

# Supporting school-based mental health systems

*This document provides ideas on planning activities and funding types that could be braided to support behavioral and mental health systems' work. Below are suggestions only, and any activities should be data informed and approved by the appropriate program office.*

## Assessment and Planning

It is important that a diverse team conducts a comprehensive assessment of current mental and behavioral health services, resources and supports, such as completing the [School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation \(SHAPE\)](#). Once an assessment is complete, your team can use different tools to prioritize interventions and activities, including needed partnership and required funding. Using a data-informed approach, ensures gaps are addressed. Data should be continuously collected and regularly assessed to ensure the chosen activities are addressing the gaps as intended.

## Funding

### Federal Formula Funding

Districts have access to federal formula funding (e.g., Title IV, Part A, etc.) that could potentially fund activities such as those listed below to build a comprehensive mental health system. Please note that no school or LEA is required to use its federal and allowable state funds for programs or activities highlighted in this document. For complete information on how different federal funds may be used, contact the appropriate program office.

- **Family/Parent Engagement** (salary/benefits, resources, informational sessions, programs, promotion of events)
- **Mental Health** (salary/benefits, coordination of health services, evidence-based programs, services, professional development)
- **Drug and Violence Prevention** (programs for students, families, and parents)
- **Community Partnerships** (salary/benefits, partnerships with local healthcare clinics, informational sessions for parents and families, outreach activities)
- **Dropout Prevention** (salary/benefits, student resources, professional development, equipment, supplies)
- **Employee Well-Being** (professional development, consultant fees, leadership development)



- **School Safety** (salary/benefits, equipment, professional development, leadership development)
- **Curriculum** (that includes mental/behavioral health topics)
- **Professional Development** (mental health literacy, suicide prevention)
- **Physical environment** (sensory rooms, alternative spaces (non-construction))

## Medicaid

Your district may be able to access Medicaid funding for behavioral health services. The [Medicaid School-based Behavioral Health Services and Billing Toolkit](#) provides details on avenues to provide and bill for services, requirements to become a licensed behavioral health agency, and best practices for working with managed care organizations.

## Other discretionary (competitive) funding

### Active grant opportunities

- [Excellent Schools Washington](#) - *Excellent Schools Grant* - Excellent Schools Washington is committed to expanding access to high-quality school options for students in Washington – particularly for students who have historically been underserved by the traditional system. This grant opportunity supports new school models that provide exceptional experiences and advance student success. One-year grant of \$200,000. **Applications due June 13, 2025.**
- [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) - *Systems for Action: Community-Led Systems Research to Address Systemic Racism* - This funding for a new cohort of community-led pilot studies to produce new, actionable evidence about how to help medical, social, and public health systems work together to address forms of systemic racism. This CFP focuses specifically on systems alignment interventions that have the potential to dismantle or disrupt the health effects of systemic racism and to positively affect the health and wellbeing of communities that experience systemic racism. Each award will be up to \$200,000. **Applications due June 4, 2025.**
- [Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health](#) - *Children's Mental Health Innovation Awards* - This program aims to provide seed funding for transformative mental healthcare solutions for children across the U.S. It helps address the lack of investment in youth mental health, connect innovative ideas with capital, and build capacity for nonprofits. There are two award categories: the Innovation Awards (\$100,000 each) which are open to all, and the Next Gen Innovation Awards (\$25,000 - \$50,000 each) which are open to nonprofits founded and/or led by leaders under 32 years old, with more than two years in operation. **Applications due July 7, 2025.**

- [Ruth Anderson Wheeler and Henry O. Wheeler Charitable Trust](#) – Mission of trust is to support a variety of charitable causes with a major focus on education and organizations primarily located in the state of Washington. **Applications due July 1, 2025.**
- [School-Based Healthcare Solutions Network, Inc. \(SBHSN\)](#) – *Student Support Services Grant* - SBHSN is a private grant-giving organization that funds and supports under-resourced public and public charter schools. SBHSN is now accepting applications from public school principals interested in implementing student mental health support services. Grant funds must be used to expand access to mental health support services for students with a documented history of chronic absenteeism, behavioral challenges, or declining academic performance.

### How to find out about funding opportunities

Grants that support school-based mental health systems are periodically released by various entities. As they are all on different schedules, it is a good idea to subscribe to various newsletters and listservs to be notified about funding opportunities. Here are a few suggestions:

- OSPI Student Engagement and Support Newsletter: [SES Engage Newsletter and Alerts](#)
- [Greenlights Grant Initiative](#) (school safety grant list)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grants Dashboard](#) and [Forecasted Opportunities](#)
- [Grants.gov](#), set up custom email notification based on saved searches, such as “school mental health”: and read their [“How to determine general funding eligibility”](#) blog post
- [Best Starts for Kids Blog](#)
- [The Athena Forum](#)
- Get connected with **local** foundations, community-based organizations, etc. that award funds or could partner to write and apply collectively for funding.

### Other resources

- [Blending and Braiding Webinar Series hosted by the Department of Education](#)
- [Unlocking Federal and State Program Funds to Support Student Success](#)
- [Model District Template: Student Social, Emotional and Behavioral, and Mental Health Recognition, Screening, and Response](#)
- [School Mental Health Quality Guide: Funding & Sustainability](#)