

| As Alaskan schools have recognized the impact of trauma on their students, staff, and the wider community, school staff have requested a guide to systemically gauge their trauma-engaged work. The **Transforming Schools Milestone Guides** can serve as a reference for superintendents, school administrators and teams, school staff, and school board members. Some guides also have steps for the community, students, and families. Milestone Guides offer four levels of action to complete, broken out by role, for each of the 11 components within the Framework and Toolkit.   * **Preparing** – In schools we prepare students all the time, for projects, concerts, and tests. We consider why certain skills and actions are important and what we need to prepare students for success. For our trauma-engaged work, we gather information and resources to deepen understanding of why trauma-engaged work is essential to our mission and how we can begin. * **Starting** – After preparing we make a start. In schools, we start our reading skills, begin to play the music, or meet to begin the project. We see what skills students have and build on those skills and expand them. As a trauma-engaged team, we assess where we are with this work – we see our strengths and weaknesses and we develop priorities of what we want to address. * **Applying** – After we get to know our students and their strengths we begin to build skills that are not there, and strengthen the ones that are. In trauma-engaged schools, we prioritize actions that can have the most impact, and we have the capacity to implement. Applying means that we are working together collectively and planning for the concrete trauma-engaged supports we want our students and families to have access to. We know that, like students, for us to feel confident and competent takes repetition and practice. * **Refining** – As students achieve their learning goals, we work with them to hone in on more subtle skills. For example, a student's writing style is enhanced, nuanced music skills are developed, or group activities skills are more deeply explored. Trauma-Engaged schools and staff take time to reflect on their structures, practices, and tools in order to make quality improvements by deepening and expanding their practice.   The Transforming Schools Milestone Guides offer steps and a starting point to deepen personal growth, establish a common vision with colleagues and community, and remind each of us that this is a process of preparing, starting, applying, and refining our trauma-engaged work. Individuals and teams move through the steps many times to continue to improve upon and deepen our approach. Using the Milestone tool, schools, districts, and individuals can reflect on how their work is going on an ongoing basis. While primarily a planning tool, the guides can also be used to celebrate progress. |
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| **LEADERSHIP: Deconstructing Trauma Milestone Guide** |
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| **Leadership 1. Operate from a resilient, strength-based perspective. Support a shift from thinking “What is wrong with students?” to “What happened to students?” for you and your school community.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Increase understanding of the importance of developing personal practice of interacting with students, families, and staff from a strength-based perspective. e.g. [Child Traumatic Stress: What Every Policymaker Should Know](https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-traumatic-stress-what-every-policymaker-should-know)  b. Watch eLearning module, "[Overcoming ACE's in Alaska Schools](https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/overcoming_aces)" and become familiar with strength based perspectives and how they can be used for those students who have experienced trauma. | c. Reflect on and identify personal skills and gaps around strength-based interactions.  d. Build awareness of the school's and community’s assumptions about behaviors and response to them. | e. Seek out professional development opportunities for staff about trauma's impacts and strength-based approaches.  f. Open up professional development opportunities to families to learn together.  g. Set up a safe process to reflect with peers about ongoing practice with the intention of changing the paradigm.  h. Integrate and utilize strengths-based approach with staff. | i. Schedule time/opportunity for school staff who have viewed eLearning modules to reflect about how content presented relates in the classroom/school.  j. Integrate and utilize strength based language. |  |

| **Leadership 2. Understand the history of the community and its current relationship with their school. Focus on the challenges, strengths, and opportunities for improving the relationship.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Reflect on what you know about the community's history with the schools.  b. Find local sources of wisdom and knowledge to help guide you. | c. Review Toolkit items related to cultural and historical reflections on school-community relationships. e.g. [Alaska Native Knowledge Network](https://www.uaf.edu/ankn/). | d. Seek professional development about implicit bias and how it may be impacting work.  e. Implement climate and connectedness surveys (if not already done) to keep a pulse on what is happening in the schools. | f. Sponsor open and humble discussions on an ongoing basis about how the school/community have and are currently interacting. |  |

