Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services

Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services (CPS) in schools can help address the mental, emotional, and behavioral health needs of schoolage youth to remove non-academic barriers to learning. This analysis explores topics related to the provision of counseling services in schools and referrals to community providers, as well as supports around specific issues such as trauma and chronic absenteeism. Staff training to build educator competencies, the adoption of school policies, and the implementation of school-based programs or referral systems to facilitate access to mental health resources are all strategies addressed in state law to promote students' mental wellness.

How are counseling and psychological services addressed in state law?

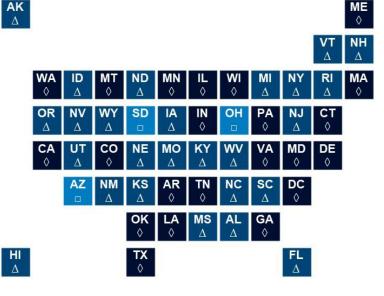
- Eleven states encourage or require staff training on the impacts of trauma, and 19 states encourage or require training on mental health issues. Both are emerging policy trends with almost all laws newly enacted since 2016.
- Twenty-six states encourage or require the adoption of suicide prevention policies, and 41 states encourage or require the provision of suicide awareness training. This

provision of suicide awareness training. This is particularly notable given rising rates of child and adolescent deaths by suicide. 1

- Thirty-eight states reference mental health screenings in laws, of which 33 states encourage or require districts to implement early identification and referral processes, such as problem-solving teams, to link students and families with needed resources. Just over 20 percent of children will be diagnosed with a mental health issue in their lifetime; however, many face barriers to receiving care.² Authorizing and encouraging schools to assist families in identifying a need for services and securing access can significantly improve outcomes.
- Thirty-eight states encourage or require districts to establish school-based health centers, employ
 mental health professionals, or partner with community providers to implement school-based or
 school-linked mental health services. These provisions help ensure all students and their families have
 access to mental health services despite socioeconomic status.

Figure 1. Only three states' policies cover fewer than four counseling, psychological, and social services topic areas.

Comprehensiveness of policies promoting counseling, psychological, and social services in schools, by state



This map shows states that have $[\]$ comprehensive (22), $[\]$ moderate (26), and $[\]$ low (3) coverage of

counseling, psychological, and social services topics in

statutes and regulations governing education.

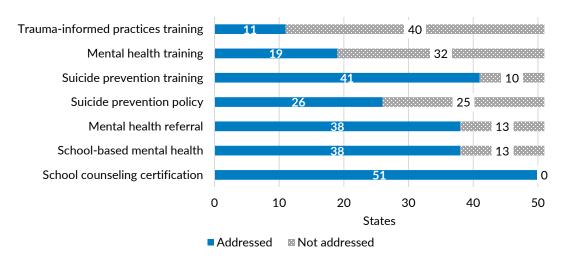
Using State Policy to Create Healthy Schools

All states address the qualifications of school counseling staff. Thirty-seven states require school
counselors to hold an advanced degree with field work, such as a practicum, internship, or prior
teaching experience. Such qualifications requirements help ensure school-based practitioners have the
specialized training needed to address the complex mental health needs of children and adolescents in
schools.

How comprehensively do states cover counseling, psychological, and social services?

- Twenty-six states moderately (range: 40 percent to 70 percent) and 22 states comprehensively (range: 80 percent to 100 percent) cover topics related to counseling, psychological, and social services.
- States with the least comprehensive coverage of counseling, psychological, and social services topics include Arizona, Ohio, and South Dakota. These states also tend toward less comprehensive policies, generally.





Child Trends, in partnership with The Institute of Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago and EMT Associates, Inc., examined the extent to which 11 healthy schools domains are addressed in state policy. These domains include the 10 components of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model: Health Education; Physical Education and Physical Activity; Nutrition Environment and Services; Health Services; Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; Social and Emotional Climate; Physical Environment; Employee Wellness; Family Engagement; and Community Involvement. An additional domain, the WSCC References domain, addresses the extent to which state laws include explicit references to the WSCC model or similar language, such as the Center for Disease Control and Preventions' Coordinated School Health model.

This sub-brief provides an overview of how state policies cover the Counseling, Psychological and Social Services domain. Sub-briefs covering the other domains as well as the compiled report can be found on the Child Trends website. Definitions of each of the 10 topics are provided in the Appendix of the compiled report. Data from all topics are available through the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) State Policy Database on School Health.

¹ Curtin, S. C., Heron, M., Miniño, A. M., & Warner, M. (2018). Recent Increases in Injury Mortality Among Children and Adolescents Aged 10-19 Years in the United States: 1999-2016. *National vital statistics reports: from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, 67*(4), 1-16.

² Perou, R., Bitsko, R. H., Blumberg, S. J., Pastor, P., Ghandour, R. M., Gfroerer, J. C., ... & Parks, S. E. (2013). Mental health surveillance among children—United States, 2005–2011. MMWR Surveill Summ, 62(Suppl 2), 1-35.