

Each Mind Matters Positions California to Help Students Learn and Thrive



At a time of historic change for California's schools, the California Mental Health Services Authority's (CalMHSA) Student Mental Health Initiative helps school districts succeed in meeting new student achievement goals and improve student mental wellness. California's new annual plan for schools, the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), targets resources to California's highest-need students through established annual goals. Many educators are refreshing their teaching approach in light of new Common Core standards, offering an opportunity to incorporate mental wellness into classrooms.

CalMHSA's partnership with leading education organizations assists school districts to meet new state standards in student engagement, parental involvement, and improving school climate, and offer a host of resources to educators, administrators and parents that are particularly valuable in this dynamic environment.



Student Engagement

Research shows that when students are healthy in mind and body, they are more engaged, miss less school, focus better in class, and are more likely to graduate. (CA State PTA)

Through CalMHSA's partnership with the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools and the County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health, 69 schools have requested training in Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS), a research-based prevention model that supports student wellness and helps create a positive and protective school environment. Contact: Erica Porteous at eporteous@dbh.sbcounty.gov.

In addition, the California Department of Education has partnered with the Placer County Office of Education to offer the Training Educators Through Recognition and Identification Strategies (TETRIS) workshops that provide teachers and school staff with tools to identify, recognize, support and refer students with mental health needs in a respectful and culturally responsive manner. Contact: Monica Nepomuceno at MNepomuceno@cde.ca.gov.



Parent Involvement

Parent involvement that engages parents in decision-making can help schools build a strong framework for student achievement. (CA State PTA)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, California (NAMI CA), has reached nearly 2,500 educators through the Parents and Teachers as Allies program, which focuses on helping school professionals and parents within the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illness in children and adolescents. Contact: Kelly Boyles at kboyles@namicalifornia.org.



School Climate

Studies have shown that schools with a positive school climate have higher academic achievement along with other impacts that are supportive of learning. (OCDE)

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) has developed a survey that provides schools an assessment tool for school climate and student mental health. This important tool helps schools draft a comprehensive approach to student success including academic, social, and emotional development and well-being. Contact: Dr. Lucy Vezzuto at LVezzuto@ocde.us.

In addition, the Sacramento County Office of Education, in partnership with Sacramento County Behavioral Health Services and CalMHSA, established model evidence-based Bullying Prevention Programs in each of the thirteen districts in Sacramento County. Contact: Cheryl Raney at CRaney@scoe.net.



Resources for K-12 Educators

CalMHSA's Program Partners have developed a wide array of easy to access mental health resources for K-12 Educators to use in their classrooms.

Online Resource Library: This searchable database of resources and best practices put tips and tools directly in teachers' hands. The library includes classroom-ready techniques to prevent bullying, create a feeling of connection for students, and identify signs of suicide risk. Access the resources at www.regionalk12smhi.org. (Developed by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association)

Stigma-Busting Performance: Walk In Our Shoes is a school-based theatrical performance that uses real life stories to engage students in a conversation about our differences and prevent negative behaviors associated with mental health stigma. Teachers can bring this proven and engaging theatrical performance, aimed at 9-13 year-olds, to their classrooms with ready-to-go lesson plans and teaching guides. WalkInOurShoes.org and PonteEnMisZapatos.org feature kid-friendly information and real life stories about mental health on an interactive website. Visit www.walkinourshoes.org/for-grownups for more information about Walk In Our Shoes.



Walk In Our Shoes performance in Gridley, CA.

Starting Classroom Conversation: Trained youth presenters share experience of mental health challenges with high school students through Ending the Silence, a 50-minute program designed for high school audiences helps break down stigmas related to mental illness and educates students on mental health resources through a presentation, short videos, and personal testimony. To inquire about a presentation in your area, contact Kelly Boyles at kboyles@namicalifornia.org.

Systemwide Changes Encouraged

In July 2014, following a recommendation of CalMHSA's Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson issued a letter to County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators encouraging all governing boards to consider adopting a suicide prevention policy using the model provided by the California School Boards Association. Superintendent Torlakson wrote, "it is imperative that we collaborate to adopt district policies and administrative regulations to address suicide prevention in our school districts."

Superintendent Torlakson's letter recommended additional suicide prevention resources: The [California Department of Education's Youth Suicide Prevention website](#) and the [Palo Alto Unified School District's Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Schools](#). Contact: David Kopperud at dkopperud@cde.ca.gov.



Partnership for Healthy Schools

CalMHSA's statewide educational resources facilitate and complement local partnerships between educators and mental health professionals.

As an example, 500 Riverside County area high school students had their perceptions about mental health challenged by the "Dare to Be Aware" full-day conference where they attended workshops covering such topics as suicide awareness, gang awareness, substance abuse prevention, bullying, LGBTQ, and more.



Prevention and Early Intervention programs implemented by CalMHSA are funded by counties through the voter approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63). For more information about the programs described above, contact Lee Anne Xiong at LeeAnne.Xiong@calmhsa.org

