

Introduction

Creating sustainable school mental health systems is a cornerstone of school mental health initiatives. Movements led by local and state leaders across the country ensure coordinated and comprehensive school-based services thrive and meet the needs of school community members. This requires learning how to translate the creative, innovative, and solution-focused work of school-based services for mental health initiatives (e.g., Project AWARE, Safe and Supportive Schools) from the local to the state level. One way to do that? Policy.

Synthesizing highlights, themes, and wisdom shared from school-based policy peers across the country, this learning capture provides local and state school professionals a general introduction to leadership approaches that are essential to school-based mental health policy design (foundations), with excerpts from voices of experience nationwide.

WHAT ARE THESE LEARNING CAPTURES?

In April 2021, NTTAC hosted state and local school systems leaders from across the country. These leaders shared their experiences about what issues are most urgent when it comes to school mental health; what policies have been the most helpful for leaders and those they serve; and what youth need most right now.¹

Collaboration, mutuality, and peer support are cornerstone principles of trauma-informed approaches to systems change. As such, we gathered school leaders from across the country in a two-part discussion and dialogue (August 2021).

We offer this to local, state, and school-based leaders as guidance, connection, validation, and encouragement in creating policy definition and design that supports the health of children, youth, families, and educators. We offer insights and strategies for schools to identify and dismantle policies that harm members of the school community. Each discussion is captured in a document intended to accompany the recorded conversations. The four conversations (two panels each) have each been condensed and edited for clarity. This is Part 2 ([see Part 1 here](#)).

WHAT IS SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH POLICY ALL ABOUT?

In all four of the policy learning forums, we opened with six fundamental pillars to school-based mental health policy. These six pillars are offered to build a shared consensus about why school-based mental health policy matters; what it can mean and how we can understand it; and why it is connected to other movements and school leadership initiatives.

» **School-Based Policies are Health Policies:** If we frame school mental health policy as general health policy, we commit to recognizing that all school policy impacts the mental health of the school community, even when it is not explicitly related to mental health. When understood this way, special education accommodation policy is school mental health policy; employee bereavement policy is school mental health policy, testing standards policy is mental health policy. We're inviting each other to widen the definition of what policy can be used to achieve collective health, to rehumanize our bodies and spirits in school institutions, and forge systems from a holistic space.

» **Policy Leadership is Leading Towards Anti-Racism:** Policies are not neutral. They are informed by our biases (implicit and explicit); the needs of those we prioritize (and historically prioritized or not); and are often written and implemented through lenses of privilege and power. School policy has historically reinforced systems and tools that reproduce inequity. Commitment to equity demands that school-based mental health policy leadership be fundamental to anti-racist efforts.

» **Policies are Issues of Legacy and Sustainability:** This work happened before us and will continue to happen long after we're gone. Sustainability doesn't always mean positive impact; it can perpetuate harm as well as support positive impact. School-based mental health policy leadership acknowledges both realities and possibilities.

» **Safety Is the Motor Engine:** Safety is the way a school or school system feels and helps establish trusting relationships between students and adults. We need to hold ourselves to our standards even when it's difficult. Safety is a school-based mental health policy's motor engine; without safety present when designing or implementing policy, the policy is not going to result in mental health equity.

» **Make the Implicit Explicit:** Every word we put in our policy holds a message about our belief system. Policies hold a wealth of data to surface these internalized belief systems. By examining the policies in place in our school communities and systems, by explicitly defining the who, how, and why of a policy, we lead with more transparency and trustworthiness.

» **School-Based Services are Organizational Self-Care:** School-based mental health policies are not just for students. They are for the adults, too. The staff, faculty, and workforce in a school community are central to school-based policy leadership; we can't create policies for our students without creating policies that ensure the wellbeing of our educators.

¹ Missed the introduction to school-based services policy session in April 2021? [Check out the materials here.](#)

This learning capture is composed of excerpts from the two panels' discussions that took place on August 24, 2021: "The What & Why: Foundations of School Based Policy."

The What & Why: Foundations of School-Based Policy

Define (How do we talk about policy across roles and responsibilities?)

Design (How might we design policies that are student, family, and educator centered?)

Dismantle (How might we interrupt or modify historically injurious and trauma-inducing policy?)

