

Texas Statewide Plan for Student Mental Health



Revised: January 2026

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Introduction

The 86th Texas Legislature enacted landmark legislation to strengthen access to and the quality of school mental health services statewide. In 2019, key bills – House Bill (HB) 18, HB 19, HB 906, and Senate Bill (SB) 11 – established a comprehensive framework for promoting student mental health and safety. SB 11 added **Chapter 38, Subchapter F, Mental Health Resources** to the Texas Education Code (TEC), creating statutory requirements for a **Statewide Inventory of Mental Health Resources** and **Statewide Plan for Student Mental Health**.

Under TEC §§38.351-38.356, this plan must:

- ◆ Describe revisions to the **Mental Health Resource Inventory Rubric** (§38.251)
- ◆ Report results of the most recent **regional inventory of mental health resources** (§38.252)
- ◆ Report results of the most recent **statewide inventory of mental health resources** (§38.253)
- ◆ Establish **agency goals for student mental health access**, including:
 - ◇ Methods to objectively measure positive school climate,
 - ◇ Strategies to increase early, effective school-based or school-connected interventions.
 - ◇ Processes to expand referrals for students and families to specialized services outside the school.
- ◆ Identify **actions the commissioner may take without legislative action** to help districts meet these goals.
- ◆ Provide **recommendations to the legislature** to ensure all districts can achieve these goals through appropriations or other legislative action.

This updated plan reflects TEA's commitment to safe and supportive schools and equitable access to mental health services and data-driven decision-making. It aligns with TEA's strategic priorities and statutory mandates along with parental consent and involvement, ensuring that every Texas student has access to mental health resources that promote well-being, academic success, and lifelong resilience.

All school districts are expected to comply with Texas Law around parental consent.

Statutory Authority

TEA's ongoing mental health initiatives are established by recent Texas laws that mandate comprehensive support for student mental and behavioral health. These statutes, including various sections of the Texas Education Code, clearly outline the responsibilities of school systems to ensure students have access to mental health resources, promote intervention and prevention strategies, and provide training programs for educators. By embedding these requirements into law, the Texas Legislature has made student mental health a legal obligation for public schools, driving TEA's commitment to develop and implement statewide plans that address these critical needs and ensure compliance with legislative directives.

Texas Education Code for Mental and Behavioral Health

- ◆ [§38.0591](#) – Access to mental health services
- ◆ [§38.254](#) – Ensure all students have adequate access to mental health resources (Statewide Plan for Student Mental Health)

- ◆ [§21.462](#) - Resources regarding students with mental health or substance abuse conditions
- ◆ [§38.252](#) - Regional inventory of mental health resources
- ◆ [§38.253](#) - Statewide inventory of mental health resources
- ◆ [§38.351](#) - Mental health promotion and intervention, substance abuse prevention and intervention, and suicide prevention
- ◆ [§22.904](#) - Mental health training program
- ◆ [§38.036](#) - Trauma Informed Care

Commissioner's Rules for Mental Health

- ◆ 19 TAC [§153.1013](#) - Suicide Prevention Training
- ◆ 19 TAC [§153.1015](#) - Mental Health Training

Working Definition of Student Mental Health

Student mental health refers to the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of students in Texas. It encompasses how students think, feel, and behave, and it affects their ability to handle stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Good mental health is essential for students to succeed academically, socially, and personally. It includes the presence of positive mental health attributes such as resilience, self-esteem, and the ability to manage emotions, as well as the absence of mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues. This definition recognizes the importance of a supportive environment, including access to mental health resources, supportive relationships, and a safe and inclusive school climate.

Chapter 1: Texas Student Profile

In the state of Texas, over 5.5 million students are served in 1,207 school districts.¹ These students come from various backgrounds. The 2024-25 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data, the student population is comprised of 53.5% Hispanic/Latino, 24.4% White, 12.8% African American, 5.6% Asian, and 3.3% multiracial. Approximately 60.4% of Texas students are from economically disadvantaged homes.¹

Student academic success in Texas is currently measured through the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and indicators of college, career, and military readiness. In 2023, 48% of all students met or exceeded grade-level STAAR standards, compared to 38% of economically disadvantaged students. STAAR will soon transition to the Student Success Tool (SST), which will continue to provide comprehensive data on academic performance. Because mental health significantly influences learning outcomes, proactive prevention and early intervention are critical to ensuring students are ready to engage and succeed academically.

Texas students may also qualify for various programs. 18.1% of students, which accounts for over 1 million students in Texas, are enrolled in Emergent Bilingual programming, 8.5% of students qualify for the gifted and talented education program, while 15.5% of students are served by special education programming.

Contextualizing Data Within the Texas Student Population

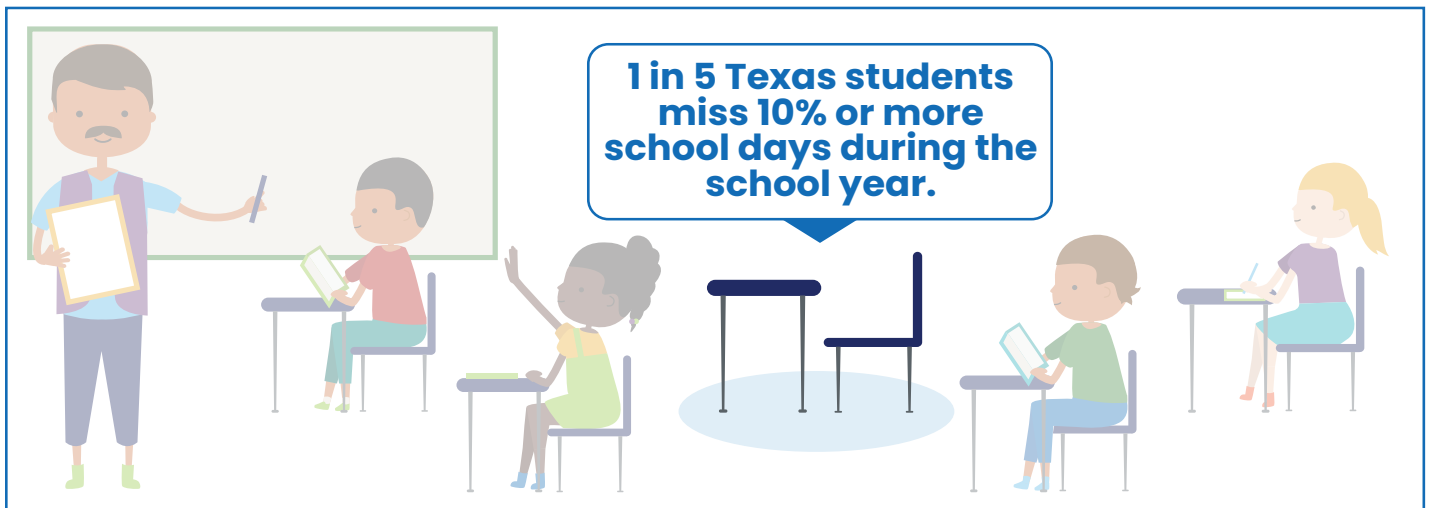


Figure 1. 1 in 5 Texas students miss 10% or more school days during the school year.²

In Texas, student absenteeism is a significant concern, with data from the 2023–24 school year showing that 19% of students were chronically absent, meaning they missed 10% or more of school days. Mental health challenges—such as anxiety, depression, grief, and trauma—may contribute to this trend.

Many students face emotional struggles that can make attending school consistently difficult. Without adequate mental health resources and early intervention, these challenges often result in increased absenteeism, as students may lack the support needed to cope with stress and emotional difficulties. Addressing mental health needs within schools is therefore essential to reducing absenteeism and supporting student well-being and academic success. Parents and school staff working together to support mental health in schools is vital for all students. As absenteeism is reduced and students have more in-class time to learn, academic outcomes improve.

