

Moving MTSS Upstream:

School Mental Health and Student & Family Partnerships in Washington



2023 OSEP LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT DIRECTORS'
CONFERENCE





2023 OSEP Leadership and Project Directors' Conference



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(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3 and 3474)

Resource Spotlight

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website
 - Brings together IDEA information and resources from the Department and its grantees.
 - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
- IDEAS That Work
 - For information from research to practice initiatives funded by OSEP that address the provisions of IDEA and ESSA. This website includes resources, links, and other important information relevant to OSEP's research to practice efforts.
 - <https://osepideasthatwork.org/>



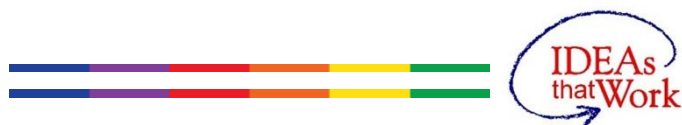
Washington State Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data

PreK to 21 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data

PreK Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data Trends: Receiving Majority of Services in a Regular EC Program				
PreK Data Group	2019 Baseline	2021 Data	2022 Data	Change from 2019 Baseline
State PreK LRE Data	23.3%	25.7%	31.1%	8.0

K-12 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data Trends: Access to General Education for 80-100% of the Day					
K-12 Data Group	2018 Baseline	2019 Data	2021 Data	2022 Data	Change from 2018 Baseline
State K-12 LRE Data	56.6%	57.7%	62.4%	63.4%	6.8
IPP Pilot Districts (95)	44.2%	49.1%	59.2%	62.2%	18 (!)

Source: OSPI. (2022). DRAFT Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Child Count Data.



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Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) Impact

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	Data Group	2018 Baseline	2022 Data	Change from Baseline
LRE 1: Placed in general ed for 80-100% of the school day	Inclusionary Practices Pilot Districts (n=100)	44%	62%	18
	All Students with Disabilities	57%	63%	6.8
	Black Students with Disabilities	49%	52%	1.8

What Does This Mean for Our Students?

- In 2019, Washington ranked as one of the 10 least inclusive states in the nation.
- These data show that our state investment in professional development, coaching, and mentoring for educators around inclusionary practices is having a profound, sustained impact on student access to general education settings.
- For our youngest learners, **585** more children with disabilities received the majority of their special education services in a regular childhood setting in 2022, compared with 2019.
- This also means over **15,000** K-12 students with disabilities have moved into the highest level of inclusion since 2018 and are now accessing general education for 80% or more of the school day.



So, What Now? What's Next?

- **Fully Fund Special Education** to decrease district reliance on local levies to meet their obligation to cover special education service costs and increase access for all students to preventative interventions, including social emotional learning, mental health supports, and enrichment activities.
- **Sustain** the legislature's investment in inclusionary practices and scale the focus to inclusionary outcomes.
- **Partner** with families, educators, and community members to codesign inclusionary practices and leadership indicators within an MTSS framework.
- **Develop** a technical assistance network that accounts for the interdependence required to create a robust educational system.

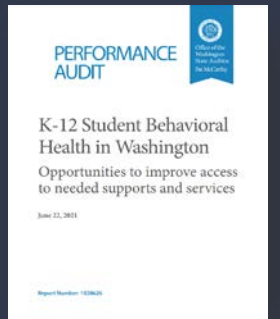


State-wide Investments and Implementation in School Mental Health and MTSS Through the Interconnected Systems Framework

Kelcey Schmitz, University of Washington SMART Center



Washington K-12 Student Behavioral Health Audit – *SYSTEMS ISSUE*



“Washington’s decentralized approach has relied on school districts to develop behavioral health plans without oversight.”

- Most schools have not implemented the full continuum of supports
- Few schools systematically screen all students
- The system of support and accountability is fragmented - and lacks comprehensive state direction
- Schools identified two key barriers for accessing services - limited MH providers & lack of transportation



https://sao.wa.gov/performance_audit/k-12-student-behavioral-health-in-washington/

What were the results of the OSPI Academic Student Well-Being Recovery Survey?

