Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

UPDATE: School Safety and Student Well-Being Advisory Committee

2022

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.635](RCW 28A.300.635)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

House Bill (HB) 1216 (2019) directed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to establish a School Safety and Student Well-Being Advisory Committee (SS-SWAC, or the Committee).

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the State Superintendent, OSPI's School Safety Center, the Regional School Safety Centers (RSSCs) at the nine educational service districts (ESDs), school districts, and public and private schools on all matters related to comprehensive school safety and student well-being. The Committee formed in the summer of 2019 through the appointment of members and participants and met on a quarterly schedule between 2020–22 to learn about, discuss, and make recommendations for the safety and well-being of Washington's students.

In the biennium, the committee discussed the following topics under its purview:

- Safety drills

- Behavioral health

- Comprehensive school safety

- Equity

- Youth and community engagement

- School-based threat assessment

- School safety and security personnel

- Data collections related to safety and well-being programs

Each year, the work of the Committee culminated in collaboration with legislators through a school safety summit. The 2021 summit resulted in the formation of priority topics for the 2021–22 year. Stemming from those priority topics, the 2022 summit led to the creation of legislative policy and funding recommendations related to school safety and student well-being. Recommendations include:

- Reduction of bias to improve school climate and student access to supports in school

- Comprehensive school safety plans and expanded harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) supports

- Threat assessment point of contact, data collection, and required training

- Mental health supports in schools for students and staff

INTRODUCTION

A 2001 legislative budget proviso originally established the Washington State School Safety Advisory Committee and School Safety Center to address the complexities of school safety. House Bill (HB) 1216 (2019) revised the School Safety Center and placed it in state law, transforming the School Safety Advisory Committee into the new School Safety and Student Well-Being Advisory Committee (SS-SWAC, or the Committee) under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.300.635.

HB 1216 (2019) required the Committee to submit a report to the legislature by November 15, 2020, and every even-numbered year thereafter, summarizing the Committee's activities during the preceding biennium. This report provides an update on the work of the SS-SWAC and programs under HB 1216 (2019) over the course of the biennium. This report also provides strategies for the improvement of school safety and student well-being, prioritized recommendations for state policies, and the estimated cost for each recommendation.

Members and Participants

The Legislature tasked OSPI with staffing the SS-SWAC and appointing the members of the Committee. OSPI sent requests for representative appointment to executive directors, supervisors, and other executive cabinet members of the sectors, organizations, and agencies identified in the legislation.

Over the course of the biennium, the SS-SWAC has continued to add to the membership of the committee. A current list of members can be accessed on the OSPI SS-SWAC webpage.

Youth Advisory Council

OSPI created the School Safety and Student Well-Being Advisory Committee's Youth Advisory Council (SS-SWAC-YAC) to convene youth perspective and voice from students across the state with diverse geographic and demographic representation. Current SS-SWAC-YAC membership consists of youth from varying geographical, racial, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds.

The SS-SWAC-YAC meets monthly and provides a presentation on a topic of their choosing at each advisory committee meeting. The SS-SWAC-YAC chooses presentation topics through group consensus and all associated work and research is done by the young people involved. It is the SS-SWAC's intent to ensure that engagement with the youth is always meaningful and beneficial to them to ensure they are not tokenized or manipulated.

Throughout the biennium meeting schedule, the SS-SWAC-YAC presented on the following topics:

- Mental health accessibility in schools

- Chronic absenteeism

- Women's health and safety

- Communication systems during health emergencies

- Mental health and the transition back to in-person learning

- Reducing racial bias and disparities in schools

- Harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) of LGBTQIA+ youth

The SS-SWAC-YAC also actively contributed alongside other members and legislators during the 2021 and 2022 Annual School Safety Summits, as the Committee reviewed and created recommendations to the legislature.

Past SS-SWAC-YAC presentations can be accessed on the OSPI SS-SWAC webpage.

UPDATE STATUS

The SS-SWAC continues to meet and discuss matters of policy and funding. The Committee intends to use the same format for the upcoming biennium that it used in the past biennium.

