

Dear Holmes Middle School Seventh Grade Parents and Guardians:

The adolescent years are marked by a roller coaster of emotions which can cause difficulty for students, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil. Depression, although among the most common of mental illnesses, appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. While treatable, depression is a leading risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth.

To proactively address this issue, Holmes will be offering a wellness screening on **Tuesday, December 4th through Thursday, December 7th to our seventh graders**. This free, voluntary and confidential screening is offered to help students identify and assess whether or not they may have symptoms consistent with depression. The screening does not provide a diagnosis, but rather encourages help-seeking behaviors in students concerned about themselves or a friend. Students will have the opportunity to participate in screenings again at Annandale High School or Edison High School.

The screening will take place in all seventh grade history classes. Students will be presented with a short informational video titled, *"Time to ACT,"* followed by a brief pencil-paper survey. The survey provides general feedback to all participants and more specific feedback for those who may require extra support and services.

Following the video and screening, a private interview with a member of our Student Services team (Holmes social worker, psychologist, or one of our school counselors) will be conducted for any student who appears to have symptoms consistent with depression. We will contact parents in these situations where an individual meeting takes place.

If you have any questions about the screening, please feel free to contact me or your child's counselor. You will also have the opportunity to view the *"Time to ACT"* video and ask members of our Student Services team questions about the wellness screening on **Monday, November 13 in the Lecture Hall from 8 a.m-9 a.m.** In addition, please visit the Student Services page on the Holmes website for resources related to mental wellness.

Parents may opt their child out of participating in the wellness screening. If you wish to opt your child out of participating, please complete the attached form and return it Director of Student Services, Serena Girón at Holmes Middle School by Wednesday, November 22, 2017.

Sincerely,

Serena Girón  
Director of Student Services  
O.W. Holmes Middle School