| **Leadership 3. Review and discuss brain science and research together as a staff. Develop and promote common language and understanding for the school environment.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Begin researching frameworks/models that may be appropriate for sustaining trauma-engaged learning/teaching such as the [Transforming Schools Toolkit](https://education.alaska.gov/apps/traumawebtoolkit/landing.html).  b. Develop self-awareness around trauma-related language used in the school environment. | c. Read and reflect on the [Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska](https://aasb.org/stronger-together-family-school-partnership-resources/) Introduction and Chapter 1 with staff (a book club approach may be used).  d. Review existing practices that may be locally appropriate for sustaining trauma-engaged learning and teaching. e.g. [A Practitioner’s Guide to Educating Traumatized Children](https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/educating-traumatized-children.pdf). | e. Implement a school/district-wide common language about emotions and responses to stressors. | f. Utilize review surveys and/or evaluations to gauge improvement in leadership, staff, student, family and community skills in responding to strong emotions. |  |

| **Leadership 4. Create space for conversations about how trauma and resilience manifest in the school community. Involve families by sharing brain development research and offering training, supports, and resource creation.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Reflect on the relationships leadership and the school has with families in the school community (e.g, trust, mutual support).  b. Explore AASB's [Family Engagement Framework](https://aasb.org/stronger-together-family-school-partnership-resources/). | c. Develop a plan to reach out to families and strengthen connections with the school.  d. Develop a plan to embed regularly scheduled times for staff to engage in self-care practices. | e. Offer joint family and staff training on brain development and other learning opportunities to foster understanding and partnership. | f. Offer time and space for ongoing reflection of these topics in both formal and informal settings. |  |

| **Leadership 5. Review school’s or district’s current discipline policies and practices with staff and families. Consider whether these practices promote resiliency and contribute to positive relationships, improved self-regulation, and lifelong learning.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Identify what the data shows about the school’s/district’s discipline policies (e.g., most common reasons for suspension).  b. Identify alternative methods of addressing behavior in school that don’t create a barrier to learning. | c. Reflect on existing policies through the lens of trauma, resilience and community, as an individual and with the leadership team. | d. Gather internal and external (community) resources to respond to discipline issues with opportunities to learn rather than punish.    e. Develop the systems to employ these resources while maintaining high expectations for behavior. | f. Monitor office referral data (e.g., suspension and expulsion data) to track whether fewer resources are going toward out-of-class time solutions.  g. Continue identifying ways to ensure that relationships are the main focus of working with each other across the school community. |  |

| **STAFF: Deconstructing Trauma Milestone Guide** |
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| **Staff 1. Understand that self-care is critical to be able to serve students effectively. Reflect on your own self-care practices and take part in activities that promote your well-being.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Begin to recognize your own patterns/habits around self and community care. | b. Identify your strengths and weaknesses and ways practice for self-care can be improved.  c. Engage intentionally in activities that promote your well-being. | d. Create a plan for self-care reflecting upon [8 domains of wellness](https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/health-and-wellness/eight-dimensions-wellness) in order to optimize well-being.  e. Take the DEED "[Self Care of Educators](https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/self-care)" eLearning courses, which provide core self-care strategies and health-enhancing information. | f. Integrate and execute a plan for self-care by keeping a simple record of meeting your own needs to optimize wellness.  g. Schedule opportunities to reflect with colleagues about the impact of integrating a plan of self-care. |  |

| **Staff 2. Operate from a resilient, strength-based perspective by supporting a shift from thinking, “What is wrong with students?” to “What happened to students?”** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Begin thinking about recognizing and reflecting on interactions with students that center resilience and strengths. | b. Reflect on your own and colleagues' behavior and approaches when working with the same groups of students, to develop goals for collective improvement.  c. Identify specific ways to shift toward strengths-based, trauma-informed questions when in conversation with students. | d. Integrate [circle work](https://www.edutopia.org/article/using-circle-practice-classroom) for intentional community building to maximize positive effect.  e. Participate in training on [Understanding Trauma: Learning Brain vs the Survival Brain](https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/).  f. Take the “[Emotional Intelligence](https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/emotional-intelligence)" eLearning Course through DEED. | g. Participate in expanded in-depth training on building resilience among students and staff.  h. Consistently use strengths-based language. |  |

