



Commissioner's Back-to-School Meeting

Connecticut State Department of Education | August 22, 2016

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health

Introduction

Numerous authors (Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1997; as well as Wilson, Gottfredson and Najak's 2001 meta-analysis of more than 150 articles on prevention services provided by schools) have pointed to the importance of programs that assist students with social and emotional competencies. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs actually contribute to improved academics, behaviors, and outcomes for students. These skills assist students in overcoming existing barriers to learning and in acquiring generalizable abilities that lead to success with challenges beyond the school day. While there are many tasks associated with academic and social success, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has issued recommendations identifying the core competencies associated with SEL. They are: self-awareness; social awareness; self-management; relationship skills; and responsible decision-making.

Additionally, schools and districts can address the emerging needs of students who have been exposed to violence or other forms of trauma. Through early administration of supports and interventions, students can develop protective strategies that will assist them in overcoming the challenges that they will face. The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study illustrated the potential harm resulting from adverse childhood experiences. The negative consequences of adverse childhood experiences are known to increase with an increase in the number of exposures. The CSDE continues to develop and expand supports to schools in addressing student needs related to exposure to acute and chronic trauma.

Community-based resources such as Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services (EMPS), Youth Service Bureaus (YSB), and Family Resource Centers (FRC) provide a wide variety of supports to schools, students and their families.

Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services

EMPS deliver a range of crisis response and crisis stabilization services to children, youth, their families and caregivers, including children residing in relative, adoptive, and foster care homes. For children currently involved in clinical treatment, the EMPS first assesses the capability of that clinical service to handle the intervention. The EMPS provider is responsible for assuring that the client receives appropriate care during the crisis period. Related services include mobile response; psychiatric assessment; medication consultation, assessment, and short-term medication management; behavioral management services; and substance abuse screening and referral to traditional and nontraditional services for any family with a child in crisis. If your district has not yet established a memorandum of understanding with your local EMPS provider, we encourage you to initiate contact to accomplish this as soon as possible.



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Youth Service Bureaus

The CSDE provides supports to YSBs financially and through technical assistance. YSBs offer a broader scope of services than most other youth-serving agencies. Besides providing direct services, YSBs are responsible for assessing the needs of youth, identifying gaps in services, and coordinating services for youth to fill gaps and avoid duplication of services. Many YSBs also play a special role in working with the juvenile justice system to meet the needs of children and youth found to be delinquent by providing and making referrals to mental health services.

Family Resource Centers

FRCs provide access, within a community, to a broad continuum of early childhood and family support services that foster the optimal development of children and families. They offer parent education and training; family support; preschool and school-age childcare; teen pregnancy prevention (positive youth development services); and family day-care provider training. School-based FRCs collaborate with the many resources in their communities, including child-care providers, school readiness councils, local United Ways, and service providers of the Departments of Social Services and Children and Families.

There are a number of programs, supports, and interventions provided to districts by the CSDE to assist them with developing internal capacity to more completely support students' success. While limited funding and other resources may often discourage districts from adopting entire, comprehensive prevention efforts, the CSDE staff has developed expertise in a variety of areas related to the social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of students. The CSDE can provide guidance and technical assistance related to a wide variety of social, emotional, and behavioral health issues, including trauma, homelessness, and other barriers to school success.

For further information and technical assistance, contact Scott Newgass at 860-807-2044 or via e-mail at scott.newgass@ct.gov.