

SHIP DAKOTA COUNTY SCHOOL WELLNESS REPORT 2022

This report highlights Dakota County Public Health Department's school wellness efforts funded through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) between November 1, 2021 and October 31, 2022. Together, school partners and Public Health planned and implemented dozens of wellness efforts focused on healthy eating, physical activity, health equity, mental health, and youth vaping prevention.

OUR REACH



10 Dakota County school districts
including

16 Individual schools engaged in implementing sustainable wellness efforts



68,420 estimated students and staff were impacted

FUNDING

\$121,800 of SHIP funds awarded to school districts to support projects

SCHOOL PARTNERS

SSD 6 - South St. Paul
 ISD 191 - Burnsville, Eagan, Savage
 ISD 192 - Farmington
 ISD 194 - Lakeville
 ISD 195 - Randolph
 ISD 196 - Rosemount, Apple Valley, Eagan
 ISD 197 - W. St. Paul, Mendota Hts., Eagan
 ISD 199 - Inver Grove Heights
 ISD 200 - Hastings
 ISD 917 - Serves 9 Districts in Dakota County

SCHOOL WELLNESS PROJECTS

ACTIVE LIVING

- Safe Routes to School Programming
- Outdoor Classroom

VAPING PREVENTION

- Tobacco/Vaping Secondary Training
- Vaping Prevention Education

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

- Summer Feeding Program
- Food Share Carts

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Calming Room/Zones/Carts
- Trauma-Informed Practices
- Suicide Prevention
- Courageous Conversations
- Mental Health Staff
- Move Mindfully®
- Training: Breathe for Change
- Present Teacher Restoration Project™

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION – DISTRICT LEVEL

- Supports for Alternatives to Suspension
- Suicide Prevention with Quality, Persuade, Refer training
- Restorative Practices for Student Leaders
- Building Toward Racial Equity District-Wide Training
- Restorative Practices: Story Circles with Staff
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): Project Discovery Kits

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HIGHLIGHTS

Share Carts in ISD 197

Utilizing SHIP funding to implement 'share carts' to address food access and recovery while providing a place for students to place unopened, unwanted breakfast and lunch items that can then be taken by students or redistributed later in the day as snacks. SHIP funds purchased refrigerators to store unused food items and carts were redirected from another ISD 197 project to be used for this initiative. As of May 2022, share carts have been implemented at 7 sites (5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 1 High School). An estimated 25-30 items are recovered and redistributed daily.

Chill Zones/Safe Spaces in ISD 194

"Numerous students have expressed gratitude for a safe space in the school building to use during the school day when they need to reset or just breathe for a minute. Having a Chill Zone in the school has helped students take a moment or class period during their day and then return to classes in a stronger, healthier mindset.



It has also increased staff awareness of the need for additional mental health/ wellness space and support within the schools."

- school staff with ISD 194

South of the River Collaborative in Partnership with Dakota County Public Health

9 monthly meetings were held over the course of the SHIP 2022 funding cycle in partnership with our SHIP community leadership team. The South of the River Collaborative is a group of school district cultural liaisons and cultural family advocates representing 6 districts across the county. Meeting topics included various learning opportunities topics identified by the group such as grounding in the current SHIP strategies and goals, mental health resources, fostering resilience, improving intercultural communications, cross-collaboration with Parks and Libraries - and more! This important work provides insight into DC Public Health's on-going health equity priority of partnering with our growing and diverse communities.

Suicide Prevention in ISD 196

SHIP funds were utilized to provide approximately 140 school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists and school social workers with the evidence-based suicide prevention gatekeeper training (Question, Persuade, Refer [QPR]), integrating Move Mindfully practices. The district's Student Suicide Risk Assessment was the foundation for these trainings, additional learning, and collaboration.

Outdoor Learning Classroom in SSD6

The outdoor classroom at Kaposia Education Center provides a space for meaningful, inquiry-based learning and activities that help meet state science standards. Additionally, outdoor learning has positive effects on students' social, emotional, and physical health. The Outdoor Learning Classroom will continue to serve as a space for all students and staff to learn, grow, inquire, investigate, and better appreciate the natural world.

HIGHLIGHTS

Present Teacher Restoration Project™ in all 10 Public School Districts

Over 304 school staff participated in the Present Teacher Restoration Project™ series – an evidence based social emotional learning training that Dakota County offered to any school staff across all 10 public school districts at no cost. This directly supported staff mental well-being, fostered professional development, and supported student well-being, who's example is set by educators and school staff modeling SEL practices. A total of 932 total hours of engagement in this 4-hour training platform.

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Reflections on Present Teacher Restoration Project™ Training

“I am glad I had the opportunity to take this training during the back-to-school workshop week. I found myself over-working and this program helped me to prioritize my work and have agency in seeking balance. It allowed me to a chance to center myself so I could see what was happening. The yoga and meditation helped me to center myself, connect to my faith, and connect to myself. After this training, doing my job felt more effortless. I like doing my job now. This training has taught me how to come back to myself. I want to do it again and I want everyone to do it!”

- District 196 ~ Reading Recovery Teacher (1st year)

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Safe Routes to School (SRTS) in SSD 6

To continue the SRTS work within South St Paul, school leaders applied for and received a MnDOT Demonstration Project Technical Assistance Grant, leveraging the foundational work already in place across the district to support SRTS. Dakota County was a partner in the grant process with guidance from Alta Planning and District partners. The grant allowed Kaposia Education Center to design, engage community feedback,



implement and evaluate a SRTS identified project from their SRTS Comprehensive Plan. This short-term, low-cost temporary roadway project was used to pilot long-term design solutions to improve the walk and bike-ability of the intersections around Kaposia Elementary School.

The benefits of this project included deepening the understanding of active transportation needs in the community, test project design and gather preliminary data, and increase engagement of walking and biking to school. Installation was completed at Kaposia Education Center in Spring of 2022. The school shared “we’ve had an overwhelmingly positive experience with this demonstration project. There has been observed increase in pedestrian safety, improved vehicle adherence to traffic laws, and safer intersections for our safety patrol to work”.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ‘HOW WELL’?



Dakota County Public Health helped school partners to sustain their project activities:

.....▶ **90%** reported they met at least 6 of the 7 criteria to sustain change.
The goal is 100% of partners meeting the criteria to sustain change.

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