Insights into Student Conduct and Discipline

During the 2024-2025 school year, 578,872 students received at least one PEIMS reportable disciplinary action. That is 10.1% of all Texas students who received a disciplinary action. There are a variety of reasons that students might face disciplinary actions, but for this report, we are going to zoom in on one category: substance abuse. 79,333 discipline counts were due to substance abuse, including 35,855 counts for marijuana/ THC, 32,581 counts for e-cigarettes, 2,388 counts for alcohol, and 3,563 counts for other controlled substances.² This data could be reflective of underlying mental health problems that students are facing, and thus, using substance abuse to cope.

Mental Health Challenges that Students Face

Depression

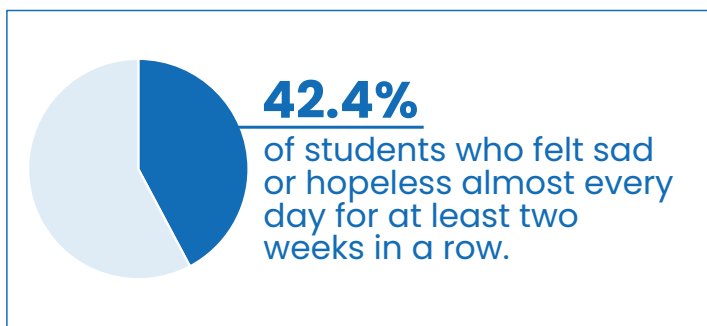


Figure 2. Depression Rate.

In a 2023 survey conducted by the Texas Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 42.4% of students reported that during the past 12 months, they felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that they stopped doing some routine activities.³

Because students spend much of their time on school grounds, whether in classrooms or participating in extracurricular activities, it is essential to provide mental health resources within schools. Offering these supports where

students are most present not only benefits the students themselves but also helps parents by ensuring their children have access to the assistance they need during the school day.

School-Based Mental Health Professionals

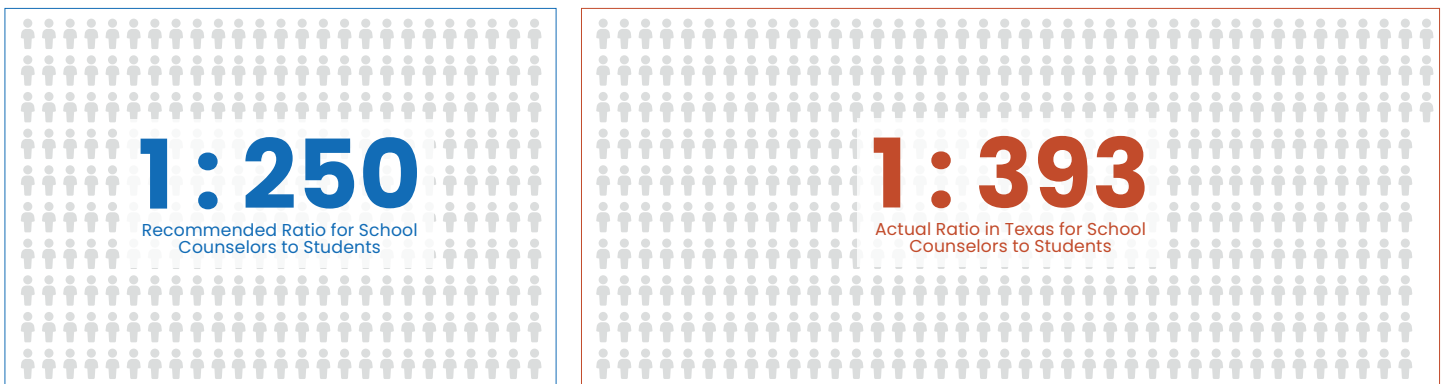


Figure 3. Professional School Counselor Ratio Recommendation versus Reality

The American School Counselor Association recommended ratio for school counselors is one for every 250 students.⁴ Using data from PEIMS Staff FTE Counts, in the 2023-2024 school year in the state of Texas, there are 13,922 school counselors in Texas.⁵ This equates to one professional school counselor for every 393 students.

Other mental health professionals in the school system have staff-to-student ratios. According to PEIMS data on district-hired staff, districts employ an average of one social worker for every 4,909 students

statewide (1,037 total) and one licensed school psychologist for every 2,561 students (2,245 total statewide).⁵ In fact, according to the National Association of School Psychologists in February 2025, the Texas licensed school psychologist per student ratio is ranked at the bottom in the nation.⁶

Current data highlights a significant barrier to mental health support: counselor and specialist ratios far exceed recommended levels. When professionals are responsible for hundreds—or even thousands—of students, timely, individualized care becomes nearly impossible. This shortage increases the likelihood that students in need, especially those who do not actively seek help, may go unnoticed.

Mental Health Support for Rural Areas

In the 2023-2024 school year, 465 school districts in Texas were classified as rural schools.⁷ These rural areas can face unique challenges in supporting student mental health, such as a lack of access to resources, far proximity from mental health providers, transportation barriers to potential community resources, and social stigma around mental health care. Recognizing and mitigating the additional barriers in rural districts is critical.

TEA received a \$1.4-million grant to specifically support ESCs in providing mental and behavioral health support to local rural educational agencies (LEAs). Because of this grant, 151 LEAs and 230 school campuses were supported with mental and behavioral health concerns.⁸ Since the grant's inception, the number of LEAs served has grown 66%, increasing from 91 to 151 LEAs served as of the 2024-2025 school year.

These LEAs were supported in a variety of ways, including assistance with completing needs assessments and school climate surveys, as well as establishing community partnerships and other resources. Additionally, 401 PLCs were conducted, with 247 focused on tier 1 universal supports, 187 focused on tier 2 targeted supports, and 181 focused on tier 3 intensive supports. Equipping rural teachers and support staff with knowledge and actionable skills related to student mental health is such an important step in providing mental health services to their students.

Chapter 2: Statewide Plan for Student Mental Health

TEA Mission

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will improve outcomes for all public-school students in the state by providing leadership, guidance, and support to school systems.

TEA Statewide Plan for Student Mental Health Goals:

Goal 1:

Expand Objective Measurement of Positive School Climate: Expanding objective measurement of positive school climate is essential because it allows school systems to assess and improve the emotional and social environment, ensuring that strategies for mental health and well-being are data-driven and responsive to students' needs.



What is needed for implementation?

- **Curriculum development:** School systems should integrate age-appropriate mental health education into courses covering topics such as emotional well-being, stress management, and recognizing signs of mental health struggles.
 - A comprehensive mental health curriculum may cover topics such as understanding mental health, coping strategies and resilience, stress management techniques, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and building resilience to life's changes.
 - Healthy Relationships & Social skills, Self-Care & Wellness; mindset & growth.
- **Staff Training:** Educators and staff need specialized training to recognize and support students facing mental health challenges. Workshops and certifications can help them create a safe, understanding environment.
- **Parental Awareness, Consent, and Involvement:** Parents must be included in mental health awareness and informed through the district's consent process. School systems should provide accessible resources and workshops to help parents and educators understand mental health, recognize early warning signs, and effectively support their children.
- **Accessible Support Systems:** School systems must have trained school counselors and mental health professionals readily available, ensuring students have a place to seek guidance when needed.
- **Community Partnerships:** Collaboration with local mental health organizations, healthcare professionals, and nonprofits can bring valuable expertise, funding, and resources.
- **Regular Assessments & Feedback:** Continuous evaluation of the program's effectiveness is essential. Surveys, focus groups, and feedback from students, teachers, and parents can help build the school system's approach to mental health.