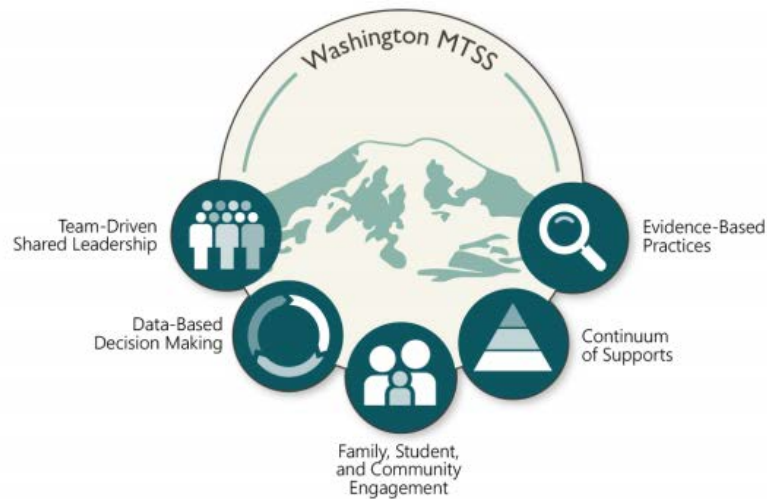
- SEL, Mental Health and MTSS - among the most frequently reported universal supports districts were providing or planning to provide for reopening.
- Districts also reported that they needed the most support with implementing SEL, MH, & MTSS.
- The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) at OSPI received OSPI ESSER funds to expand MTSS including installing mental health within the WA MTSS Framework through the Interconnected Systems Framework approach.



Installing School Mental Health within the Washington MTSS Framework along the Implementation Cascade

“MTSS is something to help organize the adults and their implementation of best practices within classrooms and schools. MTSS is not about organizing kids as much as it is about organizing what we do for and with kids and their families.”

- Dr. George Sugai, Professor Emeritus, University of Connecticut



- Supporting Building Teams
- Supporting District Teams
- Supporting Regional Educational Service District Teams
- Supporting SEA Staff

Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF)

- Deliberate application of the multi-tiered PBIS Framework for all social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) interventions
(e.g. Mental Health, Social Emotional Instruction, Trauma Informed Practices, Bully Prevention, etc.)
- Active participation of Family and Youth is a central feature of ISF.
- Aligning all SEB related initiatives through one system at the state/regional, district and school level in which education and mental health systems are integrated across tiers of support
- Moving from co-location to integration of community mental health providers
- A clear plan is developed at the district for integrating mental health and other SEB supports at all buildings based on school AND community data

What are the ways ISF enhances MTSS?

- **Effective teams that include youth, family and community mental health providers (expand opportunity and access for members historically excluded)**
- **Data-based decision making that include school data beyond ODRs and community data**
- **Formal processes for the selection & implementation of evidence-based practices (EBP) across tiers with team decision making and customized to fit culture/context/strengths/needs of community**
- **Early access through use of comprehensive and equitable approach to screening, which includes uncovering strengths, story & internalizing and externalizing needs**
- **Rigorous progress-monitoring for both **fidelity & effectiveness** of all interventions regardless of who delivers**
- **Ongoing coaching at both the systems & practices level for both school and community employed professionals (e.g., continuously examining the “health” of the system and the strengths and needs of the caregivers and helpers in the system)**

Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide PBIS

Volume 2: An Implementation Guide

ISF District Leadership Installation Guide

Purpose: This guide is intended to be used by facilitators and coaches to support District/Community Leadership Teams to install structures/systems needed to support an Interconnected System Framework (ISF). The goal is for teams to examine current system using installation activities and generate actions to move toward a more efficient and effective service delivery model.

ISF School Installation Guide

Purpose: This guide is intended to be used by facilitators and coaches to support District/Community Leadership Teams to install structures/systems needed to support an Interconnected System Framework (ISF). The goal is for teams to examine current system using installation activities and generate actions to move toward a more efficient and effective service delivery model at the building level.