| **Staff 3. Enhance your understanding of how trauma impacts learning and well-being. Integrate education about best practices around the science of learning (brain biology) into daily classroom activities.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Learn about and/or identify the significance of trauma in their own lives and in their students, families, and communities’ lives. Watch eLearning Module [Overcoming ACEs in Alaska School](https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/overcoming_aces).  b. Learn about how traumatic experiences impact brain growth. e.g. Visit the [Center for the Developing Child](https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/wp3/). | c. Build your understanding that student learning and well-being is impeded by trauma. e.g. Measure using the Trauma-Engaged Questions in the AASB School Climate and Connectedness Survey of your staff.    d. Increase your knowledge around the science of learning. e.g. Measure by AASB’s School Climate and Connectedness Survey of Professional Development wishes of your staff. | e. View Dr. Dan Siegel's "[Hand Model of the Brain](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Hand+Model+of+the+Brain&&view=detail&mid=8129F21890F35959EB1E8129F21890F35959EB1E&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DHand%2BModel%2Bof%2Bthe%2BBrain%26FORM%3DHDRSC3)" to better understand the body's stress response system.  f. Take DEED's [Self-Regulation](https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/self-regulation) micro-course to build emotional regulation skills and to teach students to do the same. | g. View [Alaska Development Network's Trauma-Engaged Schools webinars](https://asdn.org/recorded-webinars/) to expand knowledge on preventing compassion fatigue, building resilience through strengths-based practice, and understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences.  h. Attend professional development / continuing education opportunities to keep up to date on best practices and science on trauma's impact on student learning. |  |

| **Staff 4. Reflect on whether your own interactions with students and families are trauma-engaged and strength-based, and seek ways to learn and improve.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Develop heightened awareness of the impact of interactions with students and families.  b. Nurture a sense of curiosity around how trauma may be impacting their students and families. e.g. Book study groups. | c. Recognize and convey an understanding of the importance of improving their abilities to operate from a strengths-based perspective.  d. Work with colleagues to identify specific areas for improvement in a trauma-informed approach to students and families. | e. Discuss "[Trauma-Informed Starts with You](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=trauma-informed+starts+with+you%27&docid=608055807448266518&mid=754850D19D74936D1952754850D19D74936D1952&view=detail&FORM=VIRE)” with colleagues and discuss what it takes to become fully trauma-informed. | f. Watch "[The Nurturance of Being Known](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+nurturance+of+being+known&docid=608043360632383651&mid=5414B75B0B483C6218105414B75B0B483C621810&view=detail&FORM=VIRE)" and actively communicate ideas for ways the school climate can be improved to help students feel known.  g. Participate in time set aside for reflection on improving school-wide strengths-based approach. |  |

| **Staff 5. Identify trauma-engaged supports and resources available to students. Consider how they may be implemented and adapted for the classroom.** |
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| **Preparing** | **Starting** | **Applying** | **Refining** | **Key Dates & Next Steps** |
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| a. Explore trauma-engaged resources and supports for students. e.g. Staff can take eLearning courses from DEED’s eLearning suite of Trauma-Engaged Schools menu.  b. Consider ways your current knowledge on resources and supports for students may be applicable in the classroom. | c. Communicate a desire for expanded knowledge of trauma-engaged supports and resources available to students.  d. Utilize and recommend trauma-engaged supports and resources to students. | e. Organize and contribute to a shared, living master list of trauma-engaged resources and supports available for your school and community.  f. Complete DEED's "[Mind-Body Connection](https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/mind-body-connections)" eLearning module to learn non-academic mindfulness tools and techniques for students. | g. Brainstorm, network, and solicit professional guidance on a regular basis about new resources related to trauma-engaged student supports.  h. Access the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](https://www.nctsn.org/) for updated guidance on responding to specific needs of traumatized children. |  |