SUMMARY OF WORK: 2020–22 BIENNIUM

Convening the Committee

The Committee met quarterly during the 2020–22 biennium and held Annual School Safety Summits on June 17, 2021, and June 16, 2022.

In 2020–21, the Committee dedicated meeting time to a variety of topics regarding school safety and student well-being. This work culminated at the 2021 Annual School Safety Summit where priority topics were formulated.

In 2021–22, the Committee focused on the priority topics from the 2021 Annual School Safety Summit. Meetings were themed to provide further understanding of these important areas. This work culminated in the 2022 Annual School Safety Summit where committee members and legislators created recommendations to the Legislature.

Meeting notes for the 2020–22 biennium and the 2021 and 2022 Annual School Safety Summit Reports can be accessed on the OSPI SS-SWAC webpage.

Summary of Topics

The following summary describes program updates and topics of discussion throughout the biennium. This includes topics and projects that are ongoing.

Regional School Safety Centers

RCW 28A.310.510 established RSSCs at the nine ESDs, which fall under the purview of the Committee for review and consultation. These RSSCs are staffed with three positions: a Behavioral Health Navigator (BHN), a Threat Assessment Coordinator (TAC), and a Comprehensive School Safety Coordinator (CSSC). The legislature did not fund the CSSC position until the 2021 legislative session. ESD and OSPI staff meet monthly to ensure coordination and communication across the state. All RSSC and OSPI safety staff coordinate efforts across ESDs, districts, and schools to provide technical assistance, resources, and training across the state.

Comprehensive School Safety Coordinators

RCW 28A.320.125 and RCW 28A.310.510 authorized the CSSC position. Each ESD identified an individual to fulfill that function. CSSCs provide technical assistance to districts and schools on the development of required comprehensive school safety plans. They provide; training and technical assistance for school safety and security staff, HIB, best practices for implementing required drills, and other school safety-related topics. CSSCs meet monthly, with optional drop-in office hours weekly.

School-Based Threat Assessment

RCW 28A.320.123 and RCW 28A.310.510 required the creation of School Based Threat Assessment Programs at the district and school level to be implemented beginning in the 2020–21 school year. Statute directs the ESDs and OSPI to provide training, technical assistance, and support for districts to implement threat assessment programs in compliance with state law. School based threat assessment was an agenda item at three of the meetings in the biennium.

During these meetings, Washington state TACs gave presentations focused on the topics of equity and prevention. Presenters gave special focus to the perception of bias and the types of biases that may exist within threat assessment teams. One presenter also provided a case study to explain the benefits of threat assessment to the student, school, and community.

Behavioral Health Navigators

In 2020, the legislature funded the BHN component of RCW 28A.310.510 at each ESD's RSSC to help school districts develop and implement comprehensive suicide prevention and behavioral health supports for students. BHNs interviewed both district and school staff to inventory what behavioral health services students already had access to and other areas of need. The BHNs shared the interview results with districts in their region and together, as a statewide group, created protocols, training opportunities, and technical assistance to better recognize and respond to student signs of emotional or behavioral distress. Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention are included in this work. In addition, the BHNs identify and share which community organizations and service providers are available when students need additional support on an ongoing basis.

School Safety and Security Personnel

RCW 28A.320.124 modified and updated previous legislation which had established a School Resource Officer (SRO) program in Washington to include all school safety and security personnel: SROs, school-based safety and security personnel, and any contracted security services. The bill also added new training requirements for safety and security staff personnel. The CSSCs at the nine ESDs are delivering the new training requirements, while OSPI is carrying out the new data collection requirements. Training materials have been developed and trainings are delivered in person and virtually. OSPI has also completed an initial data collection to measure staffing levels. That data can be accessed here: Safety and Security Staff Data, 2021–22 school year.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

RCW 28A.600.477 modified and added requirements related to HIB. Among the changes was the requirement for district HIB contacts, referred to as HIB Compliance Officers, to participate in annual training. The addition of information on hazing as well as information on transgender/gender inclusive schools also impacted the training. District transgender/gender inclusive contacts are also required to participate in the HIB Compliance Officer training. The HIB Compliance Officer training was offered during the 2021–22 school year, as were optional weekly HIB Compliance Officer office hours.

