



MD-SMHRP 2023-2024 Learning Community for Maryland School District Leaders

Learning Community sessions will be a series of nine 60-minute Zoom meetings with an introduction and welcome; **~45 minutes of facilitated presentation and discussion by local school district leaders** to share successes, challenges, and resources related to each topic; and **~10 minutes of presentation by leaders from the Maryland State Department of Education and the National Center for School Mental Health**. We encourage participation by district leaders and teams engaged in supporting student well-being and school mental health efforts.

1. Addressing Substance Use in Schools (September 13, 2023)

Students' use of and exposure to others' use of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices, alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs are major concerns for schools and communities. This session will focus on increasing knowledge and access to student substance use prevention and intervention supports and services. Presenters will share best practices including support for identifying and referring students with substance use concerns and strategies to support students who have been exposed to adversity and distress, including substance use stressors.

2. Positive and Restorative Approaches to Discipline (October 11, 2023)

Punitive discipline practices may neglect root causes of students' behavior, leading to negative impacts on well-being and academic success. This session will focus on how the use of restorative practices, a diverse and multi-tiered set of classroom and school-based strategies, can improve school climate, offer an alternative to exclusionary discipline, and help students and communities heal from harm and/or trauma. Presenters will share successes, challenges, and resources regarding implementing positive and restorative approaches to discipline in their district.

3. Supporting Student Transition to/from Inpatient Hospitalization (November 8, 2023)

Supporting students' transition to or from inpatient hospitalization ensures continuity of care, promoting students' mental health and academic success. This session will cover critical topics including suicidal ideation assessment, crisis protocol development, provider collaboration, reintegration planning, and family engagement. Presenters will share successes and challenges in implementing targeted interventions, fostering a supportive environment, and addressing potential challenges to seamless transitions.

4. Tier II Implementation (December 13, 2023)

Implementing early intervention services and supports for students with mild distress or at risk for additional concerns (Tier II) may pose a greater challenge than promoting mental health for all (Tier I) or treating students' significant distress and impaired functioning (Tier III). This session will review best practices for identifying, staffing, implementing, and funding Tier II services and supports and provide Tier II intervention resources. Presenters will share their experiences implementing Tier II services and supports, including utilization of specific interventions.



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5. Supporting Cultural & Racial Equity in School Mental Health (January 10, 2024)

Supporting cultural and racial equity in school mental health improves student well-being and fosters an inclusive environment. This session will provide actionable steps to assess and address biases and historical disparities, enhance cultural humility, and identify resources for diverse populations. Presenters will share how they address social injustices in their communities and create safe, supportive learning environments for all students.

6. Managing Behavioral Health Crises (February 14, 2024)

Increases in student behavioral health crises remain a concern for school systems in Maryland and across the nation. This session will focus on the use of culturally-responsive and trauma-informed crisis response systems and crisis intervention, management, assessment, and prevention tools. Presenters will review crisis response and prevention successes, challenges, and strategies including topics related to school staff training and community partnership in crisis response.

7. Funding School Mental Health (March 13, 2024)

Best practices in school mental health funding and sustainability include braiding a variety of funding pathways, maximizing reimbursement opportunities, retaining school mental health staff, and maximizing community partnerships. This session will review available funding mechanisms and strategies to implement funding best practices. Presenters will share their successes and challenges in obtaining funding, supporting students regardless of insurance type or status, and accessing community resources to supplement school and district capacity.

8. Behavioral Threat Assessments (April 10, 2024)

[Maryland's Model Policy for Behavior Threat Assessment](#) provides guidelines for implementing behavioral threat assessments in Maryland public schools. However, local environments may influence best practices and student and community outcomes. This session will address behavioral threat assessment implementation considerations such as team development, equity, family and community engagement, information sharing, follow up, and safety planning. Presenters will discuss how threat assessments fit into their larger comprehensive school safety efforts and their implementation successes and challenges.

9. What Worked and Where We Are Going: Reflecting on School Mental Health Successes and Planning for Next Year (May 8, 2024)

This session will highlight districts' past-year school mental health successes including ways that the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program (MD-SMHRP) has supported, enriched, or enhanced hard-earned school mental health wins! District leaders will discuss how their use of MD-SMHRP supports and other strategies contributed to school continuous improvement efforts, positive outcomes for their district, and strategic and action planning for next year.