Step 1: Establish a single set of teams

Tasks	Installation Activities	Action Needed	By who? By when?
1a. Identify need for merging teams with similar goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Aligning Teaming Structures: Working Smarter Not Harder worksheet to identify all teams and details 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data on Working Smarter matrix and use guiding questions below to develop an action plan for eliminating or modifying teams as needed 		

Guiding Questions

- What teams exist at your school?
- What are their roles and responsibilities?
- Who are the staff who serve on the teams?
- How often does the team meet?
- Does the team use data?
- Does the team respond to student needs in a timely fashion?
- Do we have teams with similar goals? Are there teams with goals that do not align to current mission?
- Do we use same or different set of rules and processes?
- Is the team effective? What data is used for decision making and monitoring outcomes?
- How would our teams work more effectively if we had one set of teams to address social-emotional-behavioral and academic needs of our students?
- Is there any duplication or overlap?
- What communication loops and /or progress monitoring exists among all of these support personnel?

Step-by-Step Guide

Chapter 1: Context and Structure for Volume

Chapter 2: Defining ISF: Origins, Critical Features, and Key Messages

Chapter 3: Exploration and Adoption

Chapter 4*: Installing ISF at the District and Community Level

Chapter 5*: Installing ISF at the Building Level

Chapter 6: Full Implementation and Sustainability



<https://www.pbis.org/resource/interconnecting-school-mental-health-and-pbis-volume-2>

ISF District Leadership Installation Steps (Ch. 4)

1. **Establish** a District/Community Executive Leadership Team
2. **Assess** the Current Status of Mental Health and PBIS Systems in the District
3. **Reach** Team Consensus on a Mission Statement
4. **Establish** District/Community Leadership Team Procedures and Routines
5. **Develop** Action Plan to Support Demonstration Sites

ISF District Leadership Installation Guide

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Step 1: Establish a District/Community Executive Leadership Team

Tasks	Installation Activities	Action Needed:	By Who? By When?
Representative DCLT team identified. • Provide authority and problem solving needed to overcome organizational barriers and implement the efficiencies needed to functionally interconnect education, behavioral and mental health supports. • Present concerning data and needs to those with authority and propose a way of working.	• Assess current teaming structures. Identify need for new team or expansion of existing team		
	• Review current partnerships and service agreements with community partners and/or in area. Executive level leadership from each organization are part of the team.		
	• Establish team operating procedures (e.g. time for team to meet at least quarterly, roles for team, process for forming agenda, etc.)		

Guiding Questions:

- Which voices with social-emotional-behavioral health expertise within school system could benefit this team?
- Which voices of mental health, juvenile justice, core service agency partners could benefit this team?
- In what ways are we ensuring that multiple stakeholders' voices (i.e.: staff, MH agencies, parents/families, students, etc.) will stay at the table through the development of systems and overall implementation?

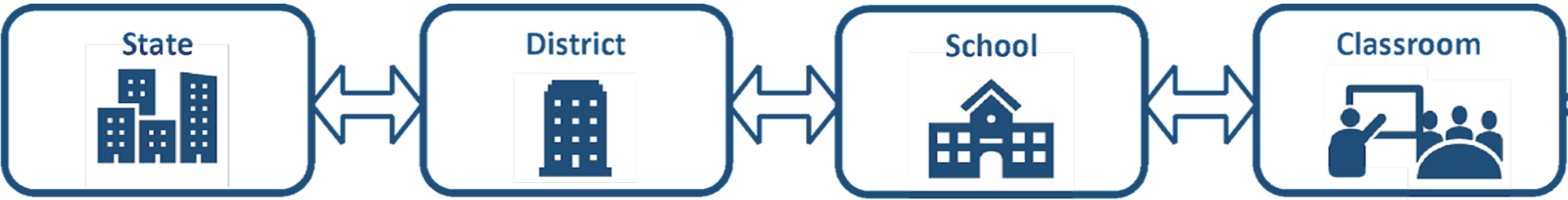


PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

This work is supported by grant SM081726 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and was supported from funds provided by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports cooperative grant supported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education (H326S180001). Dr. Renee Bradley served as the project officer.