Great Washington ShakeOut

The Great Washington ShakeOut is an earthquake preparedness exercise that Washington schools participate in annually. After two years of very little participation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 saw a sizeable increase in the number of districts, schools, and students participating.

The Great Washington ShakeOut provides an opportunity for schools to prepare for a potential seismic event and meet their drop, cover, hold-on drill requirement. OSPI coordinates with the state Departments of National Resources, Emergency Management Division, and other statewide partners in preparation for this event.

Active Shooter Scenarios in Schools

House Bill 1941 (2022), prohibiting active shooter scenarios, added rules around required safety drills. Specifically, it prohibited live simulations or reenactments of active shooter scenarios.

OSPI and the CSSCs provided clarification and technical assistance to districts and schools, clarifying the differences among drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises. Technical assistance from the CSSCs and OSPI also noted that live simulations or reenactments are not drills and that all drills must be both trauma-informed and age and developmentally appropriate.

Gang Violence Prevention

Within the state Operating Budget, Senate Bill 5693 (2022), Sec; 522 (39) provided $250,000 for fiscal year 2023 for OSPI to contract with a nonprofit organization to develop and provide a Latino youth-on-youth gang violence prevention program for students.

OSPI has contracted with the Latino Civic Alliance (LCA), a non-profit organization which meets the requirement of the legislative language, to conduct this work. The LCA has begun working on the requirements of this contract.

Behavioral Health

Over the course of the biennium, the Committee discussed many facets of behavioral health as they relate to the safety and well-being of youth. Examples of related work include the work of the BHNs at each ESD and the University of Washington (UW) SMART Center's Mental Health Literacy Library, which is designed to be a public inventory of universal school-based mental health curricula and program resources for schools.

Reducing Racial Bias and Youth and Community Engagement

As focus topics from the 2021 Summit, reducing racial bias and youth and community engagement were central to the Committee's work in the spring of 2022. The Committee heard presentations on bias and perception and fostering inclusive school cultures to promote school safety and student well-being. These presentations focused on definitions, courageous conversations, racial equity protocols, school district demographics, statistics, culturally responsive practices, and other related topics.

School Safety and Student Well-being Data Collection

This section provides an overview of data collections relating to school safety and student well-being programs. Data collection is authorized under Washington state legislation and federal grants received at OSPI. The data show the current work being done at district and ESD level and assesses available services and supports.

Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention

In 2019–21, the BHNs collected data through interviews with school district staff in their region. The resulting dataset includes interviews from 219 districts in Washington, representing all 9 ESDs and 37 of the 39 counties in the state.

BHNs conducted interviews using a protocol that included 62 questions, covering the following school-based behavioral health topics:

- Behavioral health services in schools

- Referrals to outside providers

- Past coordination with outside providers

- Memorandums of understanding (MOUs)

- Suicide prevention

- Behavioral health screening

- Mental health and substance abuse

- Medicaid

- COVID-19

48% of districts surveyed said that all students in their school community do **not** have access to behavioral health services. The most frequently cited barriers to student access were:

- School staffing shortages

- School service capacity does not match the nature of student needs

- Lack of community provider capacity

- Lack of physical access to services and/or transportation issues

- Insurance and/or other cost barriers

- Stigma

- Ineffective coordination of services within schools

- Inconsistent access to services across districts

- Language and/or cultural barriers

47% of districts indicated that they offer behavioral health services to students both directly and through partnerships with outside agencies 11% of districts said they offer services through school staff only. 35% of districts said they offer services through partnerships with outside agencies only. 7% of districts said they offer no behavioral health services at all. Interview data indicated that school districts use a wide variety of often inconsistent funding sources to fund behavioral health services for students.

