California’s Project Cal-Well is a consortium of the California Department of Education (CDE) and three partner local educational agencies (LEAs), including San Diego County Office of Education, Garden Grove Unified School District, and ABC Unified School District, as well as their community partners and members of the State’s Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup. 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 Project Cal-Well’s efforts in the third year of implementation.

**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: CDE and the Project Cal-Well sites implemented a variety of school-based mental health interventions, including professional development for staff and community leaders to improve school climates and student well-being. In 2016-17:

- 62 Project Cal-Well schools implemented Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).
- 16 Project Cal-Well schools implemented restorative practices.
- Project Cal-Well partners implemented over 200 trainings and workshops for teachers, para-educators, after-school staff, administrators, and community agencies related to student mental health awareness and supports.

NAMI On Campus: To empower and train high school students as future mental health leaders and advocates, CDE collaborated with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) California to conduct six workshops with 328 students. CDE also expanded partnerships with other county offices of education to co-sponsor these trainings. Information about NAMI High School Clubs can be found here: https://namica.org/nami-on-campus/high-school-clubs/

Policy Work: CDE and the Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup helped pass a bill in August 2016 requiring school districts that serve secondary students to adopt board policies that address suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The CDE developed and disseminated a model policy and provided trainings and technical assistance to help support districts in developing these policies. The CDE Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy can be found here: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp

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:** Project Cal-Well partners increased availability of school-based mental health (SBMH) services, resulting in increased students served, as seen in the chart below.

- ABCUSD has placed 34 School Based Mental Health professionals in each of their 29 schools.
- GGUSD hired 11 school psychologist interns and 35 school psychologists.
- SDCOE placed 11 master’s of social work (MSW) interns/staff in Project Cal-Well schools.

![Graph showing increase in students provided SBMH services]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Students Provided SBMH Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>2,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>3,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>4,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>4,978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School climate interventions may be contributing to decreases seen in student reports of suicide ideation since Project Cal-Well began.

**Reduced 9th Grade Student Report of Suicide Ideation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ABC USD</th>
<th>Garden Grove USD</th>
<th>San Diego (MEUSD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Building Partnerships and Cross-System Collaborations

**Expanded Partnerships:** Project Cal-Well built partnerships and cross-system collaborations to promote youth well-being and access to community-based services. For example:

- CDE recruited 14 new Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup members from various sectors to diversity membership.
- ABCUSD established 21 contracts with community partners, juvenile justice agencies, universities, and child welfare services.
- GGUSD strengthened relationships with community based providers by opening the first Family Resource Center where providers collaborate to serve students and families.
- SDCOE increased the number of community-based organizations who have signed the Global Oversight Analysis Linking Systems (GOALS) Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate service delivery to students to 27.

**Improved Referrals:** Project Cal-Well schools improved the process for identifying students in need of referrals and ensuring that they then received care. As a result, 561 students in 2016-17 received community-based mental health services after school-based referrals. In fact, 91% of referrals resulted in services being delivered.

**% Mental Health Referrals Resulting in Community-Based Service Receipt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ABC USD</th>
<th>Garden Grove USD</th>
<th>San Diego (MEUSD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

In 2016-17, 1,940 individuals were trained as YMHFA First Aiders by the CDE and LEAs, bringing the total trained since 2014-15 to 3,464, which surpasses the end of grant target of 2,580 individuals trained.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Individuals Trained as YMHFA First Aiders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
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This brief was produced for CDE by the University of California, San Francisco, Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, School Health Services Research and Evaluation Team (http://healthpolicy.ucsf.edu/school-health-services-evaluation) with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) [Award #5H79SM061895]. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA.