

# SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

## District-Wide Expansion



## Mineral Point Unified School District

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Elementary: At the Elementary School, mental health has been a core part of the guidance lessons that are delivered by our school counselor weekly to all classrooms. In addition, we have developed a social-emotional learning team that meets monthly to create and plan opportunities to support our students, including Mindful Mondays (morning announcements include a mindfulness moment, discussions of mental health and practicing wellness activities throughout the month of May), and identifying needs for common language and practices school-wide. Students identified for services are supported through additional lessons in the classroom, supportive groups, individual check-ins and skill building, check-in/check-out supports, mentor connections, individualized break plans, behavior plans, and alternative schedules.

Middle School/High School: At the Middle School, we have started a screening process for social-emotional and behavioral needs, which will be expanded to include 9th grade. We have implemented SEL lessons on emotion regulation, self-awareness, adolescent brain development, managing stress, goal setting, diversity, and coping skills. A referral pathway to the student support team was created. Relationship mapping was completed to ensure that every student has an adult connection in our building in both high school and middle school. Yoga and mindfulness enrichment opportunities are provided for students, and in the next school year, we are adding a Raise Your Voice Club (anti-stigma for mental health), Sources of Strength, and other clubs and activities.

## KEY CONTRIBUTORS

CWM Counseling

Iowa County Mental  
Health Coalition

Iowa County  
Suicide Coalition

District Pupil Services Team:

*Angela Klein*

*Alex Walsh*

*Erika Brunson*

*Katelyn Oellerich*

*Dani Rob*

District Teachers, Staff,  
and Administrators

## REFERRAL PATHWAYS & EXPANSION

In 2018, a Student Services team was created at both the elementary and middle/high schools. This supported key Student Services players in coming together to discuss student needs. Data has been reviewed, including attendance, grades, and behavior referrals. Based on the data and staff input at bi-weekly meetings, individualized plans were created to best support students.

Students are identified as needing support through parent, staff, and student referrals, which can be completed through an identified Student Services Team Referral process. Once identified, students are supported through additional lessons in the classroom, supportive groups, individual check-ins and skill building, check-in/check-out supports, mentor connections, individualized break plans, behavior plans, and alternative schedules.

Our school-based Student Services team has increased in its capacity to service our students: in 2018, both a pupil services director and school psychologist were hired; in the past, this had been a one-person job. In addition, in 2021, we hired our first school social worker. These additions in service providers allowed for an increase in students seen, as well as more collaborative efforts to support whole-group social/emotional learning.

## UNIVERSAL APPROACHES

1.) *Universal Approaches to Wellness and School Mental Health Wellness Committee:* This committee's goal is to support our staff's overall wellness. The committee offers opportunities to learn about physical, emotional, and mental health. The committee also works to promote activities that involve practicing well-being, including walking, being active, and taking mental breaks.

2.) *SEL Committee Elementary:* This committee began meeting during the 2018-19 school year with a goal of identifying building-wide needs in social-emotional learning.

*Middle School:* This committee began meeting during the 2021-2022 school year with a collective mission: To provide the school community with the foundation for lifelong social and emotional learning in a safe and caring environment. We have implemented fidgets in the classrooms, a sensory path, and advisory community building activities.

3.) *Therapy Dogs:* Both the Elementary and Middle/High School buildings have a therapy dog available for all students. The therapy dog stays with one person, and students are able to go to the dog, or the dog can be brought to them when they are experiencing a challenging time.





### ***PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES***

Our families are included in all aspects of support for students. We share with families what is happening in the classrooms through newsletters, Facebook posts, emails, and phone calls. When students receive more individualized services, families are included to ensure that their input is part of the planning process—and also have updates shared with them to support students in using coping strategies at home.

Our school is a certified Families And Schools Together (FAST) site. Each year, families are offered an opportunity to be a part of this program. FAST is coordinated by the school psychologist and involves another school partner, community partner, and parent partner. The goal of this program is to support communication and building relationships between families and schools, while also supporting the family unit by teaching parents strategies to build their relationships with their kids.

### ***ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS***

Our district is focused on meeting students' primary needs before learning is prioritized. We partner with the Pointer Pantry for food on the weekends and are creating a "care closet" to support families with personal care items. Our school-based mental health counselor accepts most or all insurance providers, including BadgerCare, and our district pupil services team helps families seek out resources in the community.

Our district has an alternative learning program (Options in Education) that supports students in middle and high school. Not only are Mineral Point Unified School District students serviced here, but we also offer this opportunity for other students in the area. This alternative learning environment supports students with diverse learning needs to complete high school with more individualized support. Students have the opportunity to learn in a way that works well for them while also discovering enrichment opportunities such as art, craftsmanship, and work release.

### ***MENTAL HEALTH MONTH***

Our district puts a lot of emphasis on Mental Health Month. Mental Health Matters Month Highlights: Weekly themes included Movement to Support Well-being, Get the Word Out about Mental Health, Spread Kindness & Write it Out to Support Self-Care. Other initiatives included yoga, a kick-off assembly, classroom teaching about mental health, paper flowers and pictures for the nursing home, coloring/journaling to reflect on thoughts, sunshine baskets for farmers, a anti-stigma pledge, Kindness Notes, and Rock-Painting.

## **SUBMITTED BY**

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## **SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHTS**

*a partnership of the **Coalition for Expanding School-Based Mental Health in Wisconsin** & **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction***



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