79% of districts indicated that they have a suicide prevention protocol. Of those 174 districts, 56% said they had a formal protocol, 19% said they had an informal protocol, and 25% either did not specify whether their protocol was formal, informal, or indicated that they had a partial or outdated protocol. Only 21% of districts with a protocol indicated that their suicide prevention tools were available in multiple languages. Many districts offered feedback on specific suicide prevention planning needs. Among those, the most cited feedback was a need for more assistance improving existing protocol, implementation support for specific programming, and need for a true protocol. Overall, 76% of districts were interested in learning more about what suicide prevention protocols are available.

Next steps for this project include continued data analysis to provide deeper insight into the statewide needs and the existing service gaps in school-based behavioral health offerings.

Grant Required Threat Assessment Data

In 2018, OSPI was awarded a Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Grant. The grant included data collection components for the tracking of training and the number of Level I and Level II threat assessments completed. The following tables provide specific information about trainings and threat assessments conducted from July of 2019 through June of 2022.

Table 1: Threat Assessment Trainings

Year	Level I	Level II
2019–20	106	9
2020–21	63	22
2021–22	41	3

Source: OSPI BJA STOP Grant Data Collection

Table 2: Threat Assessments Conducted

Year	Level I	Level II
2019–20	348	64
2020–21	112	38
2021–22	637	113

Source: OSPI BJA STOP Grant Data Collection

To date, the ESDs have met and exceeded all proposed goals for training and assessments under the BJA Grant and their legislative requirements under RCW 28A.310.510. TACs continue to work with their districts on training and the implementation of threat assessment to fidelity.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.300.645

RCW 28A.300.645 requires OSPI to collect data to monitor school district implementation of three types of safety plans:

- Comprehensive district safety plans (also referred to as emergency operations plans, or EOPs) and safe school plans

- Emotional or behavioral distress plans

- Threat assessment programs

OSPI collected the first round of data in the Spring of 2022 using three surveys: One for comprehensive district safety planning, one for emotional or behavioral distress planning, and one for threat assessment.

RCW 28A.300.645 requires OSPI to monitor these programs no less than once every five years. For the first year of monitoring, OSPI surveyed one fifth of Washington school districts. OSPI sent each survey to 67 school districts and each survey had a response rate of 97% (65 districts).

OSPI used survey data to assess how many districts had the required safety plans in place, how compliant the plans were, and to produce "scores" for certain subject areas, based on answers to certain survey questions. For instance, answers to questions about training would make up a district's training score. OSPI has shared these scores with ESD RSSC staff so that they can help districts create and implement comprehensive school safety plans.

Comprehensive District Safety Planning

69% of districts surveyed reported that they had adopted and implemented a comprehensive district safety plan. 58% of districts with a comprehensive safety plan reported updating their plan at least once a year, indicating that their plan is up to date. 72% of districts surveyed reported that all the schools in their district had developed and implemented a comprehensive safe school plan.

Of the districts that reported having comprehensive safety plans, their plans were, on average, 69% compliant with the requirements of RCW 28A.320.125. Data from the first round of surveys suggests that, for districts with safety plans, staff training is a weak point. On average, districts with safety plans scored a 37% on training-related questions.

Emotional or Behavioral Distress Planning

47% of districts surveyed reported that they had adopted a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students. On average, district plans for emotional or behavioral distress were 82% complete for addressing sexual abuse, 77% complete for addressing substance abuse, 91% complete for addressing suicide, and 80% complete for addressing violence.

Of the districts that reported having emotional or behavioral distress plans, their plans were, on average, 82% compliant with the requirements of RCW 28A.320.127. 87% of districts that had adopted a plan reported that they held trainings on that plan for staff that work with students at least as often as once a year.

Data from the first round of surveys suggests that, for districts with emotional or behavioral distress plans, more equity considerations could be incorporated into their plans. Questions on the survey that comprised the "equity considerations" score covered subjects such as decreasing cultural and language barriers for students and families and increasing access to services for marginalized or under-represented student groups. On average, districts with emotional or behavioral distress plans scored a 40% on equity-related questions.