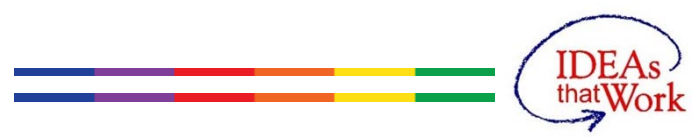
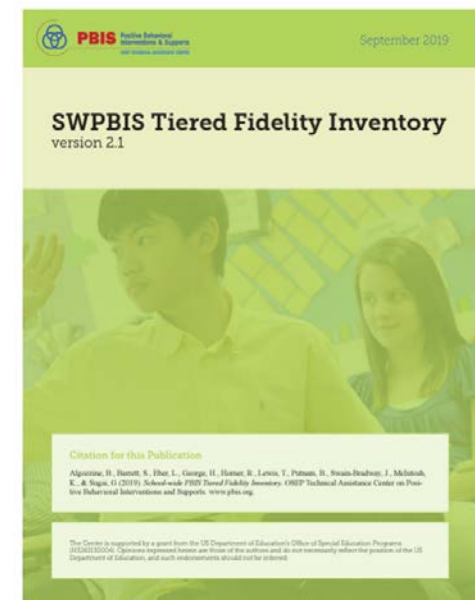
Measuring Fidelity Through the Implementation Cascade



SSF

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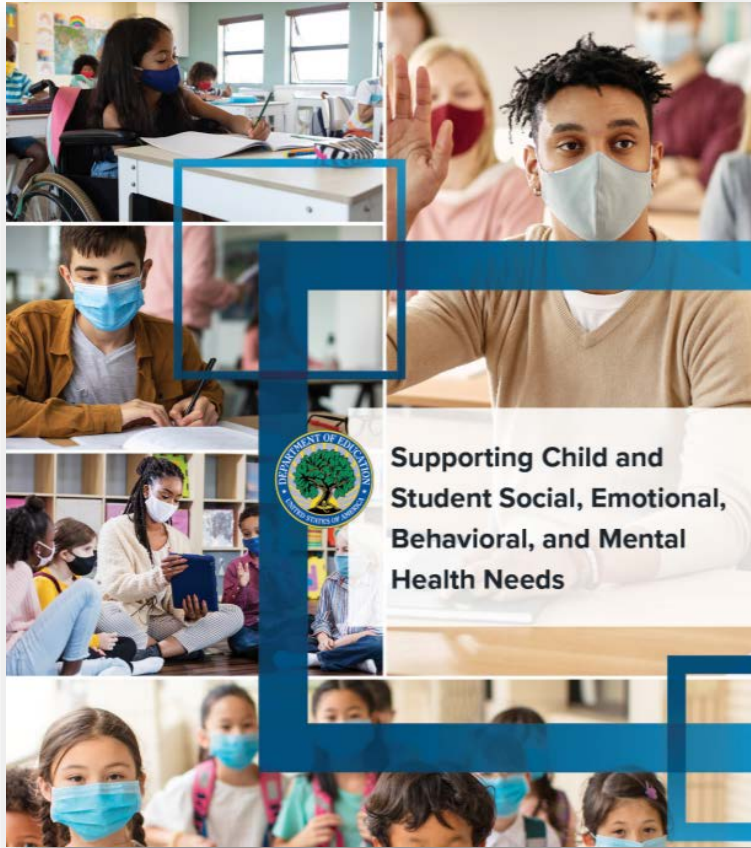
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WA State Featured in School Mental Health Resource from US Department of Education



Challenges
1. Rising Mental Health Needs and Disparities Among Children and Student Groups
2. Perceived Stigma is a Barrier to Access
3. Ineffective Implementation of Practices
4. Fragmented Delivery Systems
5. Policy and Funding Gaps
6. Gaps in Professional Development and Support
7. Lack of Access to Usable Data to Guide Implementation Decisions

Recommendations
1. Prioritize Wellness for Each and Every Child, Student, Educator, and Provider
2. Enhance Mental Health Literacy and Reduce Stigma and Other Barriers to Access
3. Implement Continuum of Evidence-Based Prevention Practices
4. Establish an Integrated Framework of Educational, Social, Emotional, and Behavioral-Health Support for All
5. Leverage Policy and Funding
6. Enhance Workforce Capacity
7. Use Data for Decision Making to Promote Equitable Implementation and Outcomes



<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>



Medical Lake School District

~Our Call to Action~

A dark blue diagonal graphic that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, creating a triangular shape in the bottom right of the page.