In Part 2 (the "Who & The How: Implementing School Based Mental Health Policy"), we explored three areas of school-based policy leadership:

- 1. Policy-to-Practice:** Local and state leaders shared the challenges and celebrations of translating a mandate, piece of legislation, resolution, or written policy into impactful practice.
- 2. Partnerships and Parity:** Leaders shared their relational organizing strategies and approaches to ensuring equal implementation of policies.
- 3. Progress and Possibilities:** Leaders shared where and how school-based policy could and should go- beyond equal implementation- to achieve equitable impact.

Recording Links for Both Sessions on August 26, 2021

- [Part 2 - Round A: School-Based Services Policy Learning Forum: The Who & How Implementation](#)
- [Part 2 - Round B: School-Based Services Policy Learning Forum: The Who & How: Implementation](#)

As you explore the "The Who and How of School Based Policy: Implementation" below, please note:

- To view the full recording and transcript, please navigate to the event page.
- This conversation capture was edited for clarity.
- All of the ideas, beliefs, and opinions expressed by panelists and moderators are theirs alone and do not represent official policy or policy positions of NTTAC or any state, local, or federal entity.

The Who & How: Implementing School Based Policy

Excerpts from the School Based Services and Support Policy Forum²

I. Policy to Practice (Local and State Implementation)

Moving policy into practice is not a leadership skill that is often explicitly taught. Leaders tend to inherit policies from previous tenures, teach themselves how to unpack the meaning of a policy and its impact on their work, or learn from experience managing school-based services initiatives.

Here, leaders share how policy work has impacted their professional sense of being, advice they have garnered from moving words from paper into action, and what we have learned through and from COVID in how needs inform policies.



How have policies impacted your school mental health practice?

“ Policy shaped my work because I started in community mental health where policies were very strict and detailed. I started there and saw where you could go within that policy and how to advocate for change. Currently, we’re working to strengthen mental health partnerships and increase access and remove barriers to basic and mental health needs.

- Carla Quintero

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“ I’m an educator, solely in Los Angeles for the past 19 years. I’ve been a teacher, coach, and principal. Currently I’m a newcomer coach (I have the privilege of working with students who recently arrived to help them feel welcome, oriented, and supported). In terms of policy, I would call it a double-edged sword. It’s necessary because it really helps to guide our processes. It can also be limiting and frustrating. When I get frustrated, I try to find the wiggle room and see where I can push back.

- Claudia Rojas

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“ When I think of policy, I [sometimes] think “that’s someone else’s job,” someone bigger, with more power. With the work that we did, I saw policy move forward in Iowa. We worked with community coalitions and legislators to implement policy that required teachers to train in ACES, suicide prevention, and postvention training

- Donna Kitrick



What are one to two factors that help move something on paper into actual practice?

*“ **Partnerships is a huge part of implementation.** Also, **it requires a lot of effort to implement policy** on the ground. California has a lot of local control (lots of implementation and oversight). Counties and school districts, providers, and health plans have a lot of pull so **implementation requires folks on the local level to understand state level changes to work through the hard parts.** As a state organization, we try to lift up practices that are going well, but we end up with a state that’s patchwork because some spots flourish and others struggle. [I always consider] **how can state agencies and advocates help support that implementation on the ground?***

- Lisa Eisenberg

“ What Lisa does at the state level, that’s what we do at the school level. The corriente, the current, trickles down from the state to the schools. It’s all about relationships and collaboration. In my role at the Orange County Department of Education, the districts come to us for understanding of policy and interpretation. We’re helping to build capacity so districts can adhere to policy. **Often that’s a lot of work, to find the best resource or program. Districts don’t have time to do that, so we do that for them and help make it more accessible to them.** Smaller districts, especially, don’t have the bandwidth (people, funding) to implement policy so it can really look different district to district. **Collaboration, connecting the community to resources, and making sure the implementation process isn’t burdensome [is key].**

- Carla Quintero

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“ [In rural communities] find a group of passionate people and collaborate. We have a group including legislators who meet at 7am in a rural district.

- Donna Kitrick

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“ I want to uplift the unspoken cultural wealth of communities. Absent formal systems, communities do take care of each other.

