



# ABC Unified School District

MAY 2018



**Project Cal-Well** is a five-year (2014–19) “Now Is The Time” Project Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (<https://www.samhsa.gov/nitt-ta/project-aware-grant-information>).

Through the California Department of Education, Project Cal-Well (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/projectcalwell.asp>) is implementing programs statewide and in partnership with: Garden Grove Unified School District, ABC Unified School District and San Diego County Office of Education.

## Strengthening Mental Health Supports for Students and Staff

Project Cal-Well’s mission is to increase awareness of and improve mental health and wellness of California’s kindergarten through grade twelve students, and provide training for school personnel to detect and respond to mental health issues. This brief provides highlights of ABC Unified School District’s (ABCUSD) Project Cal-Well efforts in the third year of implementation (October 2016-September 2017).

### Project Goals

1

Create **positive school climates** that promote healthy social-emotional development and well-being

2

Increase availability of and **access to school-based mental health services** for students and their families

3

Build partnerships and cross-system collaborations to promote youth well-being and **access to community-based services**

4

Deliver **Youth Mental Health First Aid** to train concerned adults how to identify and help students experiencing mental health challenges

# 1. Creating Positive School Climates

**School-Wide Interventions:** ABCUSD implemented several school-wide interventions to improve school climates. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a school-wide framework to improve healthy social-emotional development and well-being. By the end of the 2017-18 school year, 26 out of the 29 ABCUSD schools will be implementing PBIS. Eight of the schools scored 70% or above for Tier 1 in the Tiered Fidelity Index Measures.

Additionally, 4,000 participants at 11 schools participated in Playworks, two schools implemented restorative practices, two National Alliance for Mental Illness on Campus (NAMI) clubs were formed, and 611 students received Skillstreaming training. ABCUSD also provided 95 professional development trainings for teachers, para-educators, after-school staff, administrators and community agencies that served youth and families.

**Improved Protective Factors:** As shown below, the majority of ABCUSD secondary students (7th, 9th and 11th grade) feel that their schools encouraged students to feel responsible for how they act and to understand how others think and feel.

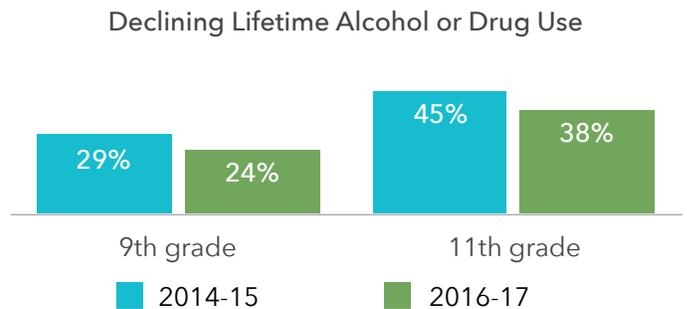
Majority of secondary ABCUSD students felt their schools encouraged students to...	
72%	Feel responsible for how they act
62%	Understand how others think and feel



Approximately 7 in 10 ABCUSD secondary students reported they knew where to go for help when they are stressed, sad or depressed.

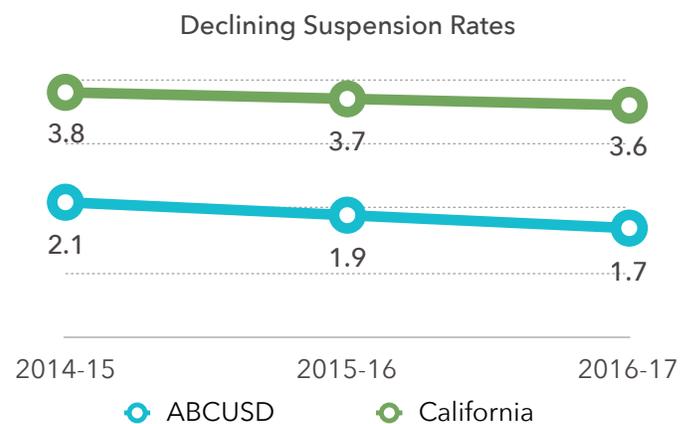
Data Source: 2016-17 ABCUSD California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) Core and Cal-Well Modules

**Reduced Substance Use:** The percentage of 9th and 11th grade students who reported lifetime alcohol or drug use has decreased since Project Cal-Well began.



Data Source: ABCUSD CHKS, Core Module

**Fewer Student Suspensions:** These school climate interventions are not only preventing the problems that lead to suspension, but also introducing alternative and more effective strategies instead of suspension. As shown below, suspension rates declined in ABCUSD and remained lower than statewide rates since Project Cal-Well began.



