BACK TO SCHOOL CONFERENCE: ADDRESSING STUDENT SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL NEEDS

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In the past, student access to structured mental health services in schools hasn’t been implemented in a functional way. It’s been ancillary & after the fact. We have the opportunity now to redesign schools & make sure that mental health services are a core part of school’s DNA.
Upcoming Department Guidance

- Background
- Outline & Content
Mental Health Defined
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

“Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.”
Draft Recommendations

- Prioritize Wellness for Each and Every Child, Student, Educator, and Provider
- Enhance Mental Health Literacy and Reduce Stigma and Other Barriers to Access
- Implement a Continuum of Evidence-Based Prevention Practices
Draft Recommendation

- Establish an Integrated Framework of Educational, Social, Emotional, Behavioral-Health Support for All
- Leverage Policy and Funding
- Enhance Workforce Capacity
- Use Data for Decision Making to Promote Equitable Implementation and Outcomes
ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

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OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
Data Trends 2019

- 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24.
- The average delay between onset of mental health symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.
- 37% of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older drop out of school- the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- Suicide rates for teens between the ages 15-19 increased 76% between 2007-2017.
- Suicide rate for children age 10-14 nearly tripled over that same time period.
- 70% of youth in state and local juvenile justice systems have a mental illness.
Emergency department visits related to mental health increased 24% for 5-11 year-olds and 31% for 12-17 year-olds between January and October 2020.

Between March and June of 2020, more than 25% of American parents reported that their child experienced declines in mental health and 14% reported increases in behavior problems.

In a survey conducted in April and May 2020, one in four youth (ages 13-19) reported an increase in sleep loss due to worry, feeling unhappy or depressed, feeling constantly under strain, and loss of confidence in themselves.

There are many “missing” students.
COVID-19, Racial Injustice, Environmental Impacts

- Significant socio-economic impacts (e.g., unemployment, food insecurity, homelessness)

- COVID-19 impacting our black, brown and migrant communities and our vulnerable populations at higher rate than others.
  - Rooted in social inequalities (e.g., residential segregation, differential access to healthcare and treatment)

- Increased mental health challenges for children, youth and families across the board with a particular increase in anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and eating disorders
We have the potential to reverse all trends and create a healthier way forward. We have a wealth of accumulated knowledge with one common theme across prevention science, behavioral and evolutionary science and that is to make people’s environments more nurturing (Biglan, 2015).
Student Mental Health: An Important Element of Student Success

Student mental health services are not only needed to support the psychological well-being of students, they are also an important part of academic success and retention.

Students with high levels of psychological distress are less academically successful: they have more test anxiety, lower academic self-efficacy, and less effective time management and use of study resources (Brackney and Karabenick, 1995).
The Importance of Mental Health in Teachers

Teaching is one of the most stressful professions. An educator work-life survey of FTE teachers across the US found 1.86 million described their mental health as ‘not good’. 61% reported they are always, or often managing high levels of stress over a 30-day period.

The poor mental health of teachers isn’t only a personal concern for them, it adversely affects their student’s levels of achievement and increases costs for schools.
What does science tell us about wellbeing?

- Brain forms and changes across life span
- Continuous interplay between body, mind, spirit, behavior and genetics.
- Sensitive periods
  - Birth to 2
  - 4-6 years
  - Adolescence
- We can intentionally train our brains to improve well being and greater good.
- “Wellbeing is a skill”
- Meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal social and emotional learning programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students. Compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement.
Tip #1 Focus on building a Whole System response by building pro-social communities for students, families and staff.

- Use public health approach to organize.

- Equal priority for social-emotional-behavioral and addressing the academic slide
  - Teaching social emotional skills, co-designing positive climate/culture, sense of belonging is academic instructional time.

- Bring community to school.
  - 23% students were receiving supports in schools (Duong et al., 2020)
  - Youth 6 times more likely to complete evidence-based treatment when offered in schools than in other community settings (Jaycox et al., 2010)
Promote a Climate of Belonging

- Shelton School District in Washington State has been participating in the School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG) project. The district made shifts in arrival and breakfast for their elementary students that have promoted a climate of belonging.

- The district staggered morning bus drop off time to allow for temperature scans and COVID exposure questions.

- All school staff were positioned in the student arrival off zones to allow them to check in individually with students.

- The staff agreed to prioritize a warm welcome to try to reduce the fear or uncertainty students felt about being in school.
Promote a Climate of Belonging

- They also incorporated morning community building during breakfast time in each classroom. Breakfast in the classroom was intended to help with contact tracing, in the event there was COVID transmission.
  - Staff found an additional, unexpected benefit to having a relaxed, welcoming environment to practice SEL skills and community building.
  - With school-wide warm greetings, and a community focused breakfast the staff and students reported that the school day began very calmly, with very few behavior issues and the teachers reported more positive connections with students.

- Next year, the district is going to maintain the staggered drop off, to allow teachers to connect with every student.
  - They have committed to not scheduling morning meetings for staff so they can be physically present to create a warm, welcoming environment for students and families.
  - They are also going to maintain the breakfast and SEL time to increase community building and help students start the day focused on a community of belonging.
Central School District, Oregon

- Central School District has strengthened and relied upon its community partnerships to prioritize the social and emotional needs of students, staff and families.

- Consolidated teams at District Level

- Invested in Staff Wellness at the Organization level
  - Central’s employee wellness program, Get Fit, and the Whole Child Program that has supported educators with mental health and wellness resources and weekly virtual staff wellness groups throughout the Pandemic

- Developed marketing campaign to decrease stigma.
  - [https://vimeo.com/561941472](https://vimeo.com/561941472)
Tip # 2. Re-establish school as a safe, positive, predictable place.

Priority for wellness shows up in budget, accountability system and messaging

- Academic success requires mental health skills and strategies (e.g., emotional regulation)
  - Teaching social emotional behavior skills is academic instructional time

- Mental health is everyone’s job
  - Resilience can be intentionally taught, practiced and developed (all ages)

- Position Social Emotional leaders to build capacity
Clifton Public Schools, New Jersey

Implementation Examples 3

- Leveraged their Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Framework to support their transitions among in-person, remote, and hybrid learning modes.

- Expanded district leadership team that includes representation from each school, key areas of expertise (e.g., mental health/wellness, physical education/wellness, special education), and representation from families.
  - This team coordinates with other school and community partners (e.g., food service, local law enforcement, child welfare) to proactively support students and families.

- Each of their schools uses the MTSS framework to teach, remind, and reinforce positive expectations to support learning and wellness. To ensure expectations are accessible to most families and students, educators presented expectations in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

- Further, staff used district-wide data to drive decisions about intensifying their universal support (for all), targeted support (for some), and intensive support (for individual students identified with significant need). And they did all of this while building a strong, positive, and vibrant community—celebrating the “Heart of the Mustang.”
Tip #3. Use and Adapt Teaching Matrices

- Developed by community members based on core values of the community
- Provides common language
- Explicit examples across locations/contexts

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Salinas Union High School District Social Emotional Leaders building capacity for all staff to embed mindfulness skills into their academic lessons.
Centers Funded by the Department of Education.

- Comprehensive Center Network (CCNetwork)
  - https://compcenternetwork.org/

- Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (CISELSS)
  - https://selcenter.wested.org/

- National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth (NDTAC)
  - Website: coming soon
Center Funded by the Department of Education

► National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE)
  • https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/centers/national-center-afterschool-summer-enrichment

► National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
  • https://nche.ed.gov/

► National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)
  • https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/
Centers Funded by the Department of Education

- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)
  - https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov

- National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
  - www.pbis.org
Thank you