Welcome!
We’re so glad you are here today.

As you get settled in...
Which bear are you today?

How Are Our Students Doing?
The Social Emotional Wellbeing of Alaska’s Students
AASB Annual Conference
How Are Our Students Doing?
The Social Emotional Wellbeing of Alaska’s Students

November 6, 2021

Presenters
Lisa X’unyéil Worl, STEPS Partnership Coordinator
Heather Coulehan, SEL Coordinator
Emotions Matter (We welcome all bears!)

It is important to acknowledge all your feelings and not beat yourself up for having them. Your feelings are not good or bad, they just are.

― Iyanla Vanzant

● Attention, memory and learning
● Decision-making
● Relationships
● Health and wellbeing
● Performance

From Teachers Need SEL Now More Than Ever
We’re glad to be here with you!

Lisa Worl,  
STEPS Partnership Coordinator

Heather Coulehan,  
Social Emotional Learning Coordinator
Them: Lavender may help reduce stress

Us:

Deep breath up,
Deep breath down
Our Purpose

- Define mental health and wellness
- Explore national and Alaska data about student wellbeing
- Identify barriers, strengths and partnerships in your own district
- Walk away with resources and action steps
In every chair is a leader

Listen Well and with Respect; Speak with Care

Our Value of Humor Helps Us

Challenges to Solutions

Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

From the First Alaskans Institute
Gathering Circle - Pair Share (3 minutes)

Please turn to the person sitting next to you and share:

What is one thing you do to keep yourself well?
What do you do to keep yourself well?
Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which an individual...

- Realizes their own abilities
- Can cope with stresses of life
- Can work/learn productively
- Contributes to their community

from Youth Mental Health First Aid
Pandemic Impacts on Students

*more than 120,000 U.S. children lost a parent or grandparent who was a primary provider of financial support and care

*Another 22,000 children experienced the death of a secondary caregiver — for example, a grandparent who provided housing but not a child’s other basic needs

*Sixty-five percent of all children experiencing COVID-associated orphanhood or death of their primary caregiver are of racial and ethnic minority
Pandemic Impacts on Students, cont.

*American Indian and Alaska Native children were 4.5 times more likely to have lost a primary caregiver compared with white children. Black children were 2.4 times more likely and Hispanic children almost twice as likely.

*Housing, food insecurity, lack of childcare - older siblings caring for younger children

*Decreased opportunities for students to spend time with peers in social situations

Sources:
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/more-than-120000-u-s-kids-had-caregivers-die-during-pandemic-study-finds
https://www.ktoo.org/2021/10/08/covid-deaths-leave-thousands-of-u-s-kids-grieving-parents-or-primary-caregivers
“If we carry intergenerational trauma (and we do), then we also carry intergenerational wisdom. It’s in our genes and in our DNA.” - Kazu Haga
Alaska School Mental Health Landscape Assessment
District Interviews

Every Alaska public school district was invited to participate in an interview. Thirty-one districts completed interviews, representing 91% of students in Alaska.

Areas of Inquiry

The interviews focused on five areas of inquiry:

- Mental health concerns
- Foundational elements
- Mental health supports
- Impacts and barriers
- Ideal systems

Summary Report

Findings were synthesized into a summary report of key themes and findings. Additionally, profiles were created for each of the 31 districts interviewed.
Key Findings: Student & Staff Experience

COVID-19 Impacts

• **Students**: Experiencing isolation, trauma, depression, and anxiety

• **Staff**: Experiencing increased stress, anxiety, and burnout

**Current Support**: All districts are providing some level of mental health support.

• **Ongoing Services**: Many districts are reviewing their current levels of support and considering services they will provide moving forward
Key Findings: Alaska Schools Current Mental Health Supports (Multi-tiered System of Supports - MTSS)

- Telehealth therapy
- Intensive services from community or regional health providers

Mental Health Difficulties

- School counseling groups (eg grief counseling, social skills)
- School team to assess and make referrals
- Family supports

Early Warning Signs

- Social emotional curriculum
- Suicide prevention activities
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Relationship building
- Community guest speakers
- Youth leaders

ALL Students
What Does This Look Like Across the State?

Chatham School District partnered with Elders and community members to develop culturally appropriate universal Tier 1 supports. Their work with Elders is contributing to the identification of student needs, availability of supports, and integration of spiritual practices for grief support.
Foundational Elements

- Professional development
- Cultural relevance
- Trauma engaged principles
- Data use
- Community partnership *
- Goals and policies *

“As one district explained, training teachers to become trauma-informed helps, but the systems and policies that support their instruction do not always align.”
Table Conversation
Table Conversation

(1) How does your district promote wellness and mental health?

(2) What policies and plans do you have in place to support wellness?

(3) Who are the partners in your community that can help address barriers and challenges?

Please take a few notes for reporting out!
Sharing the Harvest

(1) How does your district promote wellness and mental health?

(2) What policies and plans do you have in place to support wellness?

(3) Who are the partners in your community that can help address barriers and challenges?
District Profiles

- COVID Impacts
- Services & Supports
- Barriers
- Works in Progress and Ideal Systems

Read the profiles to:
- learn what is currently happening
- get inspired in designing your district’s “ideal system”!
How to Access the Landscape Assessment

Mental Health Trust Authority (scroll to the bottom of the website and click on “resources”)

alaskamentalhealthtrust.org

Mental Health Supports in Schools: A Landscape Assessment

District Profiles
Yee gu.aa yáx x’wán.
Yee léelk’u hás Khá yee x’éit has wusi.áx yeedát.

Yee gu.aa yáx x’wán. Gunéi ax tu.áadi tsu.

Yee gu.aa yáx x’wán.
Uháan áyá, haa léelk’u hás, has du ítx yaa ntu.át

Yee gu.aa yáx x’wán. Ldakát yeewháan.

Have strength and courage, all of you. Your grandparents are really listening to you now.

Have strength and courage, all of you. We are beginning to walk along it, too.

Have strength and courage, all of you. It is us, our grandparents, we are the ones following them.

Have strength and courage, all of you. Every one of you.

Shgáté Jessie Johnnie, Chookansháa
Have Strength and Courage: A Call to Action

Data: Review the statewide mental health landscape assessment and your district’s mental health profile.

Strategic Plan: Ensure that wellness is part of strategic plan.

Policy: Inventory to assess wellness and mental health policies in place. Prioritize wellness of students, staff, families.

Funding: Allocate resources for mental health and wellness services, curricula and staff professional learning and training.
Transforming Schools: Resources for Trauma Engaged Practice in AK

Framework Toolkit
Milestone Guides
Video Library
Social Media Campaign

Learn more on Sunday morning! Please join us tomorrow.
Gunalchéesh for spending time with us sharing your experiences.

Lisa Worl
lworl@aasb.org

Heather Coulehan,
hcoulehan@aasb.org