

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Wisconsin School Mental Health Project gets under way

MADISON — A five-year project to improve students' emotional well-being and mental health is moving ahead with the selection of participating districts and training for the first group of school and community teams.

Twenty-seven school districts from across the state will participate in the Wisconsin School Mental Health Project. The kick-off event included 30 schools from 14 districts that attended a one-day professional development session in August. Goals for the project are to train more school-community teams to develop policies, programs, and practices that support students with mental health challenges and to integrate those activities into the schools' existing behavior and discipline systems so they work together to improve the overall climate for student emotional well-being.

In Wisconsin, it is estimated that one in five children and adolescents experience a significant mental health issue that impairs their functioning in the community, at home, or in school. Symptoms of student mental health issues are wide ranging and can include behavioral outbursts, disengagement from friends and usual activities, problems with grades and school attendance, substance use and abuse, and thoughts or attempts of suicide. Wisconsin's youth suicide rate is more than 30 percent higher than the national average. Among the young people with mental health challenges, it is estimated that in any given year a mere 20 percent to 30 percent receive the services that they need.

"Students' emotional well-being is essential for learning, and too many kids have unnoticed and unaddressed struggles. That's why we are taking powerful steps to build capacity in Wisconsin public schools so we can support students' emotional well-being and mental health," said State Superintendent Tony Evers. "We need more adults who recognize the signs of youth who are having trouble and know how to approach the student and their family so appropriate services can be accessed to help."

School districts applied to be part of the Wisconsin School Mental Health Project, assuring that they had between one and three schools that met requirements of demonstrated need, principal commitment, staff buy-in, and current implementation of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system. The professional

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development offered through the project will directly address students with high mental health needs while also supporting strategies that benefit all students. The professional development and technical assistance will

- promote the emotional well-being of all students,
- engage families as partners in supporting student emotional well-being,
- detect early warning signs of student mental health challenges and make effective referrals,
- provide effective services by school staff and community partners for youth with mental health needs,
- integrate mental health and emotional well-being work with PBIS, and
- use a “coaching model” provided by a school mental health consultant.

Project evaluation will gauge improvements in student engagement in learning, positive school climate, and attendance and behavior.

Participating public school districts were assigned to two cohorts for 2015-18 or 2016-19. A planning team began work in February to develop resources for the project that will include online training modules, professional learning communities, and in-person workshops. The Wisconsin School Mental Health Project is supported by the Wisconsin School Climate Transformation Project through funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Project, Wisconsin AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) Project, and state alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) funds.

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**NOTE:** A list of schools selected to participate in the Wisconsin Mental Health Project follows. This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015\\_72.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_72.pdf).

## Wisconsin School Mental Health Project

### *Cohort 1 Districts and Schools — 2015-18*

#### **Ashwaubenon School District**

Parkview Middle School

#### **Baraboo School District**

Baraboo High School  
Jack Young Middle School

#### **Berlin Area School District**

Berlin High School  
Berlin Middle School  
Clay Lamberton Elementary School

#### **Clintonville School District**

Clintonville Middle School  
Rexford/Longfellow Elementary School

#### **Crandon School District**

Crandon Elementary School  
Crandon High School  
Crandon Middle School

#### **Fond du Lac School District**

Fond du Lac High School  
Parkside Elementary School  
Sabish Middle School

#### **Horicon School District**

Horicon Junior High School  
Horicon Senior High School  
Van Brunt Elementary School

#### **Hudson School District**

Hudson Middle School

#### **Lac du Flambeau #1 School District**

Lac du Flambeau Public School

#### **Shawano School District**

Brener Elementary School  
Hillcrest Primary School

#### **Stanley-Boyd Area School District**

Stanley-Boyd Elementary School  
Stanley-Boyd Middle School

#### **Sun Prairie Area School District**

Cardinal Heights Upper Middle School  
Creekside Elementary School

#### **Waupun School District**

Meadow View Primary School (4K-1)  
Rock River Intermediate School (2-6)

#### **Wausau School District**

Franklin Elementary School  
G.D. Jones Elementary School  
Hawthorn Hills Elementary School

### *Cohort 2 Districts and Schools — 2016-19*

#### **Arrowhead UHS**

Arrowhead Union High School

#### **Beloit School District**

Beloit Memorial High School  
Cunningham Intermediate School  
Todd Elementary School

#### **Black River Falls School District**

Forest Street Early Learning Center  
Gebhardt Elementary School (4-5)  
Third Street Elementary School (2-3)

#### **Holmen School District**

Holmen High School

#### **La Crosse School District**

Central High School  
Longfellow Middle School  
Northside Elementary School

#### **McFarland School District**

Indian Mound Middle School  
McFarland Primary School  
Waubesa Intermediate School

#### **Milton School District**

Milton Middle School  
West Elementary School

#### **Mukwonago School District**

Mukwonago High School  
Parkview Middle School

#### **Northwood School District**

Northwood School

#### **Richmond School District**

Richmond Elementary School

#### **Sparta Area School District**

Sparta Meadowview Intermediate School  
Sparta Meadowview Middle School

#### **Sturgeon Bay School District**

Sunrise Elementary School

#### **Twin Lakes #4 School District**

Lakewood Elementary School