Best practices:

- **Create a safe & supportive environment:** foster open conversations where students feel comfortable discussing mental health without fear of stigma or judgment.
- **Use interactive & real-life scenarios:** role-playing, storytelling, and case studies help students and educators connect with the material and apply concepts to real-life situations.
- **Multi-Modal Learning:** combining videos, discussions, hands-on activities, and journaling to cater to different learning styles and keep students engaged.
- **Partners with mental health professionals:** invite psychologists, licensed professional counselors, and experts for guest lectures, Q&A sessions, and practical workshops.
- **Peer Coaching:** fosters open conversations and supportive relationships among students, helping reduce the stigma around mental health and empowering students to learn from one another's experiences.
- The [Comprehensive Service Plan](#) offers guidance for building a structured mental health service delivery approach.



Goal 2:

Increasing Early Effective Interventions: Increasing early, effective school-based or school-connected mental health interventions and resources for students in need of additional support is essential because it enables schools to identify and address student mental health needs promptly, improving well-being and academic outcomes while preventing challenges from escalating.

- ◆ Student data collection
- ◆ Optional standardized mental health assessments
- ◆ Training and professional development metrics
- ◆ Stakeholder feedback
- ◆ Policy and program evaluation



What is needed for implementation?

- **Define Key Metrics & Objectives:** The establishment of measurable indicators of school-based mental health progress is the start to ensuring objectives for implementing school-based mental health. While those objectives with metrics are established, build benchmarks to measure success. Some suggested benchmarks that could be used are student well-being, intervention effectiveness, and staff training outcomes.
- **Build a Strong Analytical Framework:** The school district should compare data within the district to identify disparities and successful models of how school mental health is implemented. Some examples of data include the types of services offered, the number of students served, and the qualifications of school mental health professionals. Some disparities could be seen in the outcomes of these services, such as differences in student mental health metrics or academic performance. The creation of a dashboard that safeguards student privacy but provides real-time monitoring of school mental health data for the district is key. Regularly updating data and analyzing it will help ensure that all students have access to high-quality mental health services.

- **Optional Mental Health Assessments:** You have the option of developing and implementing a mental health assessment tool that establishes a clear standard for supporting student well-being. The [Texas School Mental Health Toolkit](#) offers optional assessments for screening, identification, and suicide prevention. Reminder: Parents must be given the opportunity to review all screenings and provide consent before assessments are administered.
- **Monitor and Adapt based on Insights:** School systems should establish annual reviews to assess program effectiveness. One of the ways to do this is during the District Improvement Plan process. The utilization of collected data should be refined in mental health policies and intervention strategies; such utilization must safeguard student privacy at the same time.



Best practices:

- **Standardized Statewide Frameworks:** TEA provides tools such as the [Safe and Supportive School Program \(SSSP\)](#) and the Texas School Mental Health Toolkit to help schools standardize and protect data collection and reporting. Utilizing frameworks can reduce variability across districts.
- **Infrastructure and Technology Support:** ESCs have identified resources in the [Texas School Mental Health Resource Database](#) to help school systems identify and align local mental health resources.
- **Sample Student Mental Health Intervention Plan:** This sample plan may be considered when creating a uniform way at a school system or campus level to document student interventions, responsible staff, timeframe, and other case-management needs.
- **Sample Referral Pathway:** Referral pathways are established at either the campus or district level or some combination of both. A referral pathway outlines the procedures for a student to access school- or community-based support. Generally, a referral begins with the identification of a potential need. This may occur through an optional school screening procedure, a family referral, or a staff referral.
- **Parental Awareness, Consent, and Involvement:** Parents must be included in mental health awareness and informed through the district's consent process. School systems should provide accessible resources and workshops to help parents and educators understand mental health, recognize early warning signs, and effectively support their children.
- **Define specific, measurable mental health goals for your district:** Examples: referral rates, staff-to-school mental health providers ratios, student self-reports, attendance patterns, etc.
- **Ensure consistent data security and collection:** Ensure the selected tool is consistent and produces comparable data across the school system. Data privacy and security must remain the foundation of the tool, and schools must adhere to established protocols for handling sensitive information.
- **Build feedback teams:** Establish structures to share findings with school administrators, mental health coordinators, and the community. Transparent communication builds trust and ensures data informs decision-making across the school system.
- **Leverage Technology:** User-friendly platforms allow school systems to view trends and outcomes over time. Dashboards make it easier to detect shifts and adjust strategies quickly.



Goal 3:

Increasing Referrals to Specialized Services: Increasing referrals to specialized services is essential to ensure that students and families with significant mental health needs receive timely, evidence-based support from qualified professionals outside of school, helping to prevent crises and promote long-term well-being.



What is needed for implementation?

- **Adopt an evidence-based mental health framework:** The Texas School Mental Health Toolkit can provide information and examples on how school systems can implement a policy for school mental health. Utilizing existing statutes, [TEC §38.351](#) will ensure that the school system meets requirements set by law. The framework should include policies to address suicide prevention, trauma-informed care, behavioral interventions, and postvention strategies.
- **Required evidence-based mental health training:** [19 TAC §153.1015](#) provides information for required mental health training for all school personnel who interact with students.
- **School-Based Implementation:** Establish campus crisis response teams trained in both intervention and postvention to strengthen school system processes. Integrate crisis protocols into student handbooks and district safety plans to ensure clarity and preparedness. Additionally, develop a robust communication plan for students and families to foster engagement and build a shared understanding of the school system's mental health strategy.



Best practices:

- **The school system should ensure training for crisis response:**
 - General awareness for all staff
 - Advanced training for administrators, school counselors, school-based mental health personnel, and crisis team members.
- **Build campus crisis response teams** that could include administrators, school counselors, nurses, and School Resource Officers (SROs).
- **Utilize Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) within the school system:**
 - Tier 1 (Universal): School-wide programs promoting mental wellness, social and emotional development, and stigma reduction
 - Tier 2 (Targeted): Small group interventions for students (e.g., grief counseling, trauma-informed practices)
 - Tier 3 (Intensive): Individualized support for students in crisis, including suicide risk assessment and behavioral intervention plans.

TEA Supports

Safe and Supportive Schools Programs

The Safe and Supportive Schools Programs (SSSP) framework is designed to create an environment where students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. This multitiered support system encompasses a range of strategies and practices for enhancing [school climate](#), behavioral and mental health, and wellness, all aimed at promoting the well-being of students, staff, and the broader community. The SSSP involves working together with community, county, and state organizations. It includes conducting assessments to identify potential behavioral threats and implementing various strategies to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from different types of crises.

Multi-tiered Systems of Support

Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) is a research-based framework designed to systematically align school-wide practices, programs, and services that foster both academic and non-academic development in students. This framework is structured across three tiers—universal, targeted, and intensive—to ensure supports are responsive to varying levels of student need: Tier 1 delivers evidence-based instruction for all; Tier 2 adds targeted interventions for some; and Tier 3 offers intensive, individualized support for a few.

Key Areas of Focus:

- ◆ **Non-Academic Support:** MTSS addresses the emotional, mental, social, and behavioral health and wellness needs of students.
- ◆ **Academic Development:** MTSS focuses on the academic growth and success of students.
- ◆ **Safety:** The framework ensures the physical and psychological safety of everyone within the school community.

[Tiered Interventions Using Evidence-Based Research \(TIER\)](#) is funded by TEA and provides educators, caregivers, and other educational stakeholders with knowledge and materials to ensure appropriate implementation of MTSS in every school across Texas. TIER trainers are in each of the 20 Education Service Center (ESC) regions.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) supports implementation through its [TIER initiative, offering professional learning modules](#) such as:

- ◆ TIER Introduction Module – foundational training pathways,
- ◆ MTSS Leadership Module – guides administrators in data-driven decision making, and
- ◆ Screening, Behavior, and Mental Health Modules – supports evidence-based practices across domains.

TEA also provides comprehensive documentation, including the MTSS Overview and Processes within the MTSS Framework guides, detailing core components—screening, progress monitoring, data-based decision making—and their application across tiers.

