

SANTA CLARA COUNTY STUDENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | MARCH 2023



BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is developing and strengthening partnerships with school districts and Managed Care Plans in support of creating a sustainable school health system that can meet the needs of youth and families. SCCOE's actions and attention on the longstanding youth mental health crisis is part of a larger statewide effort set forth by Governor Gavin Newsom and the State of California with the launch of the Children Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI). To meet this aim, the CYBHI established the School Behavioral Health Incentive Program (SBHIP) which provides funding to Managed Care Plans to partner with County Offices of Education and school districts to build infrastructure that will prepare schools to begin billing Managed Care Plans for behavioral health services provided to students at school. A needs assessment was completed to inform the development of this infrastructure for Santa Clara County.

Why SBHIP

Schools are a critical point of access for preventative and early-intervention behavioral health services. Starting January 1, 2024 health plans will be required to reimburse schools for services provided to youth ages 0-25. This aims to address health equity gaps, inequities, and disparities in access to behavioral health services.

Urgent attention is required so that students and families have equitable access to behavioral health services. In response, the SCCOE has taken the following actions:

- Established & Expanded: Executive Steering Committee
- Conducted A Needs Assessment
- Mapped Supports & Resources
- Identified Gaps
- Developed A Common Logic Model
- Developed A Strategic Plan & Implementation Roadmap

The model is designed to ensure resources are available to students and families to support a prevention-focused, inclusive definition of mental health and wellness. School-based services allow school staff to be proactive and provide prevention and early intervention to support healthy mental and social emotional growth so students can be academically focused and more successful.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Santa Clara County Office of Education along with the County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services and Managed Care Plans partnered with SRI International to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to develop deeper understandings of the behavioral health needs of children and youth in schools in Santa Clara County. Below are significant findings from the needs assessment.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

As behavioral needs such as anxiety, depression, and stress among students continue to rise, so does the need for accessible, culturally responsive behavioral health services for students and families in Santa Clara County.

The assessment informed the selection of **four targeted interventions** aimed at the need for funding and partnerships to develop the infrastructure for schools to begin billing managed care plans by January 1, 2024.

1) Build and Expand Partnerships



- Culturally responsive programs and services
- Equity in mental health services among students facing socioeconomic barriers, students with disabilities, students with high levels of academic achievement, LGBTQIA+ students, and students of color
- Streamlined referral process
- Mental health awareness among school staff, families, and students
- Improved communication between in-school providers and CBOs
- Secure ongoing funding

2) Enhance IT Systems and Data Use



- Centralized process for billing
- Data tracking, cross-system communication, and connection of student services to student outcomes
- Improved communication between in-school providers and CBOs

3) Expand Implementation of Wellness Centers



- Access to behavioral health services on school campuses
- Prevention and early intervention
- Decrease stigma typically associated with mental health

4) Improve Workforce Development



- Increase number of qualified mental health staff
- Culturally responsive staff
- Training for school staff and educators
- Administrative support