

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

How Can Schools Help Kids With Anxiety?



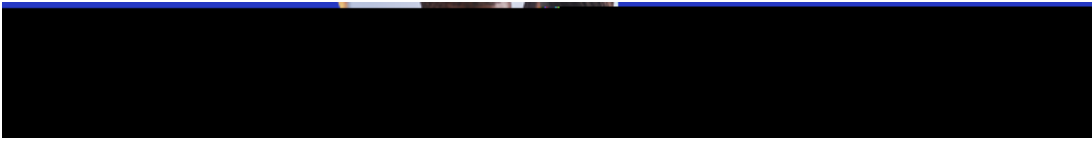
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By [Katrina Schwartz](#) Aug 20



Many students struggle with anxiety. Their teachers, parents and other educators are looking for ways to help them learn to deal. *By Kelly Heigert/KQÖÖD*

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Part Of a Broad Strategy to Support Students Where They're At

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“There was constant turnover with new teachers”



PHOTOS:  REED/EDSOURCE

Students will also have dedicated gym, art, music or technology classes. The district also hired a dedicated tutor for the school.

“They weren’t getting art or P.E. except for whatever their classroom teachers were doing” Gonzalez said. “Now all kids are getting these classes.”

The changes include the district building a better relationship between the school and the community.

The union, for example, has partnered with the district by paying the salary of a full-time Community Schools Coordinator by using a \$50,000 grant it received from its national union, the National Education Association. The coordinator, who is expected to be hired soon, will meet with families,

teachers and community leaders to generate support for the redesign and help build better relationships between each group. The union also supported the district's plan to give each teacher a \$10,000 incentive.

"We're claiming the school as one of our own," said Dale Weatherspoon, pastor of Easter Hill Methodist Church, who has been encouraging people to volunteer at the school. "I don't know if we have any children at the school at our church, but Stege is in our community, and we're a community church."

Weatherspoon said about six people from his congregation have agreed to be mentors or tutors to the students.

"We want the kids to see,

"We want Stege to be around for a long time."
—Pastor Dale Weatherspoon



PHOTO: BREW REED/EDSOURCE

“I was only a second-year teacher...and I felt spread thin,” Cleare said. “There is this concern from families that it’s your child and they’re being taught by this person who is not from here, and it’s pretty apparent when one of the first-year (teachers) is teaching.”

Cleare said one thing the community and the teachers asked for was training so the teachers could be more sensitive to the culture students were coming from. She’s also made a point of getting to know her students’ families, attending alumni events, board and community meetings.

“What’s important for me is having staff members who will be there for a very long time, are trained well and have relationships with the community,” she said.

Weatherspoon, the Easter Hill pastor, said he’s feeling positive about the new direction the school is moving.

“I always want things to move faster but I’m optimistic because there is good energy around Stege,” he said. “Some good things are happening at Stege and people want to help the school be more effective...We want Stege to be around for a long time.”

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