The MTSS framework is a collaborative approach that brings together school staff, students (when appropriate), families, and community partners to support student success. It is organized into multiple tiers of support, beginning with **universal support** such as screenings, which are available to all students.

As needs become more specific, supports increase in intensity, moving from **targeted interventions** to **intensive interventions**. To assist schools in this process, SSSP has developed the implementation of the [Behavioral Threat Assessment Process](#) (BTA), which can be a valuable resource for school systems.

For this support to be effective, interventions must be implemented **consistently and with fidelity**, ensuring that students receive the appropriate level of support at the right time.

The MTSS framework should address school climate, academic support, behavioral health, and mental health services and support, as well as integrated student support, which includes community partnerships.

School Mental Health Toolkit

This [School Mental Health Practice Guide and Toolkit](#) offers information, practice considerations, resources, and tools for schools. The goal is to assist school systems in planning and establishing a comprehensive school mental health system. This toolkit helps schools prepare to plan services and support that align with the Safe and Supportive Schools Program.

The Texas School Mental Health Framework is included in the toolkit; it helps school systems visualize and plan the implementation of a research-based process for delivering comprehensive mental health services and support.



Program Supports

- ◆ **Texas System of Care (TxSOC):** This statewide initiative is designed to improve access to coordinated, community-based mental health services for children and youth with significant behavioral health needs.
- ◆ **Safety Planning Intervention Trainings:** Hosted by Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). These training courses teach participants how to conduct safety planning with individuals at risk of suicide.

Chapter 3: Partnerships

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has established a robust network of partnerships with other state agencies to strengthen mental health support in schools. These collaborations are designed to create a comprehensive, multi-tiered system that addresses the various mental health needs of students and educators across the state by working closely with organizations such as the Education Service Centers (ESCs), Health and Texas Human Services Commission (HHSC), and federally supported initiatives like the SAMHSA AWARE grant. TEA ensures that schools have access to evidence-based training, technical assistance, and direct services. These partnerships not only enhance the capacity of schools to address mental health challenges but also foster a culture of wellness, safety, and resilience throughout Texas school communities.



Intra-agency Collaboration

TEA fosters a strong culture of intra-agency collaboration to ensure student wellness, safety, and academic success are addressed through a unified and strategic approach. Key divisions such as Counseling, Advising, and Student Supports (CASS), Communities In Schools, the Office of School Safety and Security, and the Texas Center for Student Supports (TCSS) work in close coordination to implement the Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP).

These teams collaborate on initiatives such as behavioral threat assessments, trauma-informed practices, and mental health training, ensuring that schools are equipped with aligned resources and guidance. Additionally, the Office of Special Populations and Student Supports strengthens this work through TEA's TIER initiative, which provides research-based professional development and implementation tools for MTSS. TIER resources include modules on leadership, optional screening, behavior, mental health, and academic interventions, helping districts build capacity for data-driven decision-making and integrated supports.

By aligning efforts across departments and leveraging TIER resources, TEA promotes a holistic framework that safeguards the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of all students while enhancing educators' ability to respond effectively to diverse challenges in the school environment.

Counseling, Advising, and Student Supports (CASS)

The Counseling, Advising, and Student Supports (CASS) division at TEA plays a pivotal role in advancing student mental health and wellness across the state. CASS provides leadership, technical assistance, and resources to help school districts implement comprehensive school counseling programs aligned with the *Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* (Texas Model), per Texas Education Code, §33.005. These programs are designed to support students' academic, career, and social-emotional development, with a strong emphasis on mental health awareness, trauma-informed practices, and early intervention strategies. The CASS team hosts a Rural School Counseling task force that offers support to regional counseling leaders who are committed to addressing the unique challenges in rural school counseling.

Communities in Schools

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) partners with Communities In Schools (CIS) of Texas to deliver a statewide dropout prevention initiative focused on supporting at-risk students. Funded in part by the Texas Legislature and administered by TEA, CIS operates through a network of 27 local affiliates across 201 school districts. Together, they implement Integrated Student Support (ISS) programs tailored to each campus's unique needs. CIS staff conduct thorough needs assessments and collaborate with school personnel and community providers to offer services in areas such as mental health, academic support, family engagement, attendance, and college readiness.

Office of School Safety and Security

Located within the Texas Education Agency, the Office of School Safety and Security (OSSS) is essential for supporting student safety throughout the state. Staffed by experts in school and law enforcement safety, OSSS supports districts in implementing best practices for physical security, emergency preparedness, and behavioral threat assessments. Through the Vulnerability Assessment process, OSSS ensures that required mental health policies—such as the training mandated by TEC §22.904—are in place. Data from the 2023–2024 school year show that 92% of the 24,570 behavioral threat assessments led to referrals for counseling or mental health support, a figure that far exceeds the 1,962 students referred to law enforcement.



Texas Center for Student Supports (TCSS)

The Texas Center for Student Supports (TCSS), established in 2023 by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), is driving systemic change across Texas school systems through a comprehensive approach to student support. This approach combines professional learning, resource curation, and a statewide technical assistance network, all aimed at helping schools create safe and supportive learning environments that foster student success and well-being.

The center began its work by leading the implementation of the Stronger Connections Grant in 99 Texas school systems, introducing the Student Support Framework (SSF), a holistic model addressing students' mental, behavioral, and physical health, safety, and discipline. Built on five foundational components and strengthened by positive campus and district climate and culture, the SSF emphasizes strong relationships and consistent expectations. Three integrated elements: support systems and structures, capacity building, and family and community partnerships, ensure students thrive both academically and personally.

Building on this success, TCSS is now scaling its efforts statewide, making resources, training, and technical assistance accessible to all Texas schools. Through professional learning, coaching, and collaboration with Education Service Centers (ESCs) and school systems, educators are empowered to implement evidence-based practices that transform schools into safer, more supportive environments for every student.

Education Service Centers (ESCs)

Education Service Centers (ESCs) in Texas are regional support entities established to assist school districts in improving student performance, operating more efficiently, and implementing state education initiatives. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1967 and governed under Chapter 8 of the Texas Education Code, there are 20 ESCs strategically located across the state to serve the unique needs of their respective regions. Their primary functions include providing professional development, technical assistance, and customized services in areas such as curriculum, instruction, special education, school safety, and mental health.

ESCs also play a key role in implementing state and federally grant-funded programs, including those related to student wellness and behavioral health. Several of these educational service centers coordinate state initiatives and grants. ESC Region 11 serves as the technical assistance partner for [Handle with Care](#), a program that partners local first responders with school systems to mitigate the impacts of traumatic events that impact students in their communities.

Inter-agency Collaboration

[Texas Health and Human Services Commission \(HHSC\)](#) plays a vital role in coordinating mental and behavioral health services for school-aged children through a variety of programs and initiatives. These efforts include partnerships that connect schools with mental health professionals, crisis intervention teams, family support services, substance use prevention resources, and statewide systems of care. By working collaboratively with education agencies and local providers, HHSC ensures that schools have access to comprehensive support from early prevention to intensive intervention—designed to promote student well-being and academic success. A valuable tool to learn more about these services and others provided by HHSC is the [Family Guide: Children's Mental Health Services](#), which further describes eligibility criteria and access points for services.

Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) & Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA)

These authorities are responsible for planning, developing, coordinating, and allocating resources to meet the mental health needs of individuals within their designated service areas. A cornerstone of this collaboration is the Behavioral Health Partnership Program (BHPP), which [connects Local Mental Health Authorities \(LMHAs\) and Local Behavioral Health Authorities \(LBHAs\)](#) with Education Service Centers (ESCs) across the state. Through this program, funded and coordinated by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC), BHPP liaisons—licensed mental health professionals—serve as regional resources for school districts. In fiscal year 2024 alone, BHPP liaisons facilitated over 1,800 trainings and shared more than 52,000 mental health resources with school communities. Authorizing legislation-TEC §8.155 (2019-HB 19) [Annual Report](#)

BHPP Mental Health & Substance Use



1,830
Resources Shared



52,165
Initiatives Facilitated

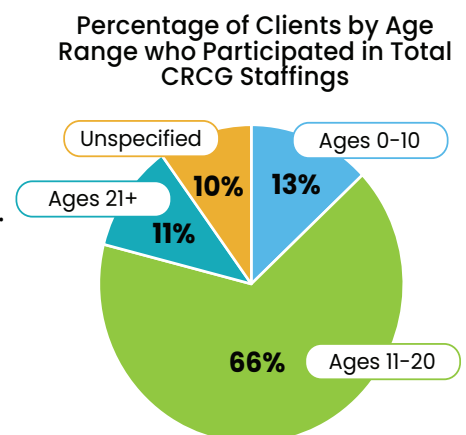


1,886
Trainings Provided

Additional programs that are implemented through the local LMHA/LBHAs available to school systems to assist with mental health support are the following:

- ◆ The [Youth Crisis Outreach Team \(YCOT\)](#) is a service that is being implemented in 7 LMHA/LBHAs, which provides rapid, community-based crisis intervention for children and youth experiencing mental health crises. These teams respond 24/7 in settings like homes and schools to de-escalate situations, stabilize youth, and connect them with ongoing support—often preventing hospitalization or law enforcement involvement. YCOTs work closely with schools by offering crisis response, follow-up care for up to 90 days, and training for staff, helping schools better support students with serious emotional or behavioral needs.
- ◆ [Youth Prevention \(YP\) for Substance Use and Misuse](#): School systems can access substance abuse prevention programs for students through a [network of HHSC-funded agencies](#) across the state. These agencies provide evidence-based programs to address prevention across each of the three MTSS tiers for mental and behavioral health.

- ◆ **Children’s Mental Health Services:** These services provide children and families with specialized services, counseling, case management, and other interventions to support children with mental health challenges and their families. HHSC community providers within the LMHA/LBHA network use the [Texas Resilience and Recovery](#) model to help guide their decisions and ensure children receive appropriate levels of care. This ensures that once a need for services is identified, children are assessed by licensed professionals, and a plan is made to deliver the support needed to address the goals identified in partnership with the child and their family.
- ◆ The **Children’s Mental Health Family Partner Support Services** program provides guidance and emotional support to the primary caregivers of children receiving mental health services. These services are delivered by certified family partners—individuals with lived experience caring for children with mental health diagnoses—who help families navigate the treatment process, advocate for their child, and access community resources. While services are not provided directly to the child, they play a vital role in strengthening the caregiver’s ability to support their child’s mental health and educational success. In school settings, this support can lead to improved collaboration between families and educators, better advocacy for student needs, and enhanced engagement in school-based mental health services.
- ◆ The **Prevention Resource Centers (PRCs)** serve as regional hubs for substance use prevention across the state. Located in 11 regions, PRCs collaborate with schools, community organizations, and local stakeholders to provide education, data, and training on behavioral health and substance use prevention. For schools, PRCs are valuable partners in promoting healthy environments by offering evidence-based resources, professional development for educators, and support for youth-focused prevention initiatives. They also help schools comply with statutes surrounding substance use prevention and implement strategies that reduce risk factors and build protective factors among students.
- ◆ The **Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC)** was established by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to serve as the state’s mental health planning council, providing stakeholder input and recommendations on the allocation and adequacy of behavioral health services across Texas. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) supports BHAC by collaborating across agencies, shaping behavioral health policies in schools, and advising through the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee (CYBHS). TEA also helps implement the Texas System of Care.
- ◆ HHSC also supports **Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs)**. These are county-based, interagency teams that bring together local partners, service providers, and community members who support individuals whose needs cannot be met by a single agency alone. These groups often focus on children and youth but can encompass any age group. CRCGs are designed to help families navigate complex systems by developing individualized service plans that address mental and behavioral health, basic needs, education, housing, and more. Currently, there are 171 CRCG groups in Texas. CRCGs operate under a shared Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by multiple state agencies, including TEA.



Based on data from the 2022 CRCG biennial report, 66% of individuals served through local CRCG staffing were between the ages of 11 and 20, while 13% were children aged 0 to 10, highlighting that the majority of staffing involved school-aged children. Among those referred, 51% presented concerns related to mental health care, followed closely by 49% exhibiting at-risk behaviors. Authorizing legislation TGC §531.055 (2017-SB 2904)

- ◆ The **Texas System of Care (TxSOC)** is a statewide initiative designed to improve access to coordinated, community-based mental health services for children and youth with significant behavioral health needs. TEA plays a critical role in the System of Care by aligning school-based mental health support with broader state initiatives to ensure that schools are equipped to identify and support students with complex mental health needs. This partnership ensures that schools are not working in isolation but are part of a larger, integrated network of care that includes mental health providers, families, and community organizations. [MOU](#) Authorizing legislation TGC §531.251
- ◆ **Suicide Prevention:** The HHSC Suicide Prevention Program aims to reduce suicide in Texas. This HHSC team does so by providing technical assistance in implementing best practices, training, and tools to communities. Some of the free training courses available to school systems through the HHSC Suicide Prevention Team include:
 - ◇ AS+K About Suicide to Save a Life, which is a three-hour virtual or in-person training that covers suicide data, risks, and protective factors. The training is available in English and Spanish. Chapter 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Resources 274 Texas State Mental Health Plan
 - ◇ Safety Planning Training is a four-hour virtual or in-person training that teaches safety planning for someone at risk of suicide. The training is also available as a training for trainers' option, which would support school systems in increasing their local capacity among their mental health staff to implement the safety planning intervention.
 - ◇ Postvention in Schools teaches healthy grieving from suicide loss at an individual and community level, intending to prevent future suicide deaths.

Texas Behavioral Health Coordinating Council

The Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (SBHCC) is a multi-agency body established by House Bill 1, 84th Legislature (2015), to ensure a unified, strategic approach to behavioral health services across the state. As a member agency, TEA collaborates with HHSC and other state entities to develop and implement the Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan, which guides the delivery of mental health and substance use services for children, youth, and families.

TEA's involvement ensures that the educational perspective is represented in statewide behavioral health planning, particularly in areas such as school-based mental health supports, trauma-informed practices, and early intervention. Through this partnership, TEA helps bridge the gap between education and health systems, promoting a more integrated and responsive behavioral health infrastructure for Texas students.

Unified Services for All Children (USAC)

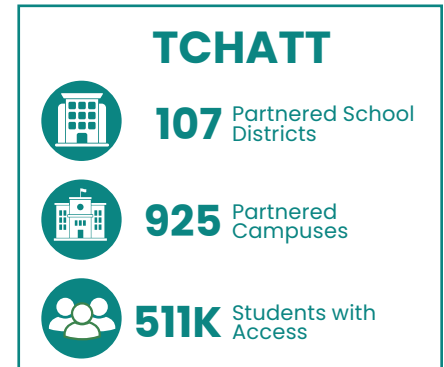
Unified Services for All Children (USAC) is an interagency workgroup with the goal of developing a system that helps school-age children achieve mental and behavioral wellness. USAC engages multiple state agencies and stakeholders to build capacity for local action-planning across systems to support mental and behavioral health for school-aged children and youth.

Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium

The **Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC)** was established by the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019 through Senate Bill 11 to address critical gaps in mental health care for children and adolescents across the state. The Consortium brings together the expertise of Texas' health-related institutions of higher education to improve access to early identification, treatment, and continuity of care for youth experiencing behavioral health challenges. The Consortium is administered by the University of Texas System in partnership with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and it

works closely with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to align services with school-based mental health initiatives. This collaborative model ensures that students across Texas have access to timely, high-quality mental health care, regardless of geographic location.

