Bigfork School’s Student Assistance Program is available to all Bigfork students and consists of peer support groups led by specially trained teachers during the school day. These voluntary support groups are part of our district-wide substance abuse prevention program.

The goals of these groups are to build healthy relationships, improve communication and develop decision and problem solving strategies. Students who participate in a group gain valuable life-long skills and are better equipped to effectively cope with pressures associated with the teen years.

Students may be referred to group by parents or teachers. Middle school and high school students will have the opportunity to sign up for a support group each semester. Groups are scheduled so that students only miss one class once a week for eight weeks. Students are asked to check in with their classroom teacher prior to each group and are expected to make up any missed work.

Parents are informed of this program through a parent letter at the start of each school year. Students are encouraged to share with parents want they are learning about in group, but are not allowed to repeat what other group members have shared in the group setting.

The program is evaluated through the use of confidential student surveys given at the final session of each group. Participants generally report positive outcomes in a number of areas including: problem solving, communication skills, stress reduction, and their general attitude toward school. Support groups are an effective way to deal with a large number of students needing help. Counselors can work with 10-12 students in a 50 minute session.

If you have any questions regarding this program please feel free to contact Mary Ahnert, elementary school counselor, Jennifer Wood, middle school counselor, or Solveig Munson, high school counselor.

Sincerely,

The Student Assistance Program Task Force

Mary Ahnert

Jennifer Wood

Solveig Munson

Scarlett Sherman

Robin Shanks

Shannon Varner