School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation Systems in the South

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SLC Policy Workshop
National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

• Established in 1995 with funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration

• The **NCSMH mission** is to strengthen policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth.

Visit the NCSMH website at [www.schoolmentalhealth.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org)
The Southeast MHTTC is located at Emory University in the Rollins School of Public Health.

Our Mission: To promote the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based mental health services in the Southeastern United States.

Our Vision: Widespread access to evidence-based mental health services for those in need.

Our Services: We use a public health approach to build leadership capacity and to provide mental health trainings and resources to providers, agencies, and communities across the Southeast.

www.southeastmhttc.org
Children’s Mental Health Crisis: What We Know
Mental health challenges are rising

• Mental health-related emergency department visits are up 24% for children (age 5-11) and 31% for youth (age 12-17).

• Twenty-two percent of parents report their child’s mental health or emotional health is worse than before the pandemic.

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7011a1.htm?s_cid=mm7011a1_w
In a nationally representative survey of young people aged 13-19:

• Approximately **25%** felt disconnected from peers and adults.

• More than **1 in 4** reported:
  • increase in sleep loss due to worry
  • feeling unhappy or depressed
  • feeling constantly under strain
  • loss of confidence in themselves

https://www.americaspromise.org/sites/default/files/d8/YouthDuringCOVID_FINAL%20%281%29.pdf
The challenges facing children and adolescents are so widespread that we call on policymakers at all levels of government and advocates for children and adolescents to join us in this declaration and advocate for the following:

- Increase implementation and sustainable funding of effective models of school-based mental health care, including clinical strategies and models for payment.
- Strengthen emerging efforts to reduce the risk of suicide in children and adolescents through prevention programs in schools.
- Accelerate strategies to address longstanding workforce challenges in child mental health.

Comprehensive School Mental Health

- Includes full array of supports and services that promote positive school climate, social emotional learning, mental health and well-being, while reducing the prevalence and severity of mental illness
- Built on family-school-community partnerships
- Assess and address social and environmental factors

www.schoolmentalhealth.org
Guidance from the Field

- Why Address Mental Health in Schools
- A Public Health Approach to School Mental Health
- The Value of School Mental Health
- Core Features of a Comprehensive School Mental Health System
- Opportunities, Challenges and Recommended Strategies
- Local Spotlights
- State Spotlights
- Moving Forward

www.schoolmentalhealth.org/AdvancingCSMHS
What is SHAPE?

Your FREE, interactive tool designed to improve school, district, and state mental health accountability, excellence, and sustainability.

Learn More

Improve student mental health in your schools, districts, and states. Sign up for:

Myself  My School  My District  My State

www.theSHAPEsystem.com
School Mental Health System Performance in the South
Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act (Florida Senate Bill 7026) – Signed into law March 9, 2018

- A comprehensive law addressing school safety and school mental health.

- Included the Mental Health Assistance Allocation (>69 million to the DOE) to help schools establish or advance comprehensive school-based mental health covering Tiers 1, 2, and 3.

- To receive funding, a district is required to submit a plan each year that is focused on evidence-based mental health treatment and includes provision of MH assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery services to students with mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of diagnoses.

Resources:
- FL Senate Bill summary
- SB7026 Mental Health Component Requirements
- District plans for 2018-2019 & 2019-2020 school years
- District plan requirements
School Mental Health Policy Map

The State Policy Map provides an overview of legislation, regulations, and policies related to school mental health.

View Map
Recent SMH Policy Scans in the Southeast

November 2019:
https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/southeast-mhttc/product/state-policy-school-based-mental-health-southeast


October 2020:
https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/southeast-mhttc/product/state-policies-school-based-mental-health-southeast

State Policy & School-Based Mental Health in the Southeast

- Kentucky: March 11, 2019 – SB1 (School Safety and Resiliency Act). Beginning July 1, 2021, at least one counselor in each school with the goal of having 1 for every 250 students, spending ≥60% of time on direct services.
- Tennessee: May 21, 2019 – HB 405 requires local board of education to adopt a policy requiring schools within the LEA to perform an ACES assessment before suspending or expelling a student.
- Alabama: October 2018 – House Speaker sets up Advisory Committee on School Safety to advise lawmakers on related bills in upcoming legislative session. Includes experts in mental health, education, & law enforcement.
- North Carolina: Bills currently under consideration: SB 601 (school-based mental health plan) and SB 424 (fully fund school counselors & psychologists)
- South Carolina: Bills currently under consideration: HB 3258 (South Carolina School Safe Space Act) and HB 3257 (Comprehensive Health Education Act)
- Georgia: Feb 11, 2019 – Governor allocated additional $8.4 million to bolster APEX program (which supports partnerships between MH clinics and schools for SMH services).

