

Choice and Change through Process and Practices

AB Education Mental Health in Schools Pilot Project

Alberta Research Network Symposium - September 21, 2024



Wellbeing & Flourishing Forever Team Members

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Mental Health in Schools Pilot



Role of School Authorities

- Prevention, promotion, early and short-term intervention, and establishing partnerships for barrier free access of an integrated pathway to, through and from specialized services.

Mental Health in Schools Pilots

- Alberta Education has invested over \$50 million in 79 two-year pilots across the province utilizing new and innovative approaches to support students' mental health and well-being. We are 1 or 45 authorities granted a full two-year contract.
- School authorities are partnering with a mental health provider or other entity in the two-year pilots.

An Informed Approach

- Werklund School of Education is conducting an extensive mapping of the pilots including current strengths, needs and gaps and promising practices in ensuring future decisions are responsive to need and Alberta's context.
- Creating a framework to support school and school authority leaders in what is required in the provision of a robust mental health continuum of supports and services including tools for implementation, including extensive stakeholder engagement.



Aurora Academic Charter School Division & Sherbrooke Community League Mental Health in Schools Pilot Project

December 2022 to June 2025

Goal

Design, implement, and evaluate a novel collaborative school authority, community league, and professional mental health provider facilitated mental health and wellness program and supports to address and improve the increasing public mental health and wellness needs of students and families of Aurora Academic Charter School Division across all grades inclusive of 200+ Sherbrooke Community League families.

Project Scope

Identified Issue: Depression, anxiety, and behavioural disorders are some of the most common mental health challenges children and youth face. They are major contributors to lost school days, dropping out, poverty and other negative life outcomes. In their most severe forms, they can lead to suicide, the third leading cause of death for adolescents worldwide.

Purpose Statement: *Why we are doing the project?*

The Aurora Charter School and Sherbrooke Community League Mental Health Pilot Project was created to positively improve the mental wellness needs of the children and youth in the Sherbrooke Community as well as those enrolled in Aurora Charter School.

Scope Statement: *What work needs to be done?*

The Aurora Charter School and Sherbrooke Community League Mental Health Pilot Project is intended to assess community needs and apply an evidenced based intervention program to improve mental wellbeing of the Sherbrooke Community as well as those families with children enrolled at Aurora Charter School.

* *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely*

Gathering Stakeholder Feedback

Surveys Administered:

- Aurora School Division leadership (division and school)
- Staff
- Parent/guardian feedback
- Community members



Gathering Student Feedback

Flourishing Life Questionnaire:

- Evidence of student strengths
- Help students understand their unique strengths and ability to draw upon them in successful ways.

