- Standards-based curricula
- Motor skills development
- Physical fitness

##### During School

- Classroom physical activity breaks
- Active lessons
- Daily recess

##### Through Staff Involvement

- Role models for wellness
- Classroom participation
- Professional development programs

##### With Community Engagement

- Shared use of recreational facilities
- Opportunities for physical activity when school is out of session
- Environments for safe travel to and from school



#### Benefits everyone:

##### The Students

- Improved attention\*
- Better mood and memory\*
- Improved bone health
- Healthier weight
- Better heart health
- Lower risk of depression
- Better grades

##### The Teachers

- More students on task\*
- Improved classroom behaviors\*
- Students getting better grades
- Fewer absences

##### The Community

- Lower health care costs
- Expanded school partnerships
- More access to activity-friendly spaces

*\*Immediate benefit from a single physical activity session*

To learn more, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity>



## Physical Activity Resources

### Active Students, Active Learners



<https://www.tn.gov/education/active-academics.html>

### Move to Learn



<https://movetolearnms.org/for-the-classroom/>

### Go Noodle



<https://www.gonoodle.com/>

## **Staff Wellness Resources**

### **GCSSD Counseling Sessions in Schools**

It is no surprise that teachers' mental health and wellness is correlated with student wellness and overall achievement. While we may not be able to remove the stressors from the teaching profession, there are things that can be done at the individual and organizational level to support you.

Allicia Ladd, GCSSD Mental Health Coordinator, is now available to individual staff for short term counseling support. As always, information shared will be confidential. There is no insurance filed or fee associated with this opportunity.

Anyone may make an appointment via her email, [ladda@gcssd.org](mailto:ladda@gcssd.org).

### **COVID-19 Emotional Support Line for Tennessee Educators Adds Text Message Capability**



Tennesseans working in education, including educators and district and school administrators and staff, dealing with feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, or depression related to work can call or text the Emotional Support Line at 888-642-7886 from 6 a.m.- 10 p.m. CT daily.

Specially trained mental health professionals who answer calls or respond to texts through the line can provide emotional support through active listening, help identify and address basic needs, and reference tools for managing stress and planning for self-care.

For more information on the Emotional Support Line for Pandemic Stress, visit this link on TN.gov: [TN.gov: TN.gov/behavioral-health/emotional-support](https://tn.gov/behavioral-health/emotional-support)



# Staff Wellness



## Here 4 TN – Employee Assistance Program

Some days we can all use a little help. Wouldn't it be nice to have a personal assistant to help you with your busy life? Good news! You have one with Here4TN.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to help you, and your family, get the most out of life. We're ready to help with the small questions and the big problems, and everything in-between, such as:

- Managing stress
- Improving relationships at home or work
- Addressing legal and financial concerns
- Getting the most out of your career
- Finding child development, childcare or elder care resources
- Getting past emotional issues or grief
- Addressing depression, anxiety or substance use issues

This service is confidential and our EAP Specialists are available 24/7. They can provide you immediate help or direct you to one of our network for providers for a no-cost, face-to-face consultation.

Speak with the advisors at Here4TN privately, on the phone or online. They will search and verify services for you, giving you answers to questions big and small.

Call anytime, day or night

855-Here4TN

(855-437-3486)

<https://www.here4tn.com/>

### GCSSD Wellness Plan Updated

The GCSSD Wellness Plan was recently updated and contains pertinent information on the topics of nutrition and physical activity. It can be found on the GCSSD CSH website. As part of this we are asking students, families, and school staff to help in these areas.

#### SMART SNACK IDEAS

Fresh vegetables (sacks of carrot/celery sticks, broccoli, cauliflower)

Fresh fruits (sacks of apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, strawberries)

Apple sauce

Raisins

Fruit roll ups

Twizzlers

Fruit gummies

Crackers

String cheese

Cubed cheese

Go-Gurt yogurt

Rice Krispie Treats

Reduced Fat Chips

Jello or Pudding

All foods should meet the Smart Snacks guidelines and this can be verified using the Smart Snacks Calculator at

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>

**Please note most of our schools sell snacks and those that do make sure these snacks meet the health requirements.**

**Also, we do not sell and ask you not to send any products containing nuts.** Please check the labels on ALL foods (even the ones listed above). Manufacturing practices change, sometimes daily. If an item contains peanuts, peanut oil, nuts, or nut oil, or has a statement as "May contain traces of ...." or "Made on equipment that manufactures or processes ...." or "Made in a facility that manufactures it is not considered safe.

#### CELEBRATIONS AND PARTIES

For celebrations and parties to ensure that all foods served to children are safe and sanitary, all items served at school parties must be purchased rather than homemade and individually wrapped or from a secured sealed package with nutrition label included. Therefore, we will not accept cupcakes, donuts, etc. from Walmart and/or local bakeries.

**Healthy School Teams have updated the Wellness Plan Assessments for each school. These can be found on the GCSSD website.**

<https://www.gcssd.org/page/coordinated-school-health>