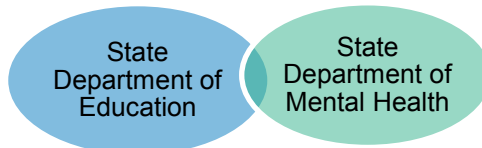# Element 5: Creating Safe and Violence-Free Schools

BACKGROUND

It is critical to identify and address issues, conditions, behaviors, and structures that contribute to unsafe environments and violence in schools. Specifically, how schools respond to disruptive and aggressive behavior among students impacts the potential for and level of violence to which students are exposed at school.

MENTAL HEALTH/EDUCATION INTEGRATION IS A HALLMARK OF THE SS/HS MODEL

An important goal of Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) is to reduce student exposure to aggressive behavior and violence in schools and to improve the safety for all students. To meet these goals, SS/HS works to increase the services available in the school that provide prevention, early intervention, and classroomwide and schoolwide curricula that target reducing aggressive and disruptive behavior as well as violence at school. SS/HS also seeks to develop collaborations with community and public mental health organizations to bolster violence reduction services provided to students in schools.

GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS

GSAFE Wisconsin: This statewide organization's mission is "to increase the capacity of LGBTQ students, educators and families to create schools where all youth thrive." Racine and Beloit have engaged GSAFE's expert consultation in building local capacity and sustained system change around LGBTQ priorities in middle schools and high schools.

Peace4Crawford in Pennsylvania: This locally grown initiative is promoting profound social change in a small, rural county in northwestern Pennsylvania to build capacity as a trauma-informed community. This county of 86,000 residents provided trauma training to over 4,000 community stakeholders. In December 2016, the Peace4Crawford community initiative was featured at U.S. Senate hearings to inform the subsequently enacted 21st Century Cures Act.

Love Wins in New Britain, Connecticut: New Britain partnered with The Ana Grace Project to conduct Love Wins trainings for 1,355 individuals. Founded in 2013, in memory of Ana Grace Marquez-Greene (Sandy Hook), The Ana Grace Project is dedicated to promoting love, community, and connection for every child and family through partner schools, professional development, music, and arts. The ultimate goal is increased connections and decreased violence in schools and communities.

In Wisconsin, the percentage of LGBTQ students who report being bullied decreased by 16% in 3 years.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

SS/HS grantees currently implement the following practices and programs as part of Element 5:

- ✓ Attendance Works
- ✓ Boys Town Educational Model
- ✓ CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools)
- ✓ CHAMPS—Classwide Positive Behavior Support (PBS)
- ✓ Club Ophelia (Relational Aggression)
- ✓ Coping and Support Training (CAST)
- ✓ Kognito At-Risk for Educators Training
- ✓ OLWEUS Bully Prevention
- ✓ Parenting Wisely
- ✓ Peaceful School Bus Program
- ✓ Peer-to-Peer Mediation
- ✓ Positive Action
- ✓ Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- ✓ Prime for Life Prevention Program
- ✓ Project Northland
- ✓ Project RENEW
- ✓ Project Toward No Drug Abuse
- ✓ Raising a Thinking Child
- ✓ Restorative Practices
- ✓ RULER (Yale Center for Intelligence)
- ✓ Safe Schools Ambassadors
- ✓ Student Assistance Program model
- ✓ Trauma Smart
- ✓ Well-Managed Schools Model
- ✓ Youth Engagement
- ✓ Youth Mental Health First Aid

Contact our SS/HS Grantees to learn what they are working on now:

CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Bridgeport Public Schools, Middletown Public Schools, and Consolidated School District of New Britain
Connecticut Grantee Profile

MI Departments of Education and Health and Human Services

Education Achievement Authority—Detroit, Houghton Lake Community Schools, and Saginaw Public School District
Michigan Grantee Profile

Safe Schools Grantees trained almost 60,000 individuals in mental health promotion and youth violence prevention.

NH Departments of Education and Health and Human Services

Concord Public Schools, Laconia Public Schools, and Rochester Public Schools
New Hampshire Grantee Profile

NV Departments of Education and Public and Behavioral Health

Lyon County School District, Nye County School District, and Washoe County School District
Nevada Grantee Profile

OH Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Education

Greene County Educational Service Center, Harrison Hills City School District, and Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center
Ohio Grantee Profile

"The child-serving system is dedicated to helping kids grown up in healthy, safe, loving homes and receive a good education. Who doesn't want that?"

PA Department of Education, Systems of Care, and PBIS

Intermediate Unit 21 (Lehigh Learning and Achievement School)/Lehigh County, Northeastern York School District/York County, and Penncrest School District/Crawford County
Pennsylvania Grantee Profile

—Joe Barnhart,
System of Care Coordinator
Crawford County, PA

WI Departments of Public Instruction and Health Services

School District of Beloit, Menominee Indian School District, and Racine Unified School District
Wisconsin Grantee Profile

Resources to Help Create Safe and Violence-Free Schools:

- Get KnowBullying App: This free app increases parents' and caregivers' awareness of bullying among children. Discusses what bullying is, how to recognize children who are being bullied, and some preventative measures.

- Coping With Grief After Community Violence: This fact sheet introduces common signs of grief and anger and offers tips for helping children deal with grief after an incident of community violence.

- SAMHSA News: Preventing School Violence: A Sustainable Approach: This article highlights a community-based program to prevent substance abuse and promote safe school environments. It reports on a national dialogue on mental health, strategies for responding to the Boston marathon tragedy, and the value of family networks.

- GLSEN Safe Space Kit: This guide is designed to help educators create a safe space for LGBT students, complete with evidence-based guidance and printable stickers and posters to be a supportive ally.