www.flourishinglife.com



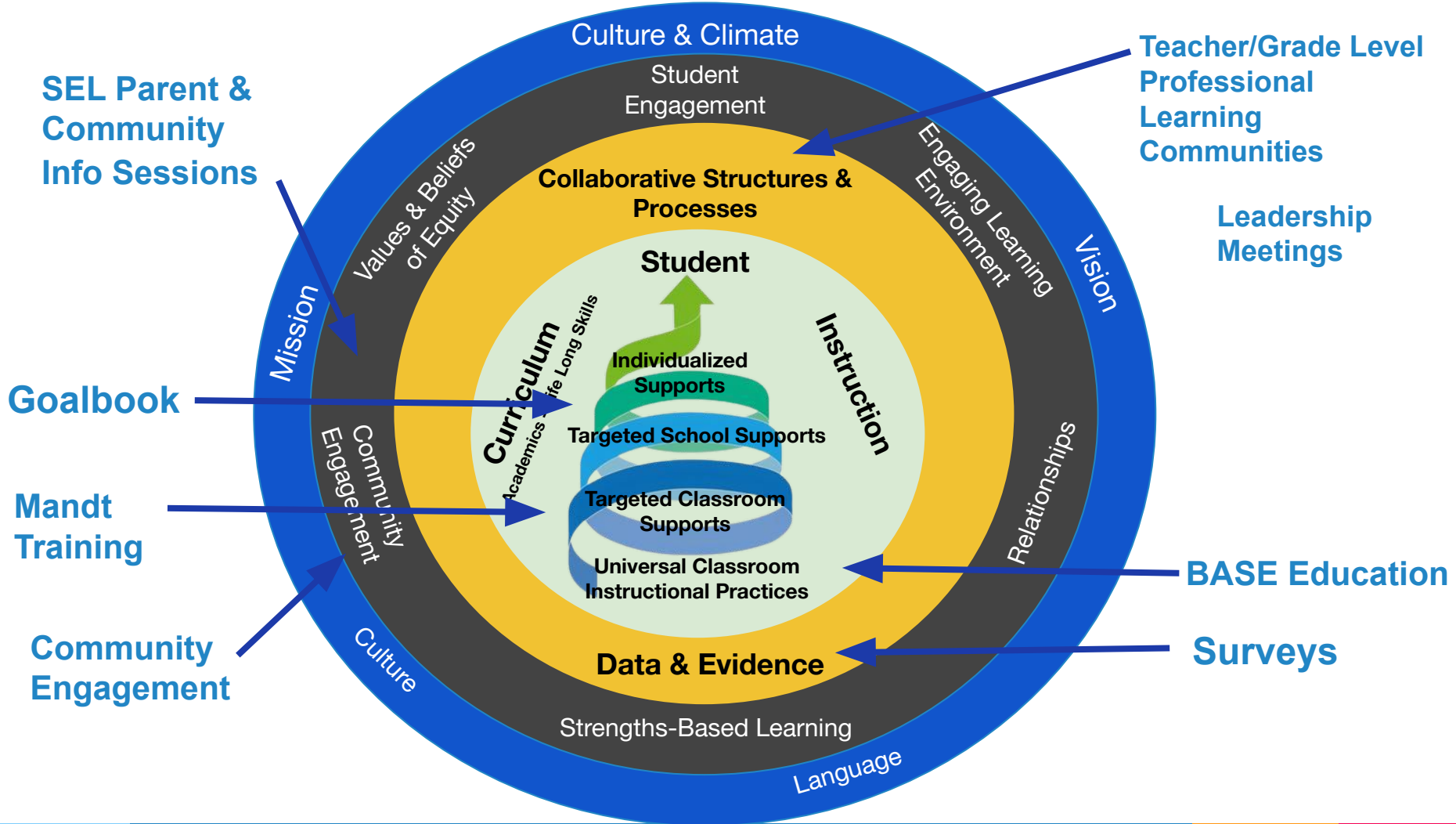
Project in Action

Strategies to Mobilize the Project



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

A Continuum Supporting
Aurora Academic Charter
School Division



Tier 1, & 2 Supports



BASE Education



Setting Goals

Elementary



Modules

- Elementary, middle and senior high
- Parent/guardian
- Professional Development
- Print and online modules
- Realtime student feedback

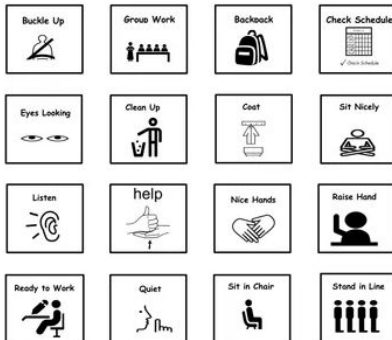
Tier 3 Supports



Goalbook

ONLINE RESOURCE

Visual Task Schedule: Behavior Icons



- Tier 1, 2 & 3 strategies and supports
- Develop goals
- Researched & evidence-based

<https://goalbookapp.com/>

Ongoing Communication



Leadership

- Informational meetings with leadership
- Meeting with Board of Trustees

Staff & Students

- PD Days - staff
- Lunch Clubs - students
- Summer Programs
- Transition to Post-Secondary Planning

Parents/Community

- Monthly Newsletters
- Information sessions
- Attend monthly Community League Meetings
- Summer Programs
- Attend Annual Community League Day

Timely Student & Family Supports

Aaron Block, Registered Psychologist

Students

- Individual counseling outside school hours (Thurs. Evening & Saturday)
- Include families as appropriate

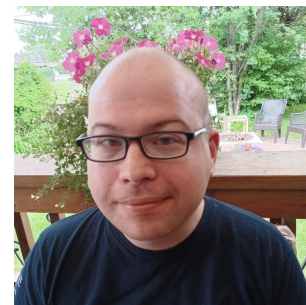
Families

- Evening, online parent information sessions
- **Topics include:**
 - Healthy Communication
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Anger Management
 - Gratitude & Being Grateful
 - Home-School Communication
 - Advocacy & Problem-Solving



Student, Family & Community Supports

Jesse Henton - Registered Social Worker, Student & Community Advocate



Students

- Lunch Clubs:
 - Drama Club
 - Book Club
 - Writing Club
- Summer Programming with the Sherbrooke Community League
- Individual Student Counseling
- Classroom support

Families & Community

- Evening, online parent information sessions
- **Topics include:**
 - Preparing for a New Grade
 - Peer Relationships & Communication

Families & Community

- Lunch and Learns
 - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 - Self-Care
- Summer Programming with Sherbrooke Community League
 - Seniors Sociables



Staff Professional Learning

- **BASE Education:**
 - multi-tiered Pre-K-Gr 12 curriculum focusing on student wellbeing
- **Goalbook:**
 - An online toolkit of research-based best practices supporting students, including strategies and individual goal development
- **MANDT Training:**
 - A program that focuses on de-escalation training and crisis prevention
- **VTRA Training:**
 - Violent Threat Risk Assessment Training
- **Conflict Resolution**
 - Sessions focusing on effective communication and conflict resolution strategies

Impact Analysis

Long-term Impact on Processes and Practices

Follow-Up & Next Steps



- **Conduct Feedback Survey of all Stakeholders:**
 - School leadership, staff, families, community members
- **Administer Student Flourishing Life Questionnaire**
- **Final Project Report submitted to Alberta Education**
- **Interpret data to determine the continuation of:**
 - Mental fitness and wellbeing programs implemented
 - Utilization of Education Psychologist
 - Utilization of School Social Worker
 - Ongoing meaningful connection with Sherbrooke Community League

Thank You!

Questions