The Medical Lake Promise

We promise to:

- Foster a **safe and supportive learning environment** through a culture of belonging.
- Focus on **personalized instruction that is engaging, challenging, and relevant.**
- Promote **hope and a vision for the future** from Early Learning through Post-Secondary.

for Every Student, Every Day

MLSD Demographics

- 17 Miles West of Spokane, Washington
- Approximately 2,000 students
- 5 Schools (2 elementary, 1 Middle School, 1 High School, 1 Alternative School) P-12
- One school on the military base
- 4 Universities in the Spokane area (Whitworth, Gonzaga, EWU, WSU)
- Lacking a centralized transportation system
- Approximately 40% free and reduced
- NO community Mental Health

To Date:

MLSD has commitment, vision & guidelines for an equitable, multi-tiered systems of support for:

- Mental Health Wellness
- Social Emotional Wellness
- Physical Health Wellness
- Academic Wellness

With the goal of being able to care for the Whole Child - Whole Family

WE are Committed



Our Call to Action: Whole Community

MLSD implemented the Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) which ensures a mental health lens through integration of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to...

- Remove barriers
- Increase access to existing intervention and resources/services
- Unite families with school
- Expand evidenced based interventions w/data collection
- Refine MTSS systems per school
- Increase Mental health literacy
- Provide Counseling Services

MLSD established a Wellness Center for families, students, and staff

Wellness Center activities:

- Individual and group therapy
- Community Classes
- Summer Groups
- Parent Support Groups
- Professional Development for staff
- A space to meet with families (HUB)
- Access to resources
- Community activities
- Weekly Medical Mobile Unit

Eastern Washington University

- School Counselors
- Social Workers
- School Psychologists
- Mental Health Counselors

Gonzaga University

- School Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Mental Health Counselors
- Marriage & Family Counselors

Whitworth University

- School Counselors
- Marriage & Family Therapists

20-25 interns yearly

Washington State University

- School Nurses

Tawni Barlow, EdS, MEd, NCC
Director of Student Services

Theresa McDowell, PhD, LICSW
School Psychologist

Robin Andrus, EdD
School Psychologist

Mabel Thackery, LMHC,
NCC
School Counselor, Forks

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Alita Crosby, LMFTA
Mental Health Coordinator

Jenna Finnerty, EdS
School Psychologist

Nikki Bauman,
Parent & Family Partner

Mardee King,
Student Services Coordinator

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Meet the Wellness Team – Task and Clinical Supervisors

MLSD: Unified our Mental Wellness Providers

Our document was created to streamline duties and help others understand the different roles and strengths and attributes of different service providers so that we can efficiently provide services.

[MLSD Wellness Providers' Roles](#)

The *Changing* Role of the providers/clinicians/ therapists at All Three Tiers

- Deliver intensive interventions
- Work with team to ensure students receiving interventions are improving and staff support new skills across contexts.

- Coordinate Tier 2 Interventions
- Build capacity of staff to deliver Tier 2 interventions and set up progress monitoring systems

- Consult with Tier 1 team to discuss ways to strengthen Tier 1
- Build capacity for ALL staff to embed social emotional skills with academics

Tier I, II, III

- School Counselor
- School Psychologist
- School Mental Health Therapist
- School Nurse
- School Social Worker

- Physical Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech Language Therapist
- Parent/Family Partner
non ESA
- Community In Schools
non ESA

Free Therapy Services

Serving the ML Community

→ Students

→ Families

→ Staff

- Abuse
- Adoption
- Addictions
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Behavior
- Communication
- Couple/Marital Concerns
- Cultural
- Depression
- Disabilities
- Divorce
- Eating Disorders
- Grief/Loss
- Mood Instability
- Parenting
- Phobias
- Relationships
- Self Harm/Suicide
- Sex/Sexuality
- Substance Use
- Trauma

Services to Date:
21/22

Students: 133

Families: 24

Staff: 22

Total: 179

Serving:

Individual

Group

Speciality (athletics)

Psych-Ed in
Classroom

Students, Families, and Staff highest
areas of need in order:

- Relationships
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depressions
- Grief/Loss
- Trauma

The Evolving (and expanding) Role of the School Psychologist

Traditional Role

- Cognitive testing for special education eligibility
- Psychoeducational Reports
- IEP/Evaluation Meetings

Expanded Role

- MTSS Team Meeting Facilitation & Coaching
- Data-Based Decision Making
 - Support of screening and progress monitoring
 - Support of problem-solving process
- Direct Student Support
- Tier 2/Tier 3 Coordination
- Family/Community Collaboration

Pathways to Revisioning the Role of the School Psychologist

Poll: reflect on the responses you shared about your student (and staff) mental health needs and the current role of school psychologists in your system - to what extent is the role aligned to current needs?