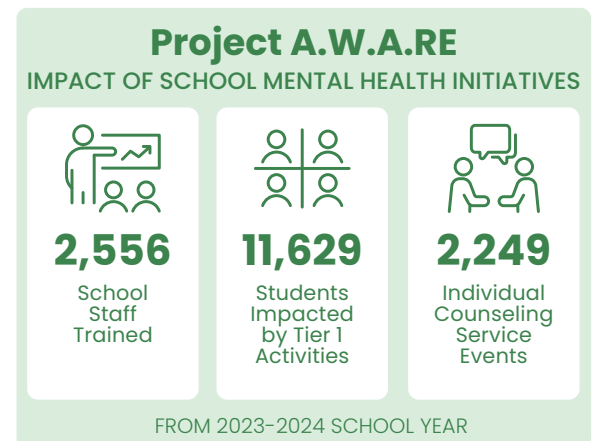
The **Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHATT)** program is a key initiative of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC), designed to provide school-based access to mental health services through telemedicine. TCHATT connects students with licensed mental health professionals from Texas' academic health centers, offering timely assessments, short-term interventions, and referrals to ongoing care when needed. This service is especially critical in rural and underserved areas where access to mental health providers is limited.



Project AWARE

Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) is a federally funded initiative through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that is designed to promote mental health awareness and improve access to mental health services within school communities. It is a collaborative effort involving the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin, and Education Service Centers (ESCs). The goal is to provide sustainable mental health support for schools.

TEA oversees the implementation of Project AWARE in selected school districts, while HHSC provides technical assistance and aligns the initiative with broader state mental health strategies. The partnership ensures that schools receive support in adopting trauma-informed practices, implementing multi-tiered support systems (MTSS), and integrating mental health into school safety and wellness plans. Together, TEA and HHSC leverage their networks, including Education Service Centers (ESCs) and Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs), to deliver evidence-based training, promote early intervention, and foster a culture of resilience and well-being across Texas schools.



Education Service Center (ESC) Region 13 supports the statewide implementation of the **PAX Good Behavior Game (PAX GBG)**, an evidence-informed, classroom-based strategy designed to improve student behavior, engagement, and academic outcomes. Rather than a traditional curriculum, PAX GBG provides educators with practical, research-backed techniques—known as “kernels”—that are integrated into daily routines to promote self-regulation, reduce disruptive behavior, and foster a positive learning environment. ESC Region 13 offers free training and materials through grant funding, making the program accessible to schools seeking to strengthen behavioral supports. Since 2021, 7,496 educational staff and 4,322 community-based staff have been trained, reaching over one million students who have received at least one month of this intervention.

The Title IV, Part A School Safety Initiative

Title IV, Part A School Safety Initiative at ESC Region 14 focuses on fostering safe, healthy, and drug-free learning environments that support student achievement and well-being. Rather than emphasizing physical security measures, the initiative prioritizes mental and physical health support, violence and drug prevention, and trauma-informed practices. ESC 14 assists school districts in using Title IV, Part A funds to implement programs such as counseling services, mentoring for at-risk students, bullying prevention, and professional development for educators on mental health and classroom management. The initiative also encourages community and parent engagement, supports telehealth services in rural areas, and promotes positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). ESC 14 plays a key role in guiding districts to use these funds effectively while complying with federal guidelines, ensuring that efforts supplement—rather than replace—state-mandated safety requirements.

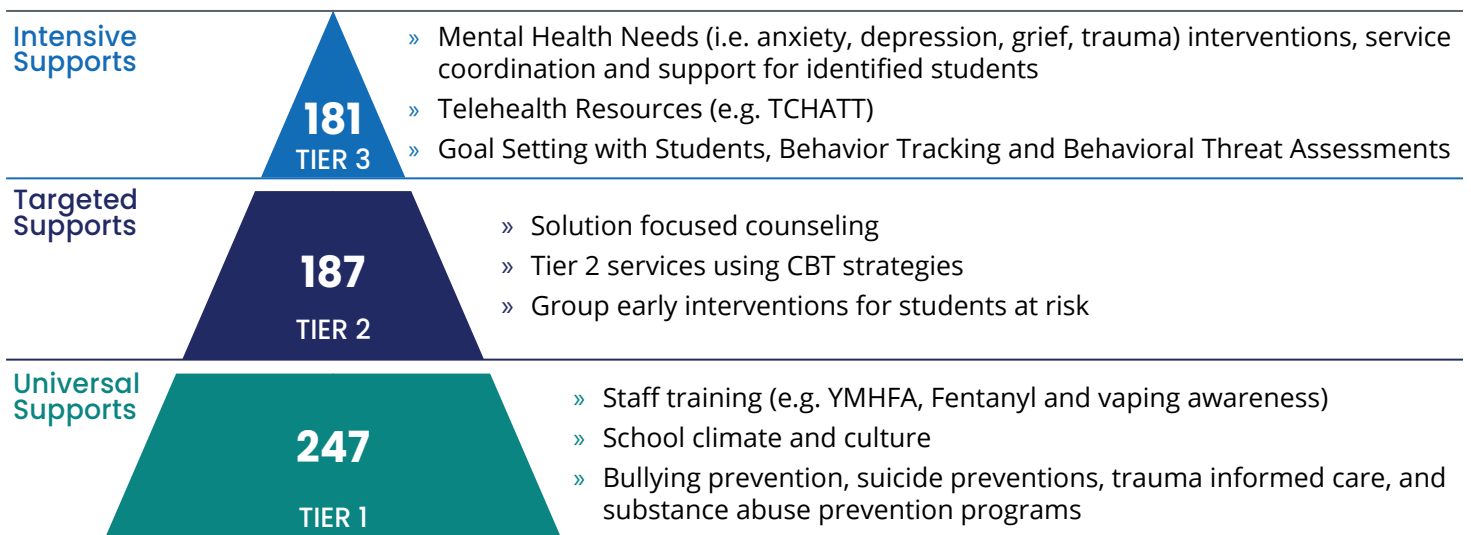
Fentanyl Contamination Training Grant

Funding from the Opioid Abatement Account was allocated to support fentanyl contamination training for school district employees. Developed by The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and delivered through all 20 Education Service Centers (ESCs), the training equips school staff with critical knowledge about the risks and dangers of fentanyl exposure, helping to enhance safety and awareness across Texas schools. As of July 2025, about 20% of school systems have received this training.

ESC Title IV Mental and Behavioral Health Training and Support Grant

All 20 Education Service Centers (ESCs) in Texas receive funding through ESSA Title IV, Part A, to strengthen the capacity of local education agencies (LEAs) in their regions. ESCs support small and rural school districts by facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Since the beginning of the grant in 2019, ESCs have provided numerous training and support to districts. ESCs provided 408 training opportunities for districts, as it relates to small and rural school districts. The graph below represents the breakdown of these 408 training opportunities.

Number of PLC Trainings on:



Chapter 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Resources

Introduction

Resources have been developed to support the local implementation of school-based mental health within school systems across the state. While each school system has its own unique set of school mental health needs, the resources listed in this section are useful for school leaders when tailoring their approach to implementing a comprehensive school mental health system.

Each resource follows the [Texas School Mental Health Framework](#), which provides an overview of how school systems should approach developing a comprehensive school mental health system. Within the framework of each area of school mental health established by [TEC §38.351](#), each school system must develop policies and procedures. The framework incorporates MTSS as a foundation for establishing school mental health structures. It also highlights the elements that enhance the effectiveness of a comprehensive school mental health system. Additionally, the framework outlines key domains necessary for maintaining high-quality school mental health practices.

TEA Mental and Behavioral Health Curated Resources

Resources developed by TEA are intended to provide leadership, guidance, and support to school mental health leaders at the regional and local level who are implementing systems to meet the needs of the school systems they serve. Included within this section are access points for curated mental health resources to meet various planning needs for school-based mental health.

[TEA Mental and Behavioral Health Webpage](#): The Mental and Behavioral Health page serves as the TEA's main source to deliver important policy updates and guidance to assist school personnel in implementing their local school mental health programs.

[Texas School Mental Health Website](#): The Texas School Mental Health provides a hub of templates, best-practice exemplars, and other tools that may be used by school system leaders or community members to support school mental health. The website is a collaboration between TEA, HHSC, and the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health (TIEMH) to meet [TEC §21.462](#), which requires TEA and HHSC to develop a webpage of resources to support educators working with students experiencing mental health conditions and substance abuse issues.



The website includes:

- ◆ [Texas School Mental Health Toolkit and Practice Guide](#), which provides best-practice considerations, resources, and tools for schools as they plan for implementing a comprehensive school mental health system. The practice guide includes key considerations and guiding principles for implementing MTSS for school mental health. Both the practice guide and toolkit improve the school system's readiness to plan services and support aligned with the statutory requirements (e.g., Safe and Supportive Schools Program, TEC §38.351).
- ◆ [Best Practices and Programs Repository](#), which was created to meet the requirements of TEC §38.351 for TEA, HHSC, and the ESC regions to annually update a list of recommended research-based best practices and best-practice-based programs for each area of school mental health listed

in the statute. The recommended list may be used by school systems as they select the training, best practices, and interventions that best meet their local needs for a comprehensive school mental health system.

- ◆ Highlights of best practice exemplars from the field are an important feature of the website. This provides insight into other school systems on how to put strategies into practice within various community settings. On the website, these examples are highlighted through the [Best Practice District Spotlights](#) and the annual Mental and Behavioral Health Webinar Sessions.

Student Support Framework (SSF): Developed for the Texas Education Agency by the [Texas Center for Student Supports \(TCSS\)](#), the SSF provides a foundation for school systems to create safe, supportive learning environments that address students' varied needs, including mental and behavioral health, physical wellness, student safety, and discipline. The framework prioritizes students' well-being and growth, equipping them to succeed academically and thrive in life.

The SSF includes five foundational components that promote health and well-being, reinforced by strong campus and district climate and culture built on positive relationships, belief in every student's potential, and consistent expectations. Interwoven throughout are three foundational supports: systems and structures, capacity building, and partnerships with families and communities. Aligning MTSS strategies with the SSF ensures a coordinated approach to meeting non-academic needs effectively.



TEA Resources for Mental and Behavioral Health Infrastructure Building

As the needs of students and families continue to evolve throughout Texas, capacity-building efforts within school mental health systems are constantly being updated to meet demand. Within the Texas School Mental Health Framework, there are seven quality indicators for school leaders to consider during their capacity-building process.

These quality indicators are:

- ◆ Teaming and Planning
- ◆ Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping
- ◆ Early Identification and Screening
- ◆ Mental Health Promotion and Prevention
- ◆ Early Intervention and Access to Specialized Services
- ◆ Funding and Sustainability
- ◆ Monitoring Progress and Measuring Impact

TEA and its partners (e.g., ESCs, districts, state agencies) have developed resources based on best-practice strategies used throughout the state that support mental health leaders as they address capacity building. The resources highlighted below are examples of approaches for addressing each of these indicators and are also included within the [Texas School Mental Health Toolkit](#). These examples are not requirements but serve as a resource to support local decision-making when creating a comprehensive school mental health system.

Teaming and Planning



Teaming is essential to developing a coordinated approach for implementing a comprehensive school mental health system. The collaborative approach to establishing a multi-disciplinary team to plan the strategies for school mental health ensures that implementation does not happen in a siloed approach. Key components of a strong teaming approach include involving school professionals with a variety of experience (e.g., principal, school counselor, mental health practitioners, teachers, caregivers, school-based law enforcement, etc.), clearly defining roles, and regularly scheduling collaboration time.

Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping

Planned interventions considered by campus/district level teams and listed within the comprehensive service delivery plans should be guided by an assessment of needs and through resource mapping. A needs assessment is a collaborative process that identifies and prioritizes the strengths and unmet behavioral health needs of students, families, and the overall system at a school or district level. While each school community has its own unique needs, data sources such as school climate surveys, optional universal screenings, crisis referrals, attendance records, discipline data, and caregiver or student interviews can offer valuable insights into significant barriers to service delivery. This [Needs Assessment Planning Tool](#) provides important insights that school systems can consider when conducting their local needs assessment to inform their strategies for mental health support.

Identification and Optional Screening

Proactively identifying students' mental and behavioral health needs is critical to creating a responsive school system. Identification allows timely intervention and better outcomes, reducing reliance on reactive approaches that strain resources. A formal referral pathway ensures everyone in the school community knows how to respond to concerns, promoting consistency and accountability in the support process.

When establishing screening plans, school systems should select the screening tools that best fit their needs, developing a process for implementation, including parental consent, and ensuring there is an infrastructure to provide support for student needs after the screening. Family and student engagement is critical in this process, including a process for parent/guardian notification and consent. The resources below provide examples for developing local screening plans within school systems.



- ◆ [School-Based Screening Compilation Tool](#)- A collection of evidence-based screening tools that meet a variety of needs. This serves as a resource for school systems as they identify the screening tool that best serves their community.
- ◆ [Universal Screening Best Practices](#)- Provides tips and approaches for school systems to establish strong universal screening protocols and procedures.
- ◆ [Mental Health Screening Guide](#)- Outlines best-practice strategies when planning for the implementation of mental health screenings.

Mental Health Promotion and Prevention

Mental health promotion and prevention are foundational to supporting the well-being and overall success of students and the adults within the school community who support them. Many mental health promotion and prevention strategies occur within Tier 1 of the MTSS for student mental health. These

strategies can improve student engagement, address educator burnout, and reduce the strain on Tier 2 and 3 resources, among other benefits. Some approaches to mental health promotion and prevention include:

- ◆ skill-building to promote positive student behaviors,
- ◆ creating positive, safe, and supportive school climates,
- ◆ improving staff awareness on how to recognize and respond to mental health conditions, and
- ◆ supporting educator wellness.

Addressing the school climate has a significant impact on strengthening efforts for mental health promotion and prevention. School climate focuses on strengthening the quality and character of school life. Many of these efforts can be reflected by conducting school climate surveys, which are completed by students, staff, and parents/caregivers. This [school climate survey compilation](#) details various evidence-based school climate surveys. Additional recommendations for best practices and programs for addressing mental health prevention and promotion are also listed on the [Best Practices and Programs Repository](#).

Monitoring Progress and Measuring Impact

Establishing data collection systems to monitor progress and measure the impact of strategies ensures continuous quality improvement within school systems' MTSS for mental and behavioral health. At the individual student level, the use of optional screening data can be used to monitor the progress of interventions, care management, student service, or wellness plans.

When data is aggregated, teams planning and implementing comprehensive service delivery plans can better understand the impact of the provided services and support on overall student outcomes. The use of targeted screening data, for instance, can provide important insight into the impact of mental health support on leaders and the mental health professionals delivering services. These insights may inform decisions on the expansion of services, addressing barriers, and efforts for sustainability.

This evaluation protocol checklist provides a list of data points that are useful for measuring progress and showing impact. This includes screening data, discipline trends, attendance rates, staff training, and surveys, among other data points. This resource also provides key considerations when designing procedures for collecting and analyzing the selected data.



Community-Based Mental Health Resources

School systems in Texas have access to mental and behavioral health supports that are provided by state agencies, regional partners, and other health-related institutions (universities/colleges, foundations, community mental health providers, etc.) to build out their MTSS infrastructure. This section will describe the resources provided by these various partners to support student mental health. Access to these services is often contingent upon location and funding.

