

Counselor Connection: This year we are thrilled to share that we have expanded our counseling staff! You may remember Jennifer Brisbine from last year. Please join us in welcoming Sarah Cue, who comes with previous experience as a Learning Center teacher, 1st grade teacher and elementary counselor.



Mrs. Brisbine
Mrs. Cue



School
Counselors

In addition, we are welcoming a new mental health specialist, Anna Maher, who has been working as a mental health support in Northshore Middle School for the past three years, and has prior experience as a therapist in community mental health. Anna will be serving Fernwood on Tuesdays.

As we settle into the 22-23 school year, you may find your child has mixed feelings about school. At the start of each school year, students and teachers alike can experience mixed emotions (excitement with unease, for example). As a parent you also may have similar feelings at this time. Please know that as a school community, we consider their social-emotional well-being as our top priority. Take comfort in knowing we strive to nurture a safe and welcoming learning environment.

You may be wondering what you as a parent can do to help your child who may be struggling with anxiety or school refusal.

Here are some tips and resources linked below:

- *Talk to your child about their feelings, explore and answer their questions
- *Without judgment, validate your child's feelings (talking about worry makes it smaller)
- *Follow routines with consistent bedtime and wake-up schedule
- *To manage wellness, make good nutrition choices, sleep, and exercise a priority
- *Practice deep breathing to help regulate the body's stress response
- *Use *Second Step's* strategies when big feelings show up: *Stop, Name the Feeling, Calm Down*

If your child needs additional support from your school counselor, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Resources for returning to school:

[Going Back to School During Covid: Child Find Institute](#)

[Johns Hopkins: Managing Anxiety for Return to School](#)

[Second Step's Mind Yeti: Guided Mindfulness Sessions](#)

[September SEL Calendar](#) SEL Calendars are provided to help children build a routine of self-care. We hope you find it helpful for your family.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Brisbine (Grades 1, 3, & 5) jbrisbine@nsd.org and 425-408-4570

Sarah Cue (Grades K, 2, & 4) scue@nsd.org and 425-408-4572