



Goodhue County Education District

Enhancing educational opportunities through interdistrict cooperation

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Important Upcoming Meetings

- **MTSS Stakeholder Meeting:** February 4, 12:30-3:30 p.m., River Bluff Education Center, 395 Guernsey Lane, Red Wing, MN

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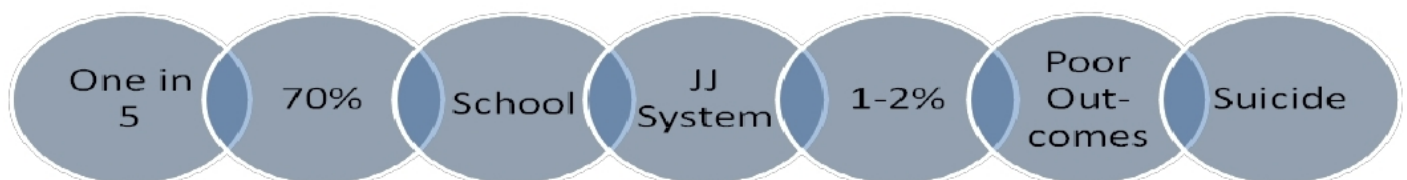
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Comments? Suggestions for new articles?

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Can schools be a front line for mental health?



By Cherie Johnson, Executive Director, GCED

The role of schools has grown over the years as we have gradually assumed a variety of health, social service, and social training functions ranging from providing immunizations to mental health counseling to driver's training. We all know that a common response to many social problems has been either to add a unit to the school curriculum (a unit regarding substance abuse, for example) or to add new staff (such as school nurses). Some of

Schools are the optimal place to develop psychological competence and to teach children about making informed and appropriate choices concerning their health and many other aspects of their lives because schools are the only organization in our society to which virtually all children and adolescents are consistently exposed for extended periods of time. Schools are vital and central to all communities.

Current statistics include that one in 5 youth have a mental health "condition". About 70% of those youth get no treatment.

these additions have become permanent. This has typically occurred when a program has had an organized group to advocate for continuing the program and when the program did not require fundamental changes in the work we do. Other add-on programs or special initiatives, however, have disappeared, only to reappear several years later as a "new idea".

Mental health support and the request for integrated services is one such area.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (*Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, 1999), "...mental health is inexorably linked with general health, child care, and success in the classroom and inversely related to involvement in the juvenile justice system."

The National Association of School Psychologists (2008), Position Statement on Mental Health Services in the Schools states that, "A collaborative and coordinated effort is needed among schools, families, and communities to ensure that all children and adolescents achieve positive academic and behavioral outcomes."

All children face some mental health problems/issues, including:

- Anxiety about school performance
- Problems dealing with parents & teachers
- Unhealthy peer pressure
- Common developmental, adjustment problems
- Fears about starting school
- School phobia
- Dealing with death or divorce
- Feeling depressed or overwhelmed
- Drug or alcohol use
- Suicidal ideation
- Worrying about sexuality
- Facing tough decisions
- Considering dropping out of school

Schools are the logical point of entry to increase the efficacy of mental health services to children and adolescents. In fact, for nearly half of the children with serious emotional disturbances who receive mental health services at all, the school system has been the sole provider. Schools are already the primary providers of mental health services for all children. Offering services in the schools improves access to treatment. Mental health has also been shown to be directly linked to educational outcomes.

School is, in fact, the "defacto" mental health provider in responding to the mental health needs of their students and the juvenile justice system is the next level of system default. One to two percent of youth are identified as emotionally/behaviorally disabled nationally. And, finally, suicide is the 4th leading cause of death among adults.

What We Are Doing Currently

Positive Behavior Support Programs (PBIS) for K-12 and the Pyramid Model for PK have been implemented across all of our districts. These interventions target the entire population of a school to promote and enhance wellness by increasing pro-social behaviors, emotional well-being, skill development, and mental health.

This includes school-wide programs that foster safe and caring learning environments that engage students, are culturally aware, promote social and emotional learning, and develop a connection between school, home, and community.

This past year, training from the Make it OK Campaign and Mental Health First Aid grants was begun. These trainings are intended to provide both anti-stigma messages and to assist schools to begin to support the training of school personnel and other adults who interact with youth in both school settings and local communities to detect and respond to mental illness in children and youth, including how to encourage adolescents and their families experiencing these problems to seek treatment. By implementing this program, we hope to achieve an increase in the mental health literacy of adults who interact with school-aged youth and increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth.

Lastly, this year we began a partnership with local mental health providers to bring mental health services directly into our buildings. The initial phase was to hire two mental health practitioners. Throughout this school year we will be linking these services to students and teams. Typically, this would include interventions that occur early after the onset of an identified concern, as well as target individual students or subgroups of students whose risk of developing mental health concerns is higher than average.

