Nevada State and Community Partnerships Creating Safe and Healthy Schools

BACKGROUND

Between 2000-2009, Nevada was one of the fastest growing states in the country, but in 2010, the U.S. economic depression hit hard, particularly in the rural counties. Suddenly Nevada had the highest foreclosure rate in the country and rated last in many education and health indicators. In 2013, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) grant offered the opportunity to build back depleted resources that students, families, and schools so desperately needed.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

When we started, there were no school-based mental health programs in any of the three communities. Nevada currently implements the following practices in Lyon, Nye, and Washoe County schools:

- Signs of Suicide Screening
- Mental Health First Aid
- Reconnecting Youth
- Service Learning
- Project Alert
- Project Northland
- Restorative Practices
- Motivational Interviewing
- Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)
- Safe Schools Ambassadors
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI)

HIGHLIGHTS

- **School Climate and Mental Health**: Significantly increased professional development training and placement of mental health professionals in schools by leveraging state legislation (SB 515), funding from federal grants and university partnerships, as well as creating an Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

  **Governor’s vision:** 1 social worker/250 students

- **“The Collaboratory”**: Integrates various state grants and initiatives to ensure a climate of collaboration. Partnerships in our Integration Team include Now Is the Time/Project AWARE, School Climate Transformation, Pre-K Development, Systems of Care, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Juvenile Justice Diversion Policy Academy, and State Youth Treatment Planning for Substance Abuse.

- **2,562 young children** (ages 5 and younger) entering kindergarten with routine developmental screenings

- **Rich tapestry of mental health resources**: A community “hub” model for local level collaboration in three key Nevada communities: Lyon, Nye, and Washoe Counties.

- **1,963 trained** mental health professionals, school administrators, teachers, and students to support student social, emotional, and behavioral well-being.

“When parents come to me seeking help, I feel I am finally able to provide them with the help they need. I used to feel frustrated not knowing what kind of resources were available. Now I say, ‘I know you are frustrated AND I know exactly how to help.’”

– School Principal, Lyon County, NV
Lyon County, Nevada  
*Healthy Communities Coalition*

- **Behavioral Health**: Project Success counselors and social workers provide mental and behavioral interventions that have resulted in a 30% increase in access to care for students, who can now obtain multifaceted services at their time of need.

Nye County, Nevada  
*Nye Communities Coalition*

- **Volunteer Network**: By adding a Volunteer Coordinator, Nye County recruited 200 volunteers to work in the schools to transform the school climate and help create a more safe and respectful learning environment.

- **Early Childhood Development**: Promoted early childhood social and emotional learning and development by completing over 200 Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional.

- **Signs of Suicide Screenings**: Increased the completion of Signs of Suicide screenings by over 750% within a one year period of time.

Washoe County, Nevada  
*The Children’s Cabinet*

- **Mandatory SOS Screening**: The Washoe County School District administration made Signs of Suicide (SOS) screening mandatory in all 10 middle schools, in addition to instituting SOS screening in one high school and one elementary school.

**LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD**

State leaders including our governor and state superintendent have outlined a vision for sustainable school-based supports in partnership with our state and local management teams. The State Management Team will sustain long after SS/HS funding. The work that is being done with SS/HS funding, in collaboration with other grants and initiatives, is building tremendous momentum toward defining a new Nevada—one that doesn’t consistently place last in education outcomes, health indicators, and availability of and access to services. We won’t be constrained by this reputation, but instead hold true to the Nevada spirit, “Don’t fence me in.”

- **Bullying Prevention**
- **Signs of Suicide Screening**
- **Community Volunteerism**
- **Early Childhood Social Emotional Screening**
- **School-Based Behavioral Health Services**
- **Social and Emotional Enrichment for All Students**

We are committed to sustaining and/or expanding the following programs and services:

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