Mental Health Framework and Initiatives
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INTRODUCTION

During the 2016–2017 school year, we embarked on a journey toward mental health and wellness for the Indianapolis Public School district. We recognized that our students were experiencing trauma, emotional dysregulation and mental health challenges that were affecting their school success. We began researching national mental health data for our young people and discovered that suicide is the third leading cause of death in children ages 10–24 and the second leading cause of death in young people aged 15–24. We found that nationally one out of every five students in the classroom is coping with a mental health challenge and that 37 percent of students with a mental health condition drop out of school. We also discovered that an average of eight to 10 years pass before a child with a mental health challenge is actually diagnosed and begins receiving treatment. Lastly, we found that 70 percent of children involved in the juvenile justice system have a mental health diagnosis.

The challenges we witnessed in our students combined with this data prompted us to act! In response, we developed a Mental Health Stakeholder Group of IPS staff and community stakeholders to begin to address the mental health and wellness needs of our school communities. The stakeholder group met monthly throughout the course of the 2016–2017 school year and outlined objectives for the 2017–2018 school year, which can be viewed in the 2017–2018 Objectives and Outcomes section.

Vision
All students are socially, emotionally, mentally and physically healthy so they are ready to learn and achieve their full potential.

Mission
We will empower students, families and staff to improve their mental health and wellness through awareness, access, training and collaboration with our community partners and stakeholders.

Values & Beliefs
• The function of an education is to address the whole child.
• Attachment is the carrier of all development, including learning.
• Meeting the social, emotional and mental health needs of teachers and school staff is just as important as meeting those of our students.
• Our students are most successful when families are informed and engaged in the developmental and mental health needs of their children.
• Our schools and communities are strongest when we work together.

Framework Components
Within this booklet you will find detailed information about each of the components of our Mental Health Framework.

A Visual Representation and Explanation of the Framework
May 21, 2018

Greetings:

The mission of Indianapolis Public Schools is to empower and educate all students to think critically, creatively, and responsibly, to embrace diversity, and to pursue their dreams with purpose. Our core business is excellence in teaching and learning, and we’re proud of the thousands of educators who dedicate their professional lives to our shared mission. However, we recognize that non-academic barriers to student success exist, including social, emotional, and mental health challenges. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge these barriers and work to build a comprehensive, integrated system of supports to ensure that all of our students are successful.

Data from the National Alliance on Mental Illness indicates that one in five children are in need of mental health support. Research also tells us that a community-based approach to addressing this issue is most effective. With that in mind, we developed a Mental Health Stakeholder Group comprised of IPS staff and community leaders and stakeholders from a variety of entities including the Marion County Health Department, the Peace Learning Center, community mental health agencies, the Marion County Commission on Youth, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, and many more. Our goal was to facilitate a group of stakeholders who could assist us in developing a framework of mental health services and supports to meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of our students and school communities.

Our district’s mental health framework and initiatives give voice to long stigmatized subjects such as mental illness, suicide, and adverse childhood experiences. With the guidance and support of our stakeholder group, this initiative has brought research based prevention and intervention activities to our students and school communities. Students are learning about their emotions and how to regulate them, gaining prosocial skills needed for success in life, and receiving mental health services to enhance their well-being.

Although teaching and learning is at the core of our work, we know that effective education is measured by more than academic achievement. We’re proud to stand in the gap for all students, no matter what challenges they face when they walk through our doors. The IPS mental health framework and associated initiatives will provide all of our schools with a powerful tool to support student success.

Thank you for sharing our commitment to excellence in all of our work.

Be well,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Superintendent

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**REVIEW 360 INTERVENTION TOOL (TIER I, II, III)**

As a component of the district’s *Mental Health Framework and Initiatives*, the IPS Mental Health Stakeholder Group identified a universal behavioral screening, intervention and data tracking tool entitled Review 360 that enables schools to identify, intervene and track students’ behavioral challenges. The Review 360 tool was piloted at Arlington Woods School 99 during the 2017–2018 school year with statistically significant success. Five additional pilot schools for the 2018–2019 school year will be added.