Mental health in schools needs to be a valued part of student support systems that enable students to learn and allow schools to achieve their educational mission. With a shared agenda, existing resources can be used in ways that enhance equity with respect to availability, access, and effectiveness.

Next month's newsletter will include our referral process for member districts to access our mental health providers, along with profiles of each.

MN DAPE Teacher of the Year: Peter Johnson



Congratulations to Peter Johnson, MN Developmental Adapted Physical Education (DAPE) Teacher of the Year!

Peter Johnson's professional reputation extends beyond Red Wing, where he serves as a DAPE teacher. Red Wing colleague Ben Slagle recognizes that Peter goes beyond being a good DAPE teacher: "Peter has taken on a leadership role in the MN DAPE Community; he serves as Region 10 DAPE Coordinator. Peter also has implemented technology into his teaching to help students with disabilities learn more effectively and to aid him while completing assessments."

Peter was nominated for MN DAPE Teacher of the Year by Sue Bremer, former Cannon Falls DAPE teacher. The two met six years ago as part of the GCED Motor Cohort. Since that time they have professionally collaborated, sharing great resources and ideas to best meet students' DAPE needs. They have also worked together representing Region 10 at the state level and providing PD opportunities for their colleagues across the state.

In Sue's nomination letter she acknowledges that with his knowledge, expertise, and leadership abilities, Peter has become "a go-to-guy in our region".

This award is sponsored by MNSHAPE, a professional association that supports the work of teachers and organizations that provide quality health, physical education, and recreation programming. We certainly appreciate Peter's willingness to mentor new teachers, share his expertise, and to continually advocate for students with disabilities.

English Learner Program Supports Students

By Brian Cashman, Coordinator of Alternative Programs

The Goodhue County Education District (GCED) is the provider of EL services to its member school districts.

The mission of the Goodhue County Education District EL program is to:

1. support student proficiency to the point where English Learner services are no longer needed while,
2. serving as a link among the school, students, and parents and
3. promoting general academic success.

The current EL program staffing configuration is:

Teaching Staff

Julie Mertens = GCED - Cannon Falls and Zumbrota-Mazeppa (K-12)

Anna Hermann = GCED - Goodhue (K-12)

Rachel Ibes = GCED - Kenyon-Wanamingo (K-12)

Kelly Hassemer = Red Wing (K-4)

Megan Hanten = GCED - Red Wing (5-12)

Paraprofessional Support

Jeimmy Yusty-Rojas (GCED - Red Wing, 5-12)

Tammy Gruhlke (GCED - Zumbrota-Mazeppa, K-12)

Translation and Interpretation

Jeimmy Yusty-Rojas (GCED - Red Wing Schools)

School Liason

Viviana Hernandez (Goodhue Schools)

ADSIS: On the continuum of supports

Through legislative action, MDE is able to offer independent school districts an Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services, more commonly known as an ADSIS grant. The purpose of the grant is to provide additional academic and/or behavioral support so that students can succeed in the general education classroom. Funded through federal special education funds, the grant is intended to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to special education. Because of that purpose, students on an IEP are not eligible to receive ADSIS services.

In June all of our member districts were awarded an ADSIS grant for 2015-2017 with a focus on elementary literacy interventions. This is one component in our continuum of supports and fits in well with our MTSS work throughout the



Kudos and thanks for our ADSIS teachers and Instructional Coach Team!

districts. In fact, MDE has stressed the importance of districts to align ADSIS with a district's RtI system or better yet with their work on MTSS. All of your hard systematic work is aligning to state and national efforts.

GCED is supporting the efforts of ADSIS teachers. Each of GCED's instructional coaches networks with and supports the ADSIS teachers' work. We have also included support through training in data, interventions, and fidelity, thanks to Coach Weston Johnson.

Initial data results are promising. In Red Wing for example, 2nd graders served with ADSIS interventions are closing in on their literacy gap. Using student data to select the appropriate and specific intervention makes a difference. As Shelby Hicks stated, "I was up in the air about Read Naturally Encore® but I'm sold now! They have been doing great :) I am very proud of them!"

While Shelby and the other ADSIS teachers provide direct instruction to students, a side benefit of the grant is any opportunity the ADSIS teachers have to model interventions for classroom teachers to use for full classes.

ADSIS Teachers

- Chrissy Nelson, CF
- Mary Curtis, Goodhue
- Katie Benbrooks, KW
- Shelby Hicks, RW—Sunnyside
- Kim Thompson, RW—Burnside
- Debbie Husbyn, ZM
- Carlene Lawler, ZM

Instructional Coach Team

- Patricia Bronk
- Weston Johnson
- Carol Redmond
- Mary Jo Schwartau
- Jaime Winchell



Zumbrota-Mazeppa ROARS with Pride

Walk through the halls of Zumbrota-Mazeppa Schools and you cannot miss the signs:

- R** = Respect
- O** = Optimism
- A** = Acceptance
- R** = Responsibility

ROAR is how ZM expects its students to behave and interact with others, which is the foundation of its PBIS program. Each year a theme is used to help with understanding. This year's theme is Everyone Matters. At the elementary level, counselor Pam Langley visits classrooms to discuss what it means when everyone matters. She helps students understand what respect, optimism, acceptance, and responsibility look like when interacting with others. Students and staff have bracelets as a reminder. One young student remarked that the Everyone Matters bracelet reminds him to treat everyone well **every** day.

