Advancing Access to Research-based Primary Prevention
Katherine Seibel & Melanie Smith, Committee for Children
[see accompanying slide deck]

- Many challenges for mental health for students
- Challenges with workforce shortages, not new but has been brought to the forefront with covid
- Recommendation focused on strengthening primary prevention
- 3 tiers Help continuum of supports
- Primary prevention includes: helping children build skills these skills help work on reduce bullying, violence,
suicidal thoughts...

- Students have asked for this help
- Students would like to learn how to handle mental health challenges that they experience
- Students do not want to have adults tell them what they need.
- This is a component of the needs of the whole child that schools should address, recommendation also designed to advance equity/racial equity
- Currently disproportionality of services negatively effects historically marginalized groups
- Component 1: covers all students in public school
- Component 2: Strengthen system of school supports
- Component 3: Ensure sufficient on-going funding
  
  There have already been investments in this component

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**Mental Health Requirements in High School Health Classes**

Bree Heuer & Zoe Boeger, Students at Lake Washington High School

[see accompanying slide deck]

- **Changes to Health class requirements in high school**
- Suicidal thoughts: 10% up 2016-2018, resulting in lower grades
- Depressive feelings and anxiety symptoms and suicide. In some 68% felt nervous or anxious in the past two weeks. (2018)
- Mental health is generally not addressed in classes
- Current curriculum includes: wellness, safety, nutrition, sexual health, substance abuse
- Social emotional health barely touches on mental health. When you break down the classes taught you get a few days of mental health-focused instruction
- With proposed changes, we would have more time for class coverage of mental health topics
- CDC says Improved health literacy is a key factor into a person’s health
- Helps to elevate self-isolation
- Other states have made step towards this
- Could break up health class in such ways as:
  1 semester Freshman year and one Junior year. Or 1 full freshman year
  - P.E. Association felt it would impact their jobs
  - They could train more PE teachers in teaching this curriculum to help with this concern

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**PALS in Schools Statewide Expansion**

Jeannie Larberg, Sumner-Bonney Lake School District

Tawny Barlow, Medical Lake School District

Eric Bruns, University of Washington School Mental Health Assessment, Research & Training (SMART) Center
Many schools have limited mental health resources, especially at Tier 3.

PALS program paired behavioral health professionals with school/district staff to advise on MTSS-based behavioral health supports.

Focus on teleconsultation.

Supported both small and large school districts (2,000 student district and 10,000 student district).

PALS consultations allowed school staff to access expertise otherwise not available in their local communities.

Triage support when needed.

Helped with knowledge on how to work with different students with mental health needs.

Insured use of MTSS and evidence based systems.

Attendees:

State Legislators & Staff:
Representative Carolyn Eslick, 39th District
Representative Lauren Davis, 32nd District
Ethan Moreno, WA House of Representatives Education Committee Staff

Member Alternates:
Eric Bruns, UW SMART Center
Liz Nelson, WA Association of School Social Workers
Mick Miller, AESD

Staff:
Barb Jones - OIC
Christian Stark - OSPI
Cindi Wiek - HCA
Diane Stead - OSPI
Maria McKelvey-Hemphill - OSPI
Rachel Burke - HCA
Tayler Burkhart – OSPI

Guests:
Alyssa Burgess, WA Association for Community Health
Bree Heuer, Student – Lake Washington High School (Presenter)
Carrie Glover
Daniel McDonald
Melanie Smith, Committee for Children (Presenter)
Michelle Mitchell, WA School-based Health Alliance
Stephanie Nelson
Zoe Boeger, Student – Lake Washington High School (Presenter)
Providing Primary Prevention in Schools

Ensuring a continuum of behavioral health support

2023 Legislative Recommendation
The Context

Washington state is in the middle of a behavioral health crisis.

But this crisis is not new
We need bold action
Strengthening Primary prevention

Is a critical part of enabling a full continuum of care

Enables challenges to managed upstream before a crisis develops
Where Does Primary Prevention Live?

Continuum of Supports*

**Tier III** services allow for programs for students identified as experiencing mental health or substance use challenges that warrant individualized interventions.

**Tier II** services allow for early intervention to mitigate challenges and targeted support for students exhibiting risk factors.

**Tier I** supports and instructional practices are provided to all students through prevention-based strategies and activities that foster healthy functioning and generate a safe and supportive school climate.
Primary prevention includes helping children and youth build the skills to:

- Cope with stress
- Navigate big emotions
- Build healthy relationships
- Develop problem solving skills
- Effectively communicate
Research- and Evidence-Based Instruction Outcomes

Has been shown to REDUCE

- externalizing challenges
- internalizing challenges
- bullying and violence
- suicidal thoughts
- substance use

Has been shown to IMPROVE

- resilience and well-being
- college and career readiness
- school climate and safety
- staff retention
“Had my schools successfully implemented a Social Emotional Learning curriculum, I would have acquired valuable skills to process my emotions and felt encouraged to seek help in a more compassionate environment.”

