



Staffing Guidance for School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator

Guidelines for building-level staff who can assist in improving access and availability of evidence-based behavioral health promotion, prevention, and early intervention practices and coordinate efforts to plan for, implement, and sustain a Student Assistance Program and staff wellness framework.

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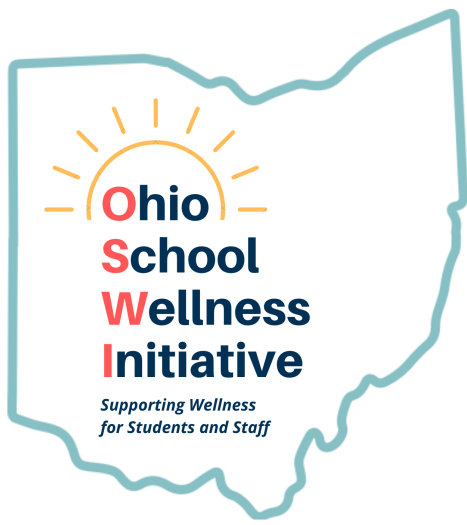


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Ohio School Wellness Initiative Overview

The Ohio School Wellness Initiative (OSWI) was designed to explore, implement, and sustain a full continuum of care including prevention, early intervention, and treatment practices for K-12 students within local districts who adopt student assistance programs (SAP), multi-tiered systems of support, and staff wellness frameworks.

The cornerstone of the OSWI is the development of an Ohio Model SAP that can serve as a best practice standard for Ohio's K-12 schools. Schools implementing a student assistance program in alignment with a multi-tiered system of support will benefit from:

- systematic approaches to support behavioral health promotion, prevention, early identification, intervention, referral processes, and guided support services for K-12 students who are exhibiting a range of substance use, mental and behavioral health risk factors; and
- resources, online training, and guidance related to school board policy, staff development, program awareness, internal referral process, problem-solving team and case management, direct services to students, cooperation and collaboration, integration with other school-based programs, program evaluation, and continuous improvement strategies.

Throughout the OSWI, integrative approaches are being identified to strengthen Tier II supports (e.g., social skills groups, self-management, and academic supports) and Tier III supports (e.g., intensive, individualized supports such as functional behavioral assessments and wraparound services) within the Ohio Model SAP for students experiencing substance use, mental and behavioral health concerns. Schools integrating Tier II/III supports within their SAP will benefit from:

- best practices for early intervention and individualized, intensive intervention to address substance use, mental and behavioral health concerns among students;
- resources and staffing guidance for embedding Tier II/III supports within their SAP; and
- partnerships with the Ohio Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Network and state-wide prevention education training initiatives.

In alignment with the Ohio Whole Child Framework, an Ohio Model Staff Wellness Framework will be developed to promote wellness among school administrators and staff. Schools implementing a staff wellness framework will benefit from:

- best practices to support staff wellness, professional resilience, secondary trauma prevention, resiliency, self-care/self-compassion, efficacy/confidence building, and mental/physical health;
- recommendations for human resource department policies related to employee assistance programs, such as mental health days and mechanisms to support wellness and resilience; and
- specific guidelines for human resources departments to support their staff who are at risk of and/or experiencing substance use and mental health disorders, such as depression screening and low-risk drinking guidelines.

The OSWI is developing a comprehensive and sustainable approach in which the components are aligned; tools, resources, training and supports on SAPs, Tier II/III supports, and staff wellness frameworks are readily available; pilot schools representative of Ohio's diverse districts are implementing SAP, Tier II/III, and staff wellness action plans; and regional training, coaching, and support networks are providing ongoing support to school districts, community service providers, and students/families.



The Need for a School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator

The OSWI recommends that schools/districts identify building-level staff who can assist in improving access and availability of evidence-based behavioral health promotion, prevention, and early intervention practices with school-based and community-wide strategies that meet the needs of children, youth and families with the school community; and who can coordinate efforts to plan for, implement and sustain a Student Assistance Program (including Tier II/III supports) and staff wellness framework.