Data Source: <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

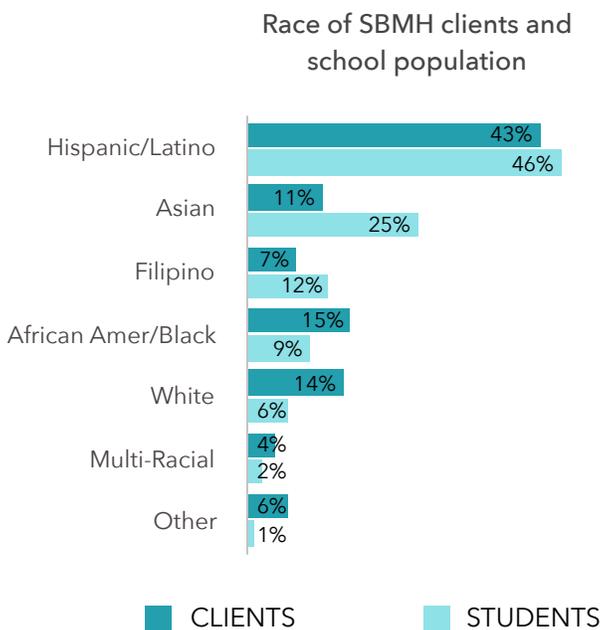
*"The impact has been that these programs have helped to alleviate stress and incorporate coping skills into individual students' lives that manifest also in academic life and classroom behaviors." - ABCUSD Wellness Coordinator*

## 2. Increasing Access to School-Based Mental Health Services

**Serving More Students:** ABCUSD has placed 34 School Based Mental Health professionals to provide access to students at each of the 29 schools. As a result in 2016-17, 2,172 students were provided SBMH services. According to Vital Research’s *2016-17 Wellness Team Report*, the primary concerns for on-going Wellness Team clients vary by school level:

- Elementary school: Social (24% of cases) and academic (17%)
- Middle school: Academic (17%), attendance (12%), and family (12%)
- High school: Anxiety (17%), depression (12%), and family (12%)

As shown below, the clients served generally reflect the diverse races of the student population, with an underrepresentation of Asian students.



Data Sources: Vital Research 2016-17 Wellness Team Report and CDE, Data Reporting Office.

*“My students know that they can come to me if they need support. Teachers and staff know they can refer students to me and consult with me to provide support to students who may be feeling unsafe and disconnected at school.”*  
- ABCUSD Wellness Coordinator

## 3. Building Partnerships and Cross-System Collaborations

**Expanded Partnerships:** ABCUSD expanded partnerships with local agencies through training opportunities for parents and staff, direct services for students, and improved referral systems. They established 21 contracts with community partners, juvenile justice agencies, universities, and child welfare services. ABCUSD also provided 21 professional development trainings to youth and family serving community-based organizations and agency partners.

**Improved Referrals:** ABCUSD improved the process for identifying students in need of referrals to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports. As a result, 177 students in 2016-17 received community-based mental health services after school-based referrals. In fact, 93% of referrals resulted in services being delivered.



**Family Workshops:** ABCUSD held 91 workshops for adult family members/caretakers through the Parent Leadership Academy and at schools throughout the district on how to identify behavioral health problems in students and the variety of social, emotional and behavioral health services available to students in the district.

*“The impact for parents and families has been that they have received support while their child was assisted. Parents were provided useful tips or skills they could implement at home.”* - ABCUSD Wellness Coordinator

## 4. Youth Mental Health First Aid

**Providing Vital Training:** Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) teaches adults who regularly interact with young people how to help adolescents who are experiencing mental health challenges, in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

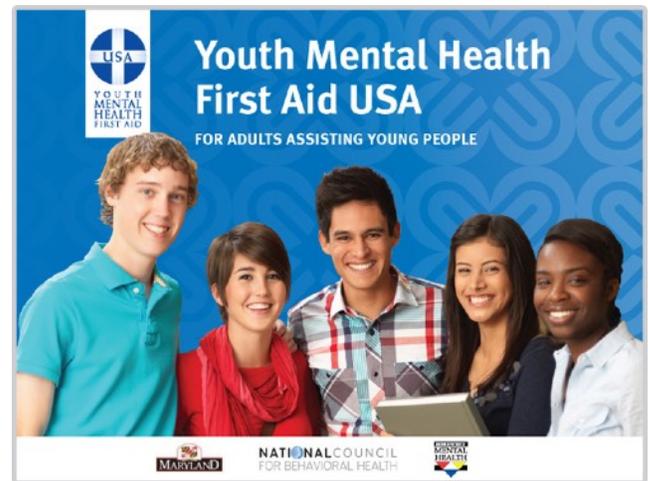
Over the three years of the Project Cal-Well grant, ABCUSD trained 756 individuals in YMHFA, who in turn referred 909 students to mental health or related services throughout the year.



YMHFA participants are trained to engage in “ALGEE” with students:

- ▶ Assess for risk of suicide or self harm
- ▶ Listen non judgmentally
- ▶ Give reassurance and information
- ▶ Encourage appropriate professional help
- ▶ Encourage self-help

Demonstrating the impact of YMHFA trainings, the *Teacher Mental Health Literacy Survey* in Spring 2017 found that ABCUSD teachers strongly agreed (4.39 on a 5-point scale) that they should apply aspects of ALGEE.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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