- Lily Fredericks, high school student, in her essay published in the Seattle Times
Improving Primary Prevention Positively Impacts Equity

- Creating a safe and supportive school environment advances equity in our education system.
- Fostering a supportive, safe, and caring learning environment that address the needs of the whole child supports students living in poverty, many of whom may experience trauma.
2023 Legislative Recommendation

Strengthening Primary Prevention

- Include essential social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health skills in basic education
- Strengthen systems of school support
- Ensure adequate and sustainable funding
Component 1

Include essential social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health skills in basic education
Component 2

Strengthen systems of school support
Component 3

Ensure sufficient on-going funding
Next Steps & Questions
Thank you!

Katherine Seibel
kseibel@cfchildren.org
CHANGES TO HEALTH CLASS REQUIREMENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL

Zoe Boeger and Gabrielle Heuer
THE ISSUE

Statewide, more 10th graders who have depressive feelings report lower grades in school (Cs, D's or F's) compared to youth who are not having depressive feelings.
THE ISSUE

Depressive Feelings, Anxiety Symptoms and Suicide
Grade 12, 2018

- Felt nervous or anxious in past two weeks: 68%
- Unable to stop or control worrying in past two weeks: 59%
- Depressive feelings in past year: 41%
- Considered approaching suicide in past year: 22%
- Made a suicide plan in past year: 18%
- Attempted suicide in past year: 9%
- No adults to turn to when sad or hopeless: 15%
CURRENT CURRICULUM

Wellness  Safety  Nutrition

Sexual health  Social Emotional Health  Substance Use and Abuse

https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/health-and-physical-education/k%E2%80%9312-learning-standards
Current Plans for Expanded Curriculum:
• Social Emotional Learning
• Referendum 90
More Material = Less Time
• 20 weeks is not enough.
ANOTHER SEMESTER OF HEALTH

Current Health Requirement

0.5 credits – Health

1.5 credits – P.E

Advised Health Requirement

1 credit – Health

1 credit – P.E
IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY: “KNOWLEDGE THAT BENEFITS THE MENTAL HEALTH OF A PERSON OR OTHERS”
Proposed law will have State of Alaska take pro-active role in expanding mental health education for Alaska’s K-12

By Suzanne Downing · March 13, 2022

WEST VIRGINIA CODE

CHAPTER 18B. HIGHER EDUCATION.

ARTICLE 1B. HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION.

§18B–1B–7. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICIES; SUICIDE PREVENTION.

(a) Each public and private institution of higher education shall develop and implement a policy to advise students and staff on suicide prevention programs available...

MENTAL HEALTH

Parents Applaud School Mental Health Requirement

By Garrett Bergquist | Wake County
Published 8:35 PM ET Jun. 11, 2020

Knightdale, N.C. – A mother of two children who are dealing with mental illness says a new law will be a big help to parents in her situation.

Not featured: Oregon, Michigan, Georgia
One semester of Health Freshman year, one semester of Health Junior Year

Health turns into a full year requirement for Freshmen

Health 1 and 2 become graduation requirements, but schools or districts can decide when their students will take the two classes
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

For Questions:
S-gheuer@lwsd.org
S-zboeger@lwsd.org
Partnership Access Line (PAL) for Schools
Pilot Project

Tawny Barlow
Medical Lake School District

Jeannie Larberg PhD
Sumner-Bonney Lake School District
School Districts’ Experience

Jeannie Larberg, PhD, MS, NCC
Director: Whole Child Counseling Services & MTSS-B
Sumner-Bonney Lake School District

Tawni Barlow
Director of Student Services
Medical Lake School District
• Rates of mental health problems in adolescents are increasing

• Schools are in a unique position to support youth, with mental health services in the school setting likely to have broader reach than clinics/hospitals

• There are limited mental health resources in many schools (especially at Tier 3)
PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Provide Professional Learning Opportunities for School Staff on Mental Health Topics

Provide Telehealth Consultations as Part of a School’s MTSS Framework
Staff Tele-Consultations
PROGRESS TO DATE – Training Data

Consultation Quality: Average Ratings Chart

The referral process allowed me to get a consult in a timely manner.

I am satisfied with the process of being connected to a consultant.

The consultant's recommendations were clear and feasible to follow up on.

I learned about a new practice, program, or community resource

Scale: Strongly Disagree (-2) to Strongly Agree (2)
SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPERIENCES & BENEFITS

• Medical Lake SD (student population 2,000) is located in rural eastern Washington.
  – Limited community mental health services
  – Need to partner with community mental health
  – PAL’s clinical psychologists provided staff with psychoeducation, intervention strategies and triage support

• Sumner-Bonney Lake SD (student population 10,000) is located in suburban area.
  – Opportunity to have professional clinical psychologists to provide resources and strategies
  – Building teams utilized previous teleconsultation support and resources for other students with complex mental health challenges
• Supports (trainings, consultation) be made available to all school districts
  ➢ Trainings to help support Tier 2 MTSS services, particularly for rural districts
  ➢ Consults to be a key part of the state’s Tier 3 “Multi-tiered system of supports”

• Increase staffing for consultations (similar to PAL line), allowing faster access to mental health professionals

• Continue reflecting on need for consult appointments with students (original intent, but more resource restrictive)
Questions?
Be a part of shaping a new safety and well-being helpline you can trust.

Earn a chance at a $15 gift card
Names drawn weekly

Take the Survey