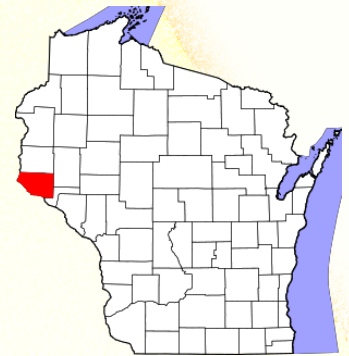


SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

Growth & Multi-Tiered Supports



Ellsworth Community School District

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Ellsworth Community School District, with an enrollment of approximately 1,600 students, is located in a rural area of northwestern Wisconsin. Our school-based mental health program is a multi-tiered support system designed to create and maintain a strong foundation of social and emotional skills to help all students (K-12) maximize their potential and well-being. Our program is a collaborative effort between school counselors, school psychologists, and a mental health coordinator, who all work closely alongside students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners. There have been elements of the program in place for a number of years; however, it is in the last 2 years that the program has become more established.

UNIVERSAL APPROACHES

Some examples of our universal or tier 1 approaches to wellness and school mental health include the following: Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), character education, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) with Second Step curriculum, Signs of Suicide in middle and high school, advisories in middle and high school, morning meetings for elementary students, chill zones/chairs, virtual calming rooms, Success by Six parenting course, Parent/Community Information Nights, Trauma Sensitive Schools trainings and offerings (including staff self-care day), a district wellness committee.



OUTCOMES

As a result of our comprehensive school-based mental health program, in collaboration with our community partner Marriage & Family Health Services, we were able to provide over 250 students with mental health support during the 2019-20 school year. Of those, 205 were school-based contacts (Ellsworth Pupil Services staff and UW-Stout Clinical Mental Health graduate students), and 47 were community-based contacts (Marriage & Family Health Services). We are on pace to exceed those numbers this year. Through our school-based program, we are pleased to have increased access to mental health services by reducing barriers including transportation and insurance.

PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

There are a variety of activities in place in our district that demonstrate the value we place on partnering with families in their children’s well-being. Some of these activities include Parent/Community Information Nights, “Success by Six” Positive Parenting courses, an Autism Support Group, a district-wide tobacco use prevention newsletter, active building-level parent groups, and providing mental health information, resources & coping strategies through school newsletters, websites, and social media accounts. We are interested in increasing our parent engagement and expanding our community collaboration (i.e. partnering with the public library, offering Youth Mental Health First Aid training to community members, etc.).

MULTI-LEVEL SUPPORTS

At the selective or tier 2 level, students in elementary, middle, or high school who demonstrate difficulties with emotional regulation have access to therapy/support dogs, as well as a sensory-motor room for elementary and middle school students. At Tier 3, we also have the RISE program, which stands for “Reaching Independence Through Structured Environments.” RISE is designed to meet the needs of third through eighth grade students who are not successful socially, emotionally, and/or academically with their current education plan. Classes are very small, and students receive both academic and social-emotional support & skill development.

REFERRAL PATHWAY

We used a portion of our school-based mental health grant funds to hire a mental health coordinator who created and implemented a referral pathway. The pathway is now utilized district-wide to make referrals for more intensive (Tier 3) support services. Students are identified through building-level teams (consisting of a school counselor, classroom teacher, specialists, and an administrator) and brought forward for referral by the school counselor. The mental health coordinator receives referrals, distributes them to the appropriate provider, and tracks referral data.



KEY CONTRIBUTORS

- Pupil Services Team
- Marriage & Family Health Services, Ltd.
- UW-Stout Mental Health Program
- Pierce County
- CESA 11
- Students, Teachers, and Parents

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SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHTS

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