



# Expanded School Mental Health in West Virginia

[www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org)

FEBRUARY 2012

## Staff Development

### Tool Kit #8

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SCHOOL-WIDE FOUNDATION OF LEARNING SUPPORTS:

**“Annual training and technical assistance for all staff to enhance their skills in addressing social- emotional needs of students and promote staff wellness”**

*West Virginia Expanded School Mental Health Steering Team, 2011*

West Virginia Department of Education Policy 4373 includes requirements for technical assistance, training and staff development on topics related to mental health, school climate and social-emotional learning.<sup>1</sup>

Staff training and development can reduce teacher burnout and improve retention by addressing teachers’ feelings of helplessness and supporting positive working conditions.

The National Summit on School Mental Health identified the following topics that teachers and other staff need to know:

- Awareness of the continuum of mental health—mental illness and early warning signs of mental health concerns
- The language and communication skills that work for connecting with all students – especially troubled students – and communicating with parents and colleagues.
- Who they can count on to support/guide their work with students to offer collaborative services for students.

- Knowing their personal and professional limits, when to ask for help with a troubled student and who to ask.
- Appreciation and awareness of diverse populations within the school and the importance of cultural competency.
- Classroom management strategies.
- Identifying their own perceptions of mental health and illness and personal mental health issues and experiences and how they affect the student’s experience in the classroom.
- Identifying social and emotional development benchmarks and milestones.
- How to build trust, empathy and communication between school and family to improve academic performance and classroom behavior.
- Skills to differentiate curricula appropriate for different learning styles among students.
- Knowledge and skills to work effectively as a member of a multidisciplinary team

#### REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup><http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p4373.html>

**DEFINITION:** “Expanded school mental health” refers to programs that build on core services typically provided by schools. It is a framework that:

- ◆ includes the full continuum of prevention, early intervention and treatment
- ◆ serves all students
- ◆ emphasizes shared responsibility between schools, mental health providers and other community partners

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## West Virginia Resources

- **Eliminating Barriers for Learning: Social and Emotional Factors that Enhance Secondary Education:** a 4-hour training module developed by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) for teachers and school staff, that describes common mental illnesses and classroom management strategies. It includes slides and a script easily implemented in segments. It is best taught by an educator and a behavioral health clinician. Follow up support and a system for referral should be part of the training. Contact Linda Anderson at [landerson@marshall.edu](mailto:landerson@marshall.edu) or visit [www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org)
- **Suicide Prevention:** West Virginia's Suicide Prevention Program offers training to school personnel on implementing a suicide prevention program and recognizing and responding to suicide/depression. Several curricula are available depending upon needs: [www.wvaspen.com](http://www.wvaspen.com)
- **Office of Healthy Schools:** Several resources/trainings on various health related topics. <http://wvde.state.wv.us/directory/office/Office+of+Healthy+Schools/>



## General Resources

- **Coping with Teacher Burnout**—Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices in Schools: <http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org>
- **School Employee Wellness—A Guide for Protecting the Assets of Our Nation's Schools:** <http://www.schoolempwell.org>

- **[www.kognito.com](http://www.kognito.com):** Web-based, interactive evidence based trainings on gatekeeper and suicide prevention, at risk students and how to refer students in Mental Distress.
- **[www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org):** Offers a 2-day school wide social emotional learning (SEL) implementation training for principals/staff that includes a toolkit that costs \$80 to \$100.
- **[www.school-connect.net](http://www.school-connect.net):** 40-lesson curriculum on social, emotional and academic skills while strengthening relationships among students/teachers. The four modules address successes in school, at work, life in general, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, etc.
- **[www.schoolclimate.org](http://www.schoolclimate.org):** Offers bullying toolkit and trainings on bullying, traumatized youth, classroom management, negotiation and collaboration, problem solving for adults and youth, promoting healthy relationships and understanding diversity. In addition, offers free newsletter and trainings at school site.

The purpose of this series of information briefs is to provide a common framework and recommendations to assist schools and community mental health providers to more effectively develop a comprehensive approach to school mental health that is consistent with current West Virginia Department of Education policies.




These recommendations and resources have been reviewed and approved by West Virginia's Expanded School Mental Health Steering Team. For more information contact [info@schoolmentalhealthwv.org](mailto:info@schoolmentalhealthwv.org)

For more information visit  
[www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealthwv.org)

This information brief was prepared by the

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Leadership for The West Virginia School Mental Health Initiative is a shared commitment of



Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities