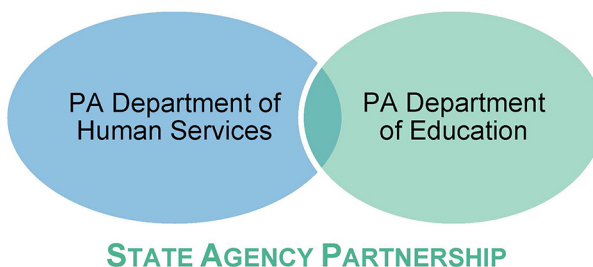




Pennsylvania State and Community Partnerships: Creating Safe and Healthy Schools

BACKGROUND

The challenges facing young people are enormous, and all children and youth need a safe and supportive learning environment to ensure success. The Pennsylvania Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Partnership aims to create safe and supportive schools and communities in three Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and their partner Systems of Care (SOC) counties (Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit 21/Lehigh County, Northeastern School District/York County, Penncrest School District/Crawford County), and ultimately throughout Pennsylvania.



HIGHLIGHTS

Expanded SLMT membership: Significantly expanded State Leadership and Management Team (SLMT) membership (education, drug and alcohol, juvenile justice, early education, and mental health) to break down barriers and work in tandem with each other, rather than in silos.

Integration of initiatives being accomplished: The SOC expansion, SS/HS, and Healthy Transitions Initiatives are being accomplished through a collaborative committee of all their directors to identify shared themes and then to leverage funds, resources, and strategies to work on obtaining positive outcomes.

Developed a system to work cross-sector: Has developed and is now implementing cross-sector “chart form” to track common indicators across school, child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health services.

Established State and Local LEA/Community Leadership Teams:

These teams are working collaboratively and are responsible for decreasing bullying, youth violence, and criminal behavior and promoting the healthy development, social and emotional learning, and academic achievement of all youth.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

Pennsylvania currently implements the following practices and programs in Crawford, Lehigh, and York County schools:

- Programwide/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- Universal Screeners
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Positive Action
- Aggression Replacement Training
- Too Good for Drugs
- Project RENEW
- Check In/Check Out
- Authentic Youth and Family Engagement

“SOC has been scrutinized about its outreach and prevention in our county education system. This partnership has allowed us to have a connection to schools. We have trained hundreds of individuals in YMHFA, and are spearheading trauma-sensitive classrooms. This partnership got us in the door so we could do more work.”

*—Joshua Bridges,
Director of Integrated Services,
Lehigh County, PA*

Pennsylvania has 375 certified trainers in Youth Mental Health First Aid who have trained 16,361 educators, youth/family and community service providers!

For more information about the many programs and services offered through the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, contact Anne Katona-Linn, SS/HS State Project Coordinator, at akatonalinn@gmail.com.

Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Strategic Partnerships: Lehigh County continues to grow partnerships with local drug and substance abuse experts such as the Drug and Alcohol Administration, Pyramid Behavioral Health Care, and the Center for Humanistic Change. These agencies help Lehigh County stay informed and ahead of the curve on the issues of substance use and treatment.

90% decrease in more restrictive settings (juvenile detention/jail)

Incarceration disparity rates decreased from 4.89% to 2.48% for African/Latino youth compared to Caucasian youth.

Officer Dan: After hiring a credentialed SRO practitioner, the district saw a decrease in the number of arrests, assaults, students who needed to be physically restrained, office discipline referrals, and students placed in a more restrictive setting.

York County, Pennsylvania

Mental Health Campaign: York County maintains and increases communication with the public through a partnership between Communities That Care, SOC, Drug-Free PA, and SS/HS youth who created public service announcements (PSA) focused on reducing the stigma of mental health and drug and alcohol treatment. SS/HS Youth initiated expansion of the PSA creation to a countywide contest to all school districts in York County.

“As a SS/HS partner, System of Care recognizes the spirit of collaboration is essential to grow and strengthen a community. Over the past two years, SS/HS and SOC have worked together to build bridges and connect youth and families to a coordinated network of community-based services and supports. By joining volunteer and financial resources, we were able to reach thousands of people through a school-wide Public Service Announcement contest and community-wide Trauma Informed Care Conference. Unity is strength!”

Colleen Igo

System of Care Coordinator, York, PA

Full-Time Social Workers: The York County School District has two full-time social workers, which is beneficial not only for providing mental health services in school for but bridging the gap between school and community services so youth and family have access to supports and services in a timelier manner.

Crawford County, Pennsylvania

PBIS Proficient: Crawford County has a strong example of school-wide PBIS proficiency, which helps to create a framework for embedding evidence-based programs, data-driven decision making, and youth/family voice.

9.8% decrease in office discipline referrals

—Crawford County

LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD

Pennsylvania looks forward to continuing its efforts to break down silos, and to strengthen the integration of state/local governance as well as management infrastructure and processes at the state level. For instance, the SLMT and Community of Practice are currently being integrated with a strategic plan to ensure shared knowledge of grant opportunities, position statement, and family partnership. In addition, opportunities to increase the authentic partnership with youth and families in all projects and activities will drive future directions in Pennsylvania. These goals may be accomplished in part by marketing the SOC outcomes to all counties in which SOC is not installed as a means of influencing social capital to bolster SOC expansion.

We are committed to sustaining and/or expanding the following programs and services:

- ✓ State-level systems integration
- ✓ Authentic youth and family engagement
- ✓ Alignment of mental health conference and training activities
- ✓ Systems of Care principles