Updated November 2019
Policy Solutions and Exemplars
Policy Solution 1.
Ensure Universal “Tier 1” Mental Health Promotion and Prevention for All Schools

Strategies:
- Leverage federally-funded, high quality resources that are free and in the public domain.
- Statutory language can be written without funding attached for many of these.
Supporting Student Mental Health: Resources to Prepare Educators

https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mhttc-network-coordinating-office/supporting-student-mental-health
• A **FREE** 5-hour mental health literacy online course for teachers and school staff with brief, high-impact training videos and accompanying website

• Course development process includes input from educators, students, and school mental health leaders
Social Emotional Learning

The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

www.casel.org
Implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum

The MS Department of Education and the Department of Mental Health work in partnership to implement new SEL Curricula for elementary students in districts.

- **Selection**: A committee reviewed curricula. A short list was presented to leaders from the ten school districts, who rated and made a final selection for their district based on their needs and implementation feasibility.

- **Pilot Implementation**: Twenty-three schools serving elementary school children across ten districts will implement a new SEL curriculum in the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Funding**: The Department of Mental Health covered the cost of selected curricula.
Policy Solution 2. Provide Robust School Mental Health Staffing

School Employed Mental Health Professionals
- School social workers, school psychologists, school counselors
- School mental health coordinators or “liaisons”

Community Employed Mental Health Professionals
- Licensed or supervised, license-eligible clinicians

**Strategies:**
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Tackling Medicaid reimbursement
- Addressing workforce shortages
School Partnerships with Community Mental Health Centers

- The SC Department of Mental Health works in close partnership with the Department of Education to advance school mental health.

  - Over 64% of SC public schools (839+) have a contract with a community mental health center (CMHC) to provide services in a dedicated space on the school campus.
  - The SC Department of Mental Health employs over 450 school mental health clinicians.
  - The state is working toward every student having access to school mental health services by 2022.
Recruitment and Retention of School Mental Health Providers: Strategies and Key Resources

Yidan Xue Zhang, MC, Adam S. Wilk, PhD, Silke A. von Essenwegen, PhD, Janet R. Cummins, PhD
Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center
Atlanta, Georgia

Access the report here: https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/southeast-mhttc/product/recruitment-and-retention-school-mental-health-providers-strategies
State Funding for a New Position: School-Based Mental Health Service Coordinators

• In 2020, the Alabama state legislature allocated $4.5 million in grants for local education agencies to employ School-Based Mental Health Service Coordinators in AY 2020-2021.

• Responsibilities
  ➢ Complete a needs assessment and a resource map of school mental health services for all schools in their jurisdiction
  ➢ Coordinate and support student mental health services (including Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 services) throughout the school district

State Funding to Expand the Workforce: Master’s Level Clinicians

• Seven years ago, the AL Department of Mental Health and AL Department of Education placed Master’s level mental health clinicians in public schools using local dollars.

• In FY 2019 – 2021, the Governor and Alabama Legislature appropriated $1.75 million in state funding to expand this workforce in 21 additional school systems.
School Mental Health Workforce Funding Example: Kentucky

State Funding to Expand the Workforce

- **Kentucky** – [HB 352](#) (enacted April 2020)
  - Appropriated $7.4 Million to fund additional *school-based mental health provider FTE positions* in FY 2020-2021 on a reimbursement basis
  - Goals committed to under [SB 8](#), 2020:
    - At least one school counselor per public school, 60% allocated to services AND
    - At least one school counselor or school-based mental health services provider *(statutory definition)* for every 250 students
School Mental Health Workforce Funding Example: Tennessee

State Funding to Expand the Workforce

- **Tennessee** – Governor's budget for FY 2020-2021 (finalized June 2020)
  - Allocated $3M (recurring) to fund 59 new school-based behavioral health liaisons
  - Responsibilities:
    - Assist schools in conducting needs assessments
    - Provide training and education for school personnel on behavioral health topics
    - Implement Tier 1, 2, and 3 services
    - Foster positive family-school-community relationships
Policy Solution 3.
Use Recovery Funds to Support Student Well-Being

- ESSER Funds for SEAs and LEAs
- Can use funds to support student and staff wellbeing and mental health
- Leveraging ESSER Funds to Access Sustainable Funding Streams (e.g. Medicaid)

SEA Funding Examples

• Understand the Policy Environment
• Foster Meaningful Collaboration
• Strengthen and Expand School Medicaid Programs
• Promote MTSS Implementation
• Enhance Data Systems and Collection
• Build LEA Capacity
LEA Funding Examples

• Building Capacity and Infrastructure to Implement the MTSS Framework

• **Tier 1:** Wellness Staff and Teams, Data Systems, Professional Development, Evidence-based Programming and Supports, Policy Considerations

• **Tiers 2/3:** Evidence-based Programming, Mental Health Services
Thank you!

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