Fourth grader Trinity Chapa looks forward to the ROAR celebrations, which reward her and others for the work they do, for learning, and applying the ROAR principles. For Trinity, ROAR is her reminder on how to calm down when she gets upset at school. She applies it even further when she uses ROAR to encourage her friends, an ideal outcome of PBIS.

MTSS Implementation Continues

Recently a group of stakeholders came together from our member districts to assess our MTSS implementation. GCED Executive Director, Cherie Johnson, began with an overview of national and state implementation data to which we could compare our own progress. In addition, district teams considered lessons learned from implementation to their own stories. It is essential to take time during implementation to reflect on the actual process to ensure that districts align resources to match needs with the ultimate goal of full MTSS implementation.

MTSS Stakeholder Meeting

February 4, 2016
12:30-3:30 p.m.

River Bluff Education Center

the majority of MTSS implementation is led by a unified effort between general education and special education. Thus giving hope that one day we will talk in terms of education, not general vs. special education.

So where are we with MTSS implementation? Districts' self-assessments reveals that each district is in its own unique spot. In the months to come, GCED will support districts with implementation work.

While distinctive needs exist, a preliminary review of district needs for this year reveal

Using implementation science is a focus of RDA or Results Driven Accountability, a term now used in special education. It all boils down to the main idea behind IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We have done a good job being compliant with IDEA, but we need to focus beyond compliance to truly impact achievement. Through the appropriate and specific supports, students with disabilities should achieve academically alongside their non-disabled peers. It all boils down to closing the achievement gap.

Our administrators, teachers and support staff members are working hard to close that achievement gap. We need to ensure that our system (MTSS) supports that hard work. Too often in education we suffer from "initiative fatigue" when we implement one new thing after another. MTSS is not another initiative; MTSS is the framework of our system—the framework of the work we do every day in education. Across the nation,



common themes for evaluation of and improvement in:

- **Data** -- Data-based decision making (Problem solving teams, PLCs, intervention evaluation/fidelity checks, moving to Tiers 2 & 3)
- **Effective Instruction** -- Tier 1 Differentiation (best practices, class-wide interventions, curriculum resources)
- **System Work** -- Expand MTSS beyond reading, including other academic areas and behavior
- **Communication** -- Communication among and between leadership team, staff members, and parents.

Much more to come as we continue to build a system that provides the specific support students and staff need when they need it. Our next countywide stakeholder meeting is February 4, 2016.

Spotlight: Katy Schuerman, Kenyon-Wanamingo Elementary Principal



Katy Schuerman, began her career as a Spanish Immersion Teacher for Minneapolis Public Schools and continued to work there until her second child was born. She was then home for several years during which time her third child was born. Her family moved to Northfield so that she could teach in and her children could access Northfield's Spanish Immersion program. She taught for 14 years in Northfield and served as a teacher leader. In December of 2014 she earned her degree in Administrative Leadership from the University of St. Thomas and now serves as Kenyon-Wanamingo K-6 principal.

Ms. Schuerman is in education because "I love kids and I love being part of their growth and development. I believe all students can achieve at high levels and I am committed to doing what it takes to make that happen."

"I believe in creative problem solving and reframing the questions we ask ourselves about instruction as a way to reach all kids and help them succeed."

- Katy Schuerman

Her school year has been very positive so far, which she attributes to the great work happening in KW classrooms. KW teachers "naturally employ a Growth Mindset and are dedicated educators who invest in kids and go to great lengths to help students succeed!" She also appreciates the collaborative, supportive administrative team in KW. All of which is demonstrated through the community's pride and investment in KW schools and students. If Ms. Schuerman were fortunate enough to win \$500,000 she would invest in KW schools with curriculum and updates to key learning areas.

It is no strange coincidence that Ms. Schuerman is in education; it is in her blood. Her mother was a teacher. Her dad was a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent. younger sister is a Spanish Immersion teacher. Although her older sister and brother missed out on the education gene they have found success in accounting and architecture.

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Goodhue County Education District is a group of six southeastern Minnesota school districts: [Cannon Falls](#), [Goodhue](#), [Kenyon-Wanamingo](#), [Lake City](#), [Red Wing](#) and [Zumbrota-Mazeppa](#). Working together, the districts provide effective and efficient educational services and funding for special education programs, staff development, extended and alternative summer school services.