Based on the current pilot experience, the four primary benefits of Review 360 implementation are:

- Identification of students who are struggling with behavioral health challenges through a universal screener. In addition to identifying students with externalizing behaviors, the screener identifies students with internalizing behaviors, which are more difficult to recognize and commonly overlooked without the screener.
- A comprehensive list of intentional, research-based interventions are available for staff to select and implement with students. Interventions are directly linked to students’ needs based upon their screening outcomes. An efficient progress monitoring/data tracking system is also included.
- Increased teacher efficacy related to intervening successfully with students who are exhibiting behavioral and mental health challenges.
- Data demonstrates that Review 360 is an effective tool in improving student behavior based upon quantitative pre- and post-intervention testing.

Our students in the highest risk category, Tier III, decreased by a statistically significant 7 percent, or 39 students following several months of intervention using the Review 360 tool. Two percent of these students moved to the moderate risk, or Tier II category, and 5 percent moved to the low risk, or Tier I category. The before (fall) and after (spring) data is displayed in a visual mode below.

Our male, non-white students were the student group identified as having the highest number of at-risk behaviors (Tier III). Following several months of intervention, this high-risk group dropped from 36 to 24 percent, indicating a 12 percent statistically significant improvement and outcome for these students. The before (fall) and after (spring) data is displayed in a visual mode below.
**2017–2018 OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

**2017–2018 Objectives**

1. Hire a full-time Wellness Specialist to facilitate and oversee the work.
2. Pilot a universal behavioral screening and intervention program at one elementary school.
3. Create a universal counseling referral form and universal referral process for all schools and for all community mental health agencies serving our schools.

**Outcomes**

1. IPS hired a full-time Wellness Specialist in May of 2017. The Wellness Specialist oversees all of the community mental health services for the district and works with the Mental Health Stakeholder Group to develop, implement and evaluate new initiatives within the mental health framework.
2. Review 360, a universal behavioral screening and intervention program, was implemented at Arlington Woods School 99 for the 2017–2018 school year. A more detailed explanation of the project with initial data results can be found under the framework component entitled Review 360.
3. A universal referral form and process were created and implemented in August 2017 and have continued throughout the school year. The universal process has enabled the Wellness Specialist to collect monthly data and make decisions about mental health interventions and practices within the district based upon the data.

During the 2017–2018 school year, the stakeholder group continued to meet and added additional objectives for the school year.

**Additional Objectives for the 2017–2018 School Year**

1. Collect data from the community mental health providers regarding referral numbers, active clients, risk assessments, hospitalizations for mental health reasons, and more.
2. Implement the Review 360 program at Arlington Woods. Collect data on the utility of the program and seek funding to implement Review 360 in five more schools for the 2018–2019 school year.
3. Implement a staff wellness pilot to teach self-care and wellness practices to school staff.
4. Share current mental health data and wellness information with the IPS community.

**Outcomes**

1. Data was collected from September 2017-May 2018 from mental health providers and used to improve mental health service delivery to students and for the writing of grants related to mental health and wellness.
2. Review 360 was successfully implemented at Arlington Woods with a statistically significant improvement in student behavior. Funding to add an additional five schools to the pilot for the 2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021 school years was obtained.
3. A collaboration between Eskenazi Health, the Center for Mind Body Medicine in Washington, D.C., and IPS was developed and wellness groups for staff were offered from January through May 2018. Results of the pilot can be reviewed under the Teacher Wellness Initiative page.
4. The stakeholder group created educational flyers for use on the district website and social media, and for distribution, with the culmination being the sharing of information during May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month. The Wellness Specialist also began writing a monthly “Mental Health Minute” about a mental health topic that was shared each month with all school communities. Educational flyers and Mental Health Minutes can be viewed through the Mental Health Education and Mental Health Minute pages.
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (TIER I, II, AND III)

In 2009, researcher and physician, Vincent Felitti, conducted a groundbreaking research study on the impact that traumatic experiences in childhood have on the health and well-being of the child as an adult. Felitti entitled these traumatic experiences as Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs. What we have learned through research from Vincent Felitti, Robert Anda, and others in the field is that adverse childhood experiences (trauma) such as abuse, domestic violence, parental divorce, imprisonment of a family member, mental illness of a family member, and more can have a direct impact on adult health and mental health outcomes, including depression, suicide, addiction, heart disease, cancer, and more. Additionally, children who are experiencing trauma have less positive academic outcomes than their non-traumatized peers.

The good news is that when school communities are sensitive to the needs of children who have or may be currently experiencing trauma, the negative impact of the trauma experience over the lifetime can be overcome. As part of the Mental Health Framework and Initiatives, IPS is working to train school staff to understand childhood trauma and respond to it in ways that are supportive and healing for students. Below you will find a link to the video “Trauma Informed Practices in Schools,” as well as links to other resources. Trauma informed and responsive practices occur at all intervention levels: Tier I, Tier II and Tier III.

Resources

- Trauma Informed Practices in Schools
- Compassionate Schools
- ACE Questionnaire
- ACE Pyramid
- Prevalence of ACE's
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (TIER I)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

In the links below you will find more detailed information about SEL, including the five core SEL competencies that school staff are striving to achieve in our school communities every day. SEL programming is a universal, Tier 1, prevention service.

In the 2018–2019 school year IPS will be implementing a districtwide SEL program entitled “Second Steps” for all students in kindergarten through Grade 5.

Resources

- SEL Explained
- SEL Wheel & 5 Competencies
- Navigating SEL
- Second Step Program
- Second Step Program Research Evaluation
MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE (TIER I)

As part of IPS’ mission to educate our school communities about mental health and wellness, we have implemented the sharing of a monthly article that provides information on a selected mental health topic. We call it a “Mental Health Minute” and hope that these educational articles will enhance understanding of mental health and reduce mental health stigma at the Tier I level. Below are links to past “Mental Health Minute” articles written by our District Wellness Specialist.

Resources

- Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers
- Children and Depression
- De-stressing the Holidays for Kids
- Children and Sleep
TEACHER WELLNESS INITIATIVE (TIER II)

One of our shared values is that mental health and wellness for teachers and staff are just as important as the mental health and well-being for our students. Well teachers are better able to meet the social, emotional, behavioral and learning needs of our students. With that in mind, we have collaborated with Eskenazi Health and the Center for Mind Body Medicine in Washington, D.C. to create a Staff Wellness Group that has been met with great enthusiasm by participants.

Data related to the utility of this Tier II mental health initiative is currently being collected and analyzed and will be available for review soon.
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES (TIER III)

Each IPS school has a dedicated mental health agency on-site that provides mental health services as a Tier III support to eligible students and their families. Links below include the referral form for counseling that IPS and the mental health agencies use. Parents and staff can refer students for counseling at any time. Additional links include contact information for mental health agencies, hospitals, and crisis phone lines and phone applications. A resource for Medicaid applications is also included.

Resources

- IPS Universal Referral Form
- Mental Health Resources for Framework
MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION (TIER I)

The IPS Mental Health Stakeholder Group has developed some documents that include current data on student mental health and educational information for parents about mental health warning signs. A list of simple ways to practice wellness is also included in the links below. Mental health education is a universal, Tier I intervention.

Resources

- Community Informational Flyer
- Parent Informational Flyer
- 31 Ways to Wellness
COMMON LANGUAGE (TIER I)

Educators and mental health practitioners use language related to mental health that can be difficult to understand. Below is a helpful link to commonly used mental health terms with definitions. Providing information about common mental health language is a universal, Tier I intervention.

Resources
- Mental Health Framework Glossary of Terms
IPS CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (TIER II)

Unfortunately, crisis events do occur on occasion within our district. We have experienced the deaths of students and teachers as well as other events that are potentially traumatizing for our students, staff and entire school communities. We know that traumatic or adverse experiences can be challenging to overcome without intervention. As such, IPS has a Crisis Response Team compiled of specially trained school social workers, school counselors and school psychologists who are available to provide counseling and support to school communities experiencing a crisis. By providing this Tier II intervention and support, we are able to mitigate the trauma experience for the school community.