Current Supports in WA and Upcoming Developments:

- HB 1664 - pathways for increasing ESA supports
- WA is in the process of discontinuing the use of severe discrepancy for eligibility under a specific learning disability (SLD)
- Structured supports for implementing MTSS

National - Level Scan – Mental Health Supports in WA State

- **WA serves 1.1M students, including 140K students with disabilities ages 3 – 5 (14.5%).**
- **In the 2021 Healthy Youth Survey, 70% of 10th-graders reported feeling nervous, anxious, on edge, or not being able to stop or control worrying.**
- **Poll: WhaWA serves 1.1M students, including 140K students with disabilities ages 3 – 5 (14.5%).**
- In the 2021 Healthy Youth Survey, 70% of 10th-graders reported feeling

Free monthly psychoeducational classes serving:

- District Staff
- Families
- Administrators

- Free childcare:
Supervised by school
psychologist interns

Psychoeducational Classes

The mental health and wellness team at MLSD offers free psychoeducational classes to any community member, parent, student, or staff member who is interested in learning more about a variety of topics, including:

- Anxiety/Depression
- Trauma/ Secondary Trauma
- Substance Use
- Sound Discipline for Teachers/Parents
- Other Health and Wellness Topics

Monthly Mental Wellness Newsletters:

Serving:

- Staff
- Students
- Families
- Community

Monthly Mental Wellness Newsletters:

Serving:

- Staff
- Students
- Families
- Community

[Online Resources](#)

Parent and Family Partner

Helps families:

- Navigates schools and their systems
- Understand processes
- Someone to turn to and to listen
- Assists administration and educators work with families
- Offers parent/family perspectives

How do you make it work:

- Currently grant funded
- Professional Development
- Space of belonging
- Administration support

MLSD Wellness Center

Created a space for
Parent called the HUB

- [Help. Unite. Bond.](#)

HUB:

- Open M-F
- Free Wifi and Devices
- Free Hot Coffee
- Access to Social Worker
- Access to Clothing Closet
- Parent Partner
- Mental Health Counselor
- Resources

Parent/Family Partnerships

A school striving for family involvement often leads with its mouth — identifying projects, needs and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute.

A school striving for parent engagement, on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears — listening to what parents think, dream and worry about. The goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners.”

Larry Ferlazzo

Embedded in Every Complaint Is a Request.

- **Be curious, don't let the "complaint" keep you from getting to the heart of the issue.**
- **Give them a chance to share their fear and help them feel heard.**

Are you committed to
Involvement or
Engagement?

What is the difference?

An involved parent takes part in the activities already determined by the school.

An engaged parent takes a step further, often becoming part of the school's decision-making process.

Think of the two as complementary actions, a kind of yin and yang that together produce better outcomes for students.

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/parental-involvement-vs-parental-engagement#:~:text=An%20involved%20parent%20takes%20part,produce%20better%20outcomes%20for%20students.>

MLSD Tiers of Family Engagement

- Universal support for all students/families
 - H.U.B. connections
 - Liaison with schools for families
 - Connect families and community to resources
 - Summer groups for kids
 - Family Handbook
 - Parent surveys
 - Brochures
 - MTSS for families handout
 - Social media presence
 - Community and family classes

MLSD Tiers of Family Engagement

- Targeted Support
 - Parent/staff support groups
 - Kindergarten readiness
 - ISF implementation work
 - MTSS inclusion team
 - Asking is Caring suicide prevention
 - CEB Truancy
 - Recruit/manage PFP volunteers & coordinate family engagement
 - Partner with ML ECEAP, ML Outreach Center, ARC of Spokane, & MLFD
 - Parent focus groups

MLSD Tiers of Family Engagement

- Intensive Support
 - One-on-one meetings with families
 - IEP & 504 meeting prep
 - Support parents/families at IEP & 504 meetings
 - Family support meetings
 - Provide student/family specific resources

Family Feedback

There is something very visceral about facing down an unknown challenge. If we feel unequal to necessary tasks, what do we do? As a culture we have shifted so strongly towards independence and self-reliance that we don't even realize that help is something we can ask for.

