

ACSA MENTAL WELLNESS TASK FORCE

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The ACSA Mental Wellness Task Force developed a series of recommendations for the Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) to consider as it determines ACSA's legislative agenda. Rather than weighing-in on each mental health policy proposal, the Task Force is providing a framework that can be utilized by the LPC and staff to assess mental health legislative proposals.

WHY:

This section is meant to capture the core of ACSA's work around mental health. The Task Force believes ACSA's mental health agenda should reflect the following principles.

- Addressing student, staff, and broader, community mental health needs is a moral imperative
- All students should have equitable access to resources and services
- Early detection and prevention should be prioritized

ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION:

Addressing school site and community mental health needs will require a concerted effort by not only district and site leaders, teachers, and parents, but also representatives from a variety of county agencies, and community based organizations and partners.

- Interagency, regional consortia, based at either the LEA, COE, or SELPA, would streamline service delivery, eliminate duplicity, and maximize local impact
- Regional partners should adopt a common MOU, develop a comprehensive strategic plan, and commit to braiding funds
- Regional partners should include but are not limited to juvenile and family court systems, behavioral health organizations, child welfare, law enforcement, SELPA, county offices of education, school districts, school site leaders and parents

FUNDING:

LEAs need access to robust and sustainable funding, which allows locals the flexibility to meet their unique needs.

- Funding must be in addition to and outside of Proposition 98
- There are immediate needs that can be addressed using short-term funding but sustainable funding sources are needed to meet long-term needs
- Broad parameters are fine but locals must have some flexibility in how funds are utilized
- Funding should support the delivery of service at school sites, whether or not funds are provided directly to LEAs or through designated regional consortia

TRAINING:

Training is key not only to identify warning signs and ensure proper response but also for establishing "buy-in" and creating cultures and systems that are sustainable.

- Specific trainings should not be prescribed to LEAs, recognizing that each community will have unique needs
- All school stakeholders, including students and parents, should have access to mental health training
- Training for teachers should be the top priority because they are best positioned to identify the mental health needs of students
- Funding must be provided to LEAs to support the offering of increased training