

Ask Dr. Jim...

“I feel like the school is lucky to have psychological services in the school...but I don't really know what this means...what do you do?”

This is a great question to start the new school year. We provide many services to a variety of school systems including Northern Gateway Public Schools. At Central, I am at the school generally three days per week on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I have a long history of involvement at this school and have had the privilege of getting to know staff and students over the past several years.

I think it is fair to say that in general, I am focused on two primary issues: staff and student wellbeing and the social climate within the school setting. We know that staff and students learn and grow when they feel safe, cared for and understood. In concert with administration, I carry a caseload of individual students (with parental consent) that I typically assist with emotional or behavioral issues that may impact their education and life circumstances. These services can be accessed through Ms. Moir at the school. In addition, I provide some small group work (with parental consent) focused on a particular topic. This year we are focusing on resiliency as it relates to anxiety.

Finally, in terms of the overall climate, I contribute to everything from Science Club (rockets anyone?), PD activities (student learning), classroom management strategies (consistency, use of humor and positive attitudes), health classes and human sexuality for grade fours (ahh, life!) and even unplug the odd toilet or two! I am in all classes, teach the odd lesson or two (yup, I'm a teacher too!) and always seem to have a group of students at lunch for a lesson or two in various board games. I also act as a referral source for specialized services, consult with parents regarding student behaviors, and am keenly interested in the concept of teaching resiliency through problem solving. I have four adult children, five grand-daughters, love hockey and have been a psychologist for nearly forty years...yup, I'm old!

Feel free to stop in for coffee or send me an email if you would like some further information.