Threat Assessment Programs

66% of districts surveyed reported having a threat assessment program, and 74% of those districts have both a threat assessment policy and procedure in place. Of the districts that reported having threat assessment programs, their programs were, on average, 65% compliant with the requirements of RCW 28A.320.123.

53% of districts with threat assessment programs were not training their threat assessment team often enough, reporting that their team trained on their threat assessment process less often than once a year. Additionally, the survey highlighted equity concerns around focusing threat assessments on situational variables instead of a student's demographic or personal characteristics. Although 86% of districts with a threat assessment program did include this consideration in their threat assessment policy, only 18% of them were able to adequately communicate what tools they were using for this purpose. These concerns are supported by districts' low scores (35%, on average) on questions related to data analysis, most of which focused on using data analysis to identify potential equity issues. Overall, 60% of districts that have threat assessment programs reported that their threat assessment process did **not** create guidelines for the threat assessment team to collect, report, and review quantitative data on their activities.

Next Steps
- Continued data analysis to provide deeper insight into district preparedness

- Working with district staff and ESD RSSCs to help surveyed districts create and implement compliant plans

- Continued data collection for the remaining 80% of districts that have not yet been surveyed

Annual School Safety Summits

RCW 28A.300.273 requires the Annual School Safety Summit to:

- Establish a statewide plan for funding school safety

- Monitor the progress of a statewide plan and implement school safety planning efforts

- Train school safety professionals and integrate mental health and security measures

- Local Education Agency (LEA) safety planning

The Annual School Safety Summits provide a forum to identify and prioritize recommendations from the Committee. The Committee convened the 2021 Annual School Safety Summit on Thursday, June 11, 2021, and the 2022 Annual School Safety Summit on Thursday, June 16, 2022. The Summits included attendees from the state legislature, Committee members and participants, OSPI representatives, and members of the SS-SWAC-YAC.

The Committee used suggestions created at the 2021 Annual School Safety Summit to develop the agendas for the 2021–22 SS-SWAC meetings and to guide the work of the Committee overall. Furthermore, the Committee themed each meeting to provide additional learning and discussion specific to the priority topics. At the 2022 Summit, the group utilized the work of the 2021 Summit and the SS-SWAC year to further build upon and expand on policy and funding suggestions. Through the 2022 Summit Process, the attendees settled on 4 recommendations to provide to the legislature.

The Annual School Safety Summit Reports can be accessed on the OSPI SS-SWAC webpage.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

Recommendation #1: Reduction of Bias to Improve School Climate and Student Access to Supports in School

- Goals:
    - Provide professional development related to equity, cultural responsiveness, and anti-racism.
    - Engage youth voice and the community on the creation and review of policies and practices and curriculum that affect them, with particular emphasis on youth voice.
    - Provide more inclusive learning opportunities to decrease feelings of exclusion and increase student well-being, reduce absences and learning loss, create a positive school climate, create a space for more representation of historically marginalized groups, and help reinvigorate excitement and learning for underrepresented groups.
- Elimination of opportunity gaps and disproportionate effects:
    - Inclusion of more diverse voices and a better understanding of the need of different students, communities, and populations
    - More equitable district policy creation and the provision of services
    - Representation of all demographics in decision making
    - Opportunity for the voices and opinions of communities and individuals to be heard, allowing for this specific input to have an impact on policy
    - Decrease in chronic absenteeism by increasing knowledge base of school officials around the topic of culture and race and how both can affect students in the school environment
- Technical aspects:
    - Districts would be responsible for engaging youth and the community.
    - Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) would need to create a sample policy and procedure.
- Legislative alignment and/or funding:
    - This work could relate to SB 5693 (2022) Section 501(4)(gg), page 607, line 8: $1,000,000 contract with a community-based youth development nonprofit organization for a pilot program to provide behavioral health support for youth and trauma-informed, culturally responsive staff training.