The **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator** role is multifaceted, calling for a broad range of skills and experience. It entails leading, managing, coordinating, and serving as a liaison with the members of the community.

Expertise in multiple service systems— behavioral health, child welfare, early childhood, or juvenile justice—is equally important. It is also critical that the coordinator is integrated both into the school system and the larger community. Partnerships are the crux of a successful initiative, and a well-connected coordinator can help to make, nurture, and sustain the many collaborations that are needed to support SAPs and staff wellness frameworks.

The **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator** will be responsible for providing leadership and direction to the overall school behavioral health and wellness efforts. This includes the development of a comprehensive plan to promote effective integration of the activities and efforts of the multiple service systems. From the outset, the School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator should coordinate planning, implementing, evaluating, sustaining, and innovating their SAP practices and health education curriculum and instruction support. The School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator should develop and implement a clear evaluation plan from the outset (e.g., using the Self-Assessment can facilitate this), evaluate process variables (e.g., implementation) and outcome variables (e.g., behavioral health and substance use), obtain feedback and data from diverse stakeholders, use multiple methods of data collection, and use evaluation data to inform decision-making.

In addition to developing and implementing the comprehensive plan, the **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator** works to “connect the dots” of the various programs and functions, helping to demonstrate the impact of the initiative in the community. The following core elements, strategic approaches, and guiding principles can assist the School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator in “connecting the dots”.

Core Elements for Success

The following are **Core Elements** that will assist the School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator in assisting schools in addressing the needs of the whole child:

- 1 **Promoting Social and Emotional Learning and Development &**
- 2 **Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health**
- 3 **Identifying Prevention Strategies & Early Interventions for Behavioral Health Problems, (including Substance Use)**
- 4 **Connecting Family, Schools, and Communities**
- 5 **Creating Safe and Violence-Free Schools**

<https://mha.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/mha/community-partners/schools/resources/safe-schools-healthy-students>



Strategic Approaches & Guiding Principles



The following **Strategic Approaches** serve as a road map to ensure success in planning and implementation in how education, behavioral health, and youth and family serving organizations work together with cultural and linguistic humility and sustainability being at the core of the work:

- **Collaboration and partnership**: Involving multiple organizations and working together in sharing common vision, resources, goals, and outcomes. For example, collaborative partnerships between Coordinators and local Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Boards is beneficial.
- **Technology**: Harnessing evolving technology to increase efficiency and support program implementation and evaluation.
- **Policy change and development**: Using existing or new lessons learned to inform the revision of current or development of new state and local policies.
- **Capacity building**: Strengthening the knowledge, abilities, and skills of individuals and improving organizational structures and processes to more efficiently meet the needs of the community in a sustainable way.
- **Systemic change and integration**: Changing existing systems to better coordinate multiple service agencies and programs to improve outcomes for the target population. Systems change and integration is a natural product of collaborative activities

The following **Guiding Principles** provide a best practice approach for School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinators:

- **Cultural and linguistic competency**: Ensuring that all programs and evaluations are appropriate for every cultural group. Programs should value diversity and incorporate multiple cultural perspectives. Policies and strategies should support the cultivation of data to measure and address disparities.
- **Developmentally appropriate**: Using prevention and intervention strategies and evidence-based programs that are valid and appropriate for a specific age group or developmental level.
- **Evidence-based interventions**: Using a continuum of integrated policies, strategies, activities, and services whose effectiveness has been proven or informed by research. For example, health education curriculum and instruction can support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing the physical, behavioral, and social-emotional dimensions of health.
- **Resource leveraging**: Assessing and using existing resources and identifying the need for additional resources, e.g., the leveraging of existing federal funding mechanisms, including resources available through the Affordable Care Act.
- **Serving vulnerable and at-risk populations**: Addressing the needs of children and youth, students, and schools that are most vulnerable or at risk, e.g., foster youth, English language learners, LGBTQ youth, disconnected youth, families in transition or homeless youth, and youth at risk for commercial sexual exploitation).
- **Sustainability**: Using various strategies to maintain the positive outcomes of the SAP and staff wellness efforts and ensuring the ongoing support of programs and policies.
- **Youth guided and family driven**: Ensuring that youth understand that change is possible, that systems serve them, and that they feel safe, cared for, valued, useful, and spiritually grounded. Ensuring that families have a primary decision-making role in the care of their own children as well as the policies.
- **Data-based decision making**: Incorporating data and a cycle of ongoing continuous improvement to plan-do-check-and act within the Ohio Improvement Process. Conducting ongoing program evaluation to effectively implement, sustain, and implement the program.





Roles & Responsibilities

The **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator** serves as a key staff member in a school's efforts to plan for, implement, and sustain behavioral health and wellness efforts. This includes providing a variety of services, including (1) behavioral health promotion, (2) prevention, (3) early identification, (4) evidence-based intervention, (5) referral processes, and (6) guided support services across the multi-tiered spectrum for K-12 students, especially those most vulnerable. A key focus is on preventing and supporting students experiencing non-academic barriers to learning including behavioral health concerns, substance use, and family and relationship concerns. A focus on the school's health education curriculum and instruction can support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing the physical, behavioral, and social-emotional dimensions of health. Staff wellness frameworks are school-wide wellness programs that promote healthy adults who feel positive about their roles, are excited to be at work, and are consistently present. The **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator's** role is to connect and coordinate student behavioral health services and staff wellness programming (within the school district and among community partners). Collaborative partnerships with local Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Boards is strongly recommended.

The **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator** is responsible for coordinating systems that support student and staff behavioral health & wellness components, including:

- Focus on core elements, strategic approaches, and guiding principles;
- Collaborative partnerships between school, families, and the community, including behavioral health providers;
- Collaborative partnership with local ADAMHS Board;
- Systematic identification of student and staff behavioral health & wellness needs (e.g., screening & assessment processes);
- Early identification of student and staff trauma exposures;
- Trauma-informed and trauma-responsive early intervention practices for students and staff;
- Equitable behavioral health services and supports for students and their families and for the school staff;
- Professional development for teachers, administrators and other school staff;
- Evidence-based peer-to-peer support;
- Equitable integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) within all academic instruction for K-12;
- Support of health education curriculum and instruction;
- Equitable access to a full continuum of prevention programs and services that reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors;
- Evidence-based interventions, including those provided outside the classroom or outside of the school day;
- Systematic evaluation of behavioral health & wellness supports (e.g., formative and summative evaluation processes);
- Systematic connection to clinical treatment (when needed);
- Sustainable policies that support behavioral health & wellness for students and staff.
- Participation in Coordinators' Learning Community; and
- Collaboration with technical assistance provider.

Learning Communities & Technical Assistance

As part of the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services' support of School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinators, Miami University's Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs (CSBMHP) will establish and support Learning Communities for all Coordinators and their partners (including local ADAMHS Boards). In addition, the CSBMHP will offer technical assistance to Coordinators, as needed.





Qualifications & Educational Requirements

The following are the qualifications and educational requirements for the **School Behavioral Health & Wellness Coordinator**:

- Bachelor's degree required;
- Evidence of effective networking and facilitation among diverse groups and agencies;
- Experience working with local school districts, law enforcement, and/or human service agencies toward common goals;
- Experience with children and families with special needs, especially in school settings;
- Experience with, or knowledge of, research-based alcohol/drug abuse prevention strategies;
- Experience with, or knowledge of, mental health/public health needs, services, and promotion;
- Knowledge of minority populations' needs;
- Ability to complete complex tasks and synthesize outcomes for concise reporting;
- Adept with computer technology, Word, and Excel programs;
- Experience with effective public relations/marketing strategies;
- Excellent problem-solving and crisis-management skills;
- Excellent oral and written skills;
- Evidence of successful experience in grant writing, grants administration, reporting, and financial management;
- Evidence of personnel management skills; and
- Flexible, adaptable, and able to bring groups together for a common goal.