I found myself recently staring down a particular task that I was completely unequipped for. I was transitioning my 2 children from home education into the public school system. Both of my children have different special needs that meant seeking 504 plans and additional assessments would also be needed.

Fortunately, our school district had recently added a very unique staff position - a Parent Partner.

Family Feedback

When I first reached out to Nikki, what struck me most was how unflappably encouraging she is.

She shared with me the district's culture around supporting children with special needs. Her inside knowledge, ability to make the foreign seem accessible, and compassionate attitude put me completely at ease.

She made herself available, not just by sending helpful links and articles, but also by taking time - over and over again - to sit down with me, check in, talk through any real or imagined challenges that were coming up.

She made time to attend meetings at the school with me - not to replace my voice, but to be the second set of ears and second brain that I very much needed to absorb and process all the incoming information while also making sure I was able to communicate my family's needs effectively.

Staff Feedback

I have been so impressed with Nikki's ability to integrate within our school district to fill a much-needed gap as our parent and family advocate.

She is one of those people who is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and dig into the hard work, but also the heart of the right work to help our families better understand their rights and access to resources.

She is knowledgeable and incredibly approachable which makes her such a great fit for this role.

Lyra McGirk
Assistant Principal
Medical Lake High School

Hey,
can I borrow
your car??

We are always
asked, how do we
pay for these
services?

Shift your Resources

Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education

“there is a unique opportunity to reconceptualize how we prioritize and provide school- and program-based mental health supports, an essential component of creating nurturing educational environments for children, students, families, educators, and providers.”

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>

MLSD Partnerships

- Whitworth University
- Gonzaga University
- Eastern Washington University
- Washington State University
- Central Washington University
- U of W SMART Center
- Northwest MHTTC
- Seattle Children's Hospital
- Spokane Regional Health Department
- ESD 101
- WA DOH
- Inland NW Behavioral Health
- Pacific NW Behavior
- Magnolia Behavior
- Belong Partners (Sound Discipline)
- CHAS Health
- Children's Home Society
- OSPI
- Sound Options
- NW PBIS
- Forks School District
- Central Valley School District
- Richland School District
- WSASP
- Communities in Schools
- Hope Dogs
- Fairchild Air Force Base

Impact: emotional
and physical healthy
community
&
United Family and
School

Family Engagement reduces:

- Reduction in complaints
- Reduction in legal fees
- Reduction in conflict
- Reduction in lengthy meetings
- Reduction in numerous staff contacted due to parent concern
- Student feeling concerned about educators

Impact: improve outcomes for every student, every day

Supporting students' mental and behavioral health and,

Implementing effective social emotional learning environments, and,

Implementing effective discipline policy & practice and,

Delivering intentional professional development and creating a sustainable workforce

Building a united family school community

improves outcomes and environment:

- Students struggling with barriers to learn
- Creates safe and supportive learning environments free from bullying & harassment
- School Climate & Safety
- Increase in trust between home and school
- Studies show schools that engage families find that their students have higher grades, show faster rates of literacy acquisition, attend school more regularly, and are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.

Evaluating Implementation, Fidelity, and Outcomes

District Level:

-[District Systems Fidelity Inventory](#)

-[District Capacity Assessment](#)

School Level:

-[Tiered Fidelity Inventory](#)

-[ISF Implementation Inventory](#)

-[Schoolwide Evaluation Tool](#)

-Climate Survey

Student Level:

-Screening and Progress monitoring

-Office Disciplinary Referrals

-Grades

-Attendance

The entire Medical Lake School District is Committed!

The entire Medical Lake School District is committed to building a comprehensive single system that supports the entire community

- Designed to integrate mental health & wellness supports into a multi-tiered systems of support through a single system of delivery to ensure evidence based practices are provided efficiently and effectively

[Our Call to Action](#)

References

Eber, L., Barrett, S., Perales, K., Jeffrey-Pearsall, J., Pohlman, K., Putnam, R, Splett, J., & Weist, M.D. (2019). *Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide PBIS, Volume 2: An Implementation Guide*. Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education).



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