- o Districts could utilize Title I funds for family engagement and to meet staffing needs and training.

Recommendation #2: Comprehensive School Safety Plans and Expanded HIB Supports

- Goals:
  - o Provide funding or add a professional learning day for school staff to map out and better understand safety procedures.
    - Topics would include current and/or relevant issues such as active shooter or SEL. This funding would provide staff time to plan, educate on, and address safety including physical and mental health needs of students and staff, placing schools in a proactive position.
  - o Increase safety for everyone by shifting the narrative across the system to place schools in a proactive position. This includes:
    - Awareness of traumatic experiences and triggers related to school drills and the lack of communication.
    - Mental health and behavioral health support for students that may have trauma resurfaced through drills or having an SRO on site.
    - Expansion of HIB Supports.
    - Emphasis on understanding the different types of bullying (racism, LGBTQIA+, etcetera) and increased training opportunities for school staff.
    - Inclusion of youth voice and lived experiences to improve school climate, safety trainings, and decision-making
- Communication:
  - o To mitigate trauma and triggers, schools should communicate the intent to perform a drill to provide transparency and understanding.
  - o After an incident, staff, students, and the community should be notified of the incident to provide transparency and understanding.
  - o Connection and collaboration on the intersection of work with state agencies and/or public health will help to provide services and supports in the aftermath of traumatic events.
- Elimination of opportunity gaps and disproportionate effects:
  - o Support from trained staff to all students when needed and minding the needs of students throughout the creation of comprehensive school safety plans

- Technical and aspects:
  - Connection and collaboration with the CSSC at each ESD would assist districts in acquiring necessary training and assistance in creating safety plans.
  - Impact on building administrators and increased expectations need to be taken into consideration.
  - Dedicated time for district staff to assess and develop resources, including a new or increased FTE, may be necessary to fully implement comprehensive school safety in each school.
  - Comprehensive School Safety Plans should utilize lessons learned, disease mitigation, and other aspects of the past and current situations to ensure thorough and detailed plan development.
  - Monitoring to assist districts in implementation and accountability should be increased.
  - Based on monitoring, targeted technical assistance could be provided for schools who have indicated they do not have plans or are not confident in their current plans based on data collection.
- Legislative alignment and/or funding:
  - Comprehensive School Safety Plans and requirements fall under RCW 28A.320.125.
  - Funding may be necessary to pay for professional development.
  - School resource assessments should be funded with the intention of supporting and building comprehensive school safety plans.

Recommendation #3: Threat Assessment Point of Contact, Data Collection, and Required Training

- Goals:
  - Ensure each district has a designated point of contact (POC) and a required data collection to monitor for disparities and required training for all team members surrounding threat assessment.
  - Increase implementation of threat assessment in the state to fidelity with best practices.
  - Focus on a prevention method to school violence, including providing detailed information on who to contact when a threat is received.
  - Required data collection and training with an increased equity component to decrease disparities in assessment.

- - The RCW 28A.300.645 data collection findings presented earlier in this report support this recommendation

- Elimination of opportunity gaps and disproportionate effects:

  o Decrease in inequities in implementation a better community understanding of the school threat assessment process through increased training requirements for school threat assessment team staff

  o Clear indication of districts in need of further training on implementation and equitable threat assessment practices through the designated data collection

- Technical aspects:

  o Increased training is required for school threat assessment team staff.

    - RCW 28A.320.123 requires districts to have school-based threat assessment programs but does not require training in threat assessment.

    - RCW 28A.310.510 requires the ESD RSSCs to have trained TACs on staff to assist districts in training and implementation of threat assessment.

  o The data collection including student demographic data, reasons for threat assessment, and discipline/exclusion data pulled from OSPI's Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).

  o An identified POC will alleviate confusion on who to contact in the event of a threat and will help with disbursement of information, connection, and coordination when a student moves from one district to another.

    - This will help to create a network so that the student can go to a trusted adult, or another student, and that person will know who to contact.

- Legislative alignment and/or funding:

  o This recommendation could include proposing amendments to RCW 28A.320.123.

  o These amendments would require funding of a currently indeterminate cost for districts to acquire training and the creation of a data collection.

Recommendation #4: Mental Health Supports in Schools for Students and Staff

- Goals:

  o Address mental health needs of both students and staff to increase wellness.

    - Often when students start having mental health problems, their academic and social emotional functioning decline. Mental health problems also create difficulty for school staff who may be experiencing secondary traumatic

stress, anxiety, or depression themselves. These concerns can leave them unable to support students or themselves, leading to absences from work in the short term and increased turnover of school staff in the long term.

- o Increase access to mental health supports in schools.

- o Implement and increase robust, proactive child-find activities to identify students with potential mental health disabilities following referral processes for Section 504 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- o Identify other students in need of supports.

- o Coordinate with community-based services and higher education institutions.

- Elimination of opportunity gaps and disproportionate effects:

  - o Increased access and removal of barriers to supports for all students and staff

    - Increasing these supports would have a significant impact on districts in rural communities with lack of access to community-based services.

  - o Expansion of 504 plans and additional accommodations for all students in need

- Technical aspects:

  - o Create a sustainable structure that uses all participants' capabilities, expertise, and materials and is consistent across the state.

  - o Create an asset mapping system to:

    - Increase awareness of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and identify available community assets.

    - Build partnerships with higher education to utilize mental health experts and internships.

    - Improve collaboration between statewide and regional stakeholders to improve mental health curriculum used in schools.

  - o Support teacher competency development for mental health.

  - o Increase accessibility necessary for students who are potentially facing a crisis.

- Legislative alignment and/or funding:

  - o House Bill (HB) 1664 (2022) provided additional funding to school districts by increasing minimum allocations for nurses, social workers, psychologists, and counselors on the prototypical funding model over three school years beginning in the 2022–23 school year.

    - HB 1664 (2022) requires districts to maintain a minimum staffing ratio across a select list of student physical social and emotional support staff positions,

which expands across more than just those that received increased allocations.

- HB 1664 (2022) provides a significant investment in physical and emotional support staff positions at districts across the state. It is currently unknown how many new Full Time Equivalent (FTE) that will result in.

  - For example, some districts may be meeting the minimum staffing ratio, in which case the law would not require them to add new staff, but they might choose to do so. For other districts, it may be a matter of re-coding existing staff so they are reported correctly, or counting contracted staff that provide physical, social, or emotional services.

o Overall, funding for school-based mental health support staff still does not meet the need many school districts are experiencing, particularly in rural communities across.

- HB 1664 raises the funding 'floor' that schools start with for mental health support staff. However, districts that are currently able to offer mental health supports that more closely approach a comprehensive, equitable continuum of supports for students can do this only by significantly supplementing baseline funds from the prototypical school funding formula with other local funding sources (grants, local levies, donations, etcetera).

o To support students with increased social and emotional needs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and to prevent the overreliance on special education and referrals to higher levels of community-based care, additional funding for students and staff that can provide direct mental health supports to students in schools is needed, beyond the allocation increases included in HB 1664.

o Committee members suggested that districts would need an additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to provide students and staff with direct services, training, and connection to broader resources. This increased funding should complement, and be in alignment with, the funding increases included in HB 1664.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Committee has met the legislative requirements set forth under HB 1216 (2019) during 2020–22 biennium. The Committee met quarterly, discussed and researched matters related to school safety and student well-being, and provided recommendations for funding and policy.

The 2022–23 year will be focused on learning and discussing topics and issues of importance related to school safety and well-being. The 2023 Annual School Safety Summit will be utilized to create priority topics for the committee to focus on during the 2023–24 year. The 2024 Safety Summit will utilize the work done over the previous years to create recommendations for the 2024 School Safety and Student Well-Being Advisory Committee Legislative Report Update.

The work of the Committee is ongoing.

LEGAL NOTICE

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