The listed partner resources below are not exhaustive and are intended to emphasize the importance for school mental health leaders to conduct their environmental scans and develop resource maps to reflect available community-based resources.

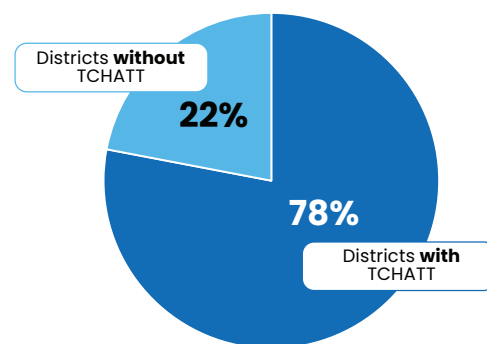
Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC)

[TCMHCC](#) is designed to improve mental health care and systems of care for children and adolescents throughout Texas. TCMHCC is made up of health-related institutions of higher education across the state, which provide an array of services accessible to school systems as well as conduct research to continuously improve the delivery of mental health services for children in Texas.

Within the TCMHCC is the [Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine \(TCHAT\)](#) program. School systems can sign up for TCHAT services for free by developing a formalized partnership with the health-related institution(s) that serve their school community. Through this partnership, school systems have access to free telemedicine and telehealth programs. These programs can help districts identify, assess, and provide mental health services to students in need of mental and behavioral health support.

TCHAT continues to grow in usage and popularity across the state as the need for student mental health supports increases. As of July 2025, most school districts across the state offer mental health services through TCHAT. This equates to over 4.4 million students who have access to this free mental health service.

TCHAT Prevalence in Texas



Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC)

The [TxSSC](#), based out of Texas State University, it serves as a key partner for school systems in the dissemination of best practices, research, training, and technical assistance to create safe learning environments. While the TxSSC is integral in serving as a clearinghouse and collaborator for ensuring physical safety in schools, the center also serves a key role in assisting school communities in strengthening psychological safety as well. Some tools and resources from the TxSSC that support creating safe and supportive learning environments include:

- ◆ Behavioral Threat Assessment training, which meets statutory requirements for district Behavioral Threat Assessment teams to be trained in evidence-based strategies for identifying and providing interventions for those who may pose a threat to others.
- ◆ Trauma-Informed Care Trainings for elementary and secondary school staff. Both training courses emphasize the impact of trauma on learning and provide developmentally appropriate strategies to support students from a trauma-informed lens.
- ◆ Bullying prevention support is also available through TxSSC. These supports include a [Bullying Checklist](#), which the school system can use as a part of their Safe and Supportive School Programs for bullying prevention.

Chapter 5: Mental Health Resource Inventory Rubric and Texas School Mental Health Resource Database

Resource Inventory Rubric Background

In 2019, the TEA developed the current mental health resource inventory rubric under SB 11, TEC [§38.251–38.256](#). The rubric was developed with stakeholder input which included the following state agencies: HHSC, Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium, Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health at the University of Texas– Austin, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and the Communities in Schools (CIS) of Texas program at TEA.

In accordance with statute, the rubric provides for the identification of resources related to:

- ◆ Training and technical assistance on practices that support the mental health of students
- ◆ School-based programs that provide prevention and intervention services to students
- ◆ Community-based programs that provide school-based or school-connected prevention or intervention services to students
- ◆ CIS programs
- ◆ School-based mental health providers
- ◆ Public and private funding sources are available to address the mental health of students

To address this barrier, the agency partnered with the [Region 14 Comprehensive Center](#) to develop and launch the [Texas School Mental Health Resource Database](#) in 2023. The database now allows TEA and ESCs to meet statutory requirements while enhancing the user experience for those searching for mental health resources.

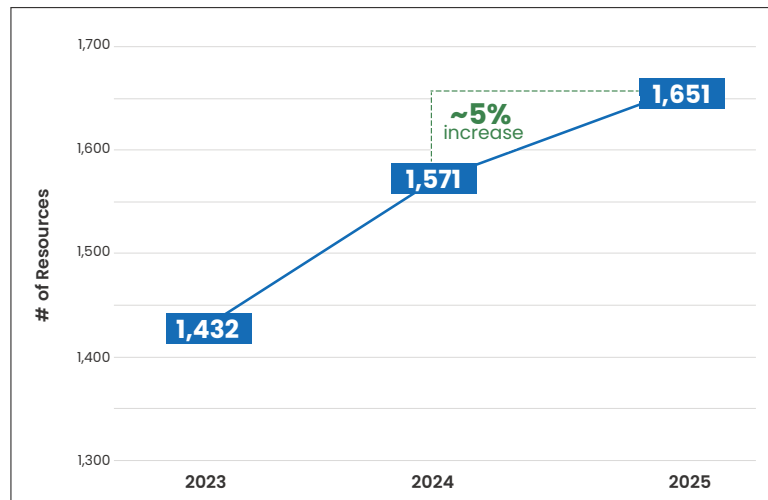
Resource Inventory Rubric used for the Texas School Mental Health Resource Database

The Resource Inventory Rubric is used by ESC and state-level staff to categorize identified resources based on resource type, location, intended impact, evidence base, and area of focus. Once resources are identified, they are listed within the [Texas School Mental Health Resource Database](#). The database is searchable and can be filtered by the rubric categories. For example, the resource database includes tele-mental health resources, known funding resources available to schools, and training offerings, among a variety of other resources.

The resource database is a useful tool that creates awareness of specialty services within each ESC region and throughout the state. The database can also inform the planning of school leaders as they identify appropriate referrals and service connections.

Resource Inventory Results

The Texas School Mental Health Resource database is updated regularly by ESC and TEA staff using the Resource Inventory Rubric. Existing listings are periodically updated to ensure accurate information. ESC regions have ongoing access to the list of newly identified resources. As of July 2025, there are 1,650 statewide and regional resources listed in the Resource Database.



Best Practices and Programs Rubrics

The TEA, ESC regional partners, and HHSC developed rubrics for assessing the quality of research-based best practices and best-practice-based programs to support comprehensive school mental health systems. The [Mental Health Best Practices and Programs List Review Rubrics](#) were designed following statute, recommended training requirements from the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC), and school-mental health standards. The rubrics are used by state-level partners and ESC staff when reviewing listings for the Best Practices and Programs Repository, which meets statutory requirements for [TEC §38.351](#). ESCs may also use these rubrics when reviewing their listings for the Texas Resource Database that are identified as evidence-based in alignment with [TEC §38.351](#).

The rubrics below are currently available for the four areas of school mental health listed in the [SBEC Clearinghouse](#) document:

- ◆ Trauma and Grief Informed Care
- ◆ Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention
- ◆ Building skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision-making
- ◆ Positive Youth Development

While school systems do have access to the Best Practices and Programs Repository and the Texas Resource Database, which lists practices and programs that meet statutory requirements, the listed resources are not exhaustive. In addition to the rubrics listed above, school systems may also reference the statutorily based [Mental Health Best Practices and Programs List Competencies](#) as they consider research-based practices and best-practice-based programs when determining their local policies and procedures to meet statutory requirements for school mental health.

This is an update that TEA has developed a rubric for the Best Practices and Programs Competency document for the area of school mental health listed within TEC 38.351, which is:

- ◆ [Statewide Mental Health Resources Review Rubric](#)
 - ◇ The Statewide Mental Health Resources Review Rubric is a tool developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in collaboration with other agencies to systematically identify, categorize, and evaluate mental health resources available to schools across Texas. This rubric ensures that resources—such as training programs, school-based and community-based interventions, and funding sources—are assessed for their type, location, intended impact, evidence base, and area of focus. By using this rubric, TEA and Education Service Centers (ESCs) maintain an up-to-date, searchable database that helps school staff and families find appropriate mental health supports tailored to their needs. The rubric’s structured approach promotes transparency, consistency, and accessibility in statewide mental health resource planning.

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