- Yesmina Luchsinger

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“ In my former role as a coordinator of mental health for a school district in Orange County (CA), we successfully led the creation of a taskforce to address new policy. [California Assembly Bill 2246](#) was created in 2016: all middle- and high-schools had to have a prevention, intervention, and postvention policy in schools. I was tasked with organizing [the policy workgroups], and my goal was making the voices of the stakeholders heard, which led to creation of a task force. The **taskforce encompassed students, teachers, board members, and community providers.** We discussed “the how”: How was it going to happen? What resources do we have in place? Students vetted existing programs being used for prevention. Together we examined data, and we asked, “what does that mean to us?” Process was done within 9 months. Sometimes, **you have to go slow to go fast.**

- Angela Castellanos

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“ A couple of factors that are critical for success: 1) It’s easier to get policy on paper than get into practice; 2) Heavy support (training, coaching, consulting, being willing to do work with and alongside stakeholders) is needed; 3) “Train and hope” doesn’t really work; 4) Sending too many resources can overwhelm overworked educational staff, so you need to focus on support to go with resources and policies; 5) Resources need to be vetted thoroughly; and, 6) the team giving the resources needs to understand it well in order to help with training and implementation.

Also, make an effort to align the policy with district and local mission, vision, and goals so people see the connection. **Ask yourself: Who is the policy for? Who does it benefit? How will it change student outcomes?** Take time to support the process, teams, and people: Where are you going and why?

- Casey Yates



COVID really taught us [educators and systems leaders] about the need to implement policy fast and how it’s always changing and how that impacts the district level. How did you find the policies that you were required to implement during COVID-19? What strategies did you use to help make that successful throughout your district?

“ Because we had to move so quickly, and because there was a lot of fluidity, we really wanted to rely on the data because we had to ensure people had a level of trust in whatever we did. As we put these things out, **staff and families need to have a level of trust and consistency.**

We used data to support every decision we made. Our superintendent did a lot of background work with the board, ensured they understood what was going on, talked, and coached them through the process, provided data to enable them to make informed decisions. The [School District Governing] Board has a lot of trust in the Superintendent so that gave her a lot of autonomy to make decisions on the fly, but she was still in communication with the board and community.

COVID showed us that we can be flexible, responsible, and quick.

- Louis Laffitte

II. Partnerships and Parity (within school systems and community)

Meaningful action happens in partnership and in relationship. Implementing school-based mental health policies rests upon trusting ourselves, each other, stakeholders, and community members.

Here, district, county, and state leaders share stories of how they build and nurture partnerships to achieve implementation parity. One common element? The work takes time, commitment, and responsive action.



When we talk about policies, procedures, and programs that we implement, how do you generate action together with the community, in partnerships?

“ The greatest part of being part of both segments of [Project] AWARE 1 and AWARE 2 is that with AWARE 1, there was the [Maryland Safe to Learn Act](#) that was implemented towards the end of 2018. We augmented our current practices to make that work to fit, so that involved a lot of partnerships.

*The majority of our partnerships we have in Maryland are through ties with University of Maryland and the [National Center for Student Mental Health](#). These have been instrumental to find training opportunities. We also partnered with [Mental Health Association of Maryland](#), which does the majority of the state’s [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) trainings through Maryland State Department of Mental Health. For the new [AWARE] grant in 2020, we partnered with the [Family Tree of Baltimore](#). **All of these various partnerships and pieces actually work together to help us. Mental health is COMPLEX, so in order for us to be successful we have to look at this whole spectrum [of wellness] holistically.***

During the 2020 legislative session for Maryland, we had a state delegate who was passionate about mental health and what “trauma-informed” actually meant. [HB 277](#) asked “what does trauma-informed look like, and how does it impact our school system?” What we found through the legislation is that the requirements were very vague. The legislation essentially said, “you just need to have a guidance document.” It’s not really a policy; a guidance document can lead to policy and make change as we go through to our school systems.

In Maryland, we have 24 districts that we serve, and with that particular guidance document we were tasked to partner with the behavioral health administration within Maryland. There was a whole gamut of people we were tasked to involve, but what came out of that [partnership] is a guidance document that has just been rolled out to our schools, and how timely is that when we are trying to transition back successfully for COVID. The document is called “The Trauma Informed Approach.” It’s a framework to have systems to navigate holistically to educate all teachers and staff; is inclusive of families and communities; and makes our partnerships viable and stronger

It’s just about relationships and being a courageous conversationalist.

- Terrell Sample



*“ Relationship building is a critical strategy. **Build relationships with the people you need to make policy implementation successful.** When I was new, the failure rate was high because we were throwing things out there and saying, “hey we’re all going to do this.” When we created buy-in, and the push out was nearly flawless*

- Casey Yates



*“ Yes to being “the courageous conversationalist”! When I was hired as a counselor on special assignment, it was during ABA 202. The state department (CA) provided a lot of resources to reduce the counselor to student ratio. **We asked students** “What do you need? How do you access mental health?” Having different focus groups led us to develop a fabulous referral system.*

Courageous conversations create magic relationships by creating those connections,

- Angela Castellanos

“ People can so often decide not to be courageous when it comes to putting policy into practice. Implementation takes courage. Create situations where someone speaks up and uses lived experience to make change.

- Lisa Eisenberg

“ When people begin to trust what you’re going to deliver and that you’re collaborative, they’ll come. Build that trust and accountability for how money and time are spent.

- Donna Kitrick



If you had to give someone a piece of wisdom who was just starting out in state leadership or district leadership, what about policy implementation would you say to them?

“ What we know first and foremost is **connection and relationships are the most important things**. I wonder if people know HOW to do that? I look at my assets: Who do I have relationships with? Clinicians? Office of Education employees, district employees? How do I build up those relationships and create new ones? I came in and came alongside them, met them where they were at. I didn’t come in as an expert and was very clear about what I did and didn’t know. I put myself in their shoes, listened to their frustrations and barriers, then put my hand out and looked. I have all of my districts meet together and share information.

- Jen Baker

“ Provide resources. It can be as simple as providing a checklist. Create that community of practice so that districts can learn from each other’s successes. It makes that accessibility more impactful.

Work with the district on getting buy-in from the staff and establishing “the why.” When you really feel like you’ve got **teachers as stakeholders, get their feedback and buy in**. They’re the ones interacting with students and families, so getting their buy-in can really help.

- Carla Quintero

“ You must go slow to go fast. There’s so many different resources and emails and initiatives that are coming down the pipe, but I learned not to get it confused or try to do everything all at once. Take things piece by piece.

- Angela Castellanos

“ There typically **isn’t a need to reinvent the wheel**. If you start doing your homework or start talking to your partners or team, **there is usually some form of language you can start to build upon**. Being willing to share or asking someone to share helps enormously with getting momentum

- Laura Muse

“ I try to seize those “reachable teachable moments.” When you’re actually trying to share and take a little bit of this and that, you find that people and organizations already have the tools in place; it’s just a question of execution. **When we look at it with a growth mindset, we are better able to shift to that proactive stance versus the “traditional” reactive stance**. A lot of times we find that people and orgs are fixated and stuck on traditionalism. But, if the pandemic has taught us nothing more, **we have to be innovative with everything that we do, because it’s all about trial and error**.

- Terrell Sample

“ If I could give one piece of advice to a new state leader, it’s to read the piece of legislation that governs that particular piece of your program. Oftentimes it had been so long since some of the folks had read the legislation that we actually were able to amend something.

- Yesmina Luchsinger

“ Take the time to know and accept who you’re serving. That will help you to adapt and adopt a new way of doing things, thus creating new policy, or augmenting current policy.

- Terrell Sample

“ For me [as a district leader] the approach is to *try and deconstruct “what is the policy asking?”* Or, if we’re building a policy, *know what your end goal is so that you know what you’re constructing.*

*Build a level of understanding, and then identify what’s needed to make it work and really go through all of those steps: **Who are the experts within and outside of our building? What are the resources and how do we connect all those pieces?***

For example, state legislature in Arizona passed [ARS 15-120](#), which required all staff members to be trained in [suicide] awareness and prevention for guidance counselors, teachers, administrators, anyone working with students grade 6-12. Because of partnerships and resources from Project AWARE, I had gotten trained on suicide prevention and all of our social emotional learning specialists also got trained in suicide prevention. We also got vouchers to pay for online training, which was especially key when COVID hit. We ended up training every single staff member in our district (1400 people including custodians, bus drivers, teachers, etc.).

- Louis Laffitte

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“ One thing I would suggest for district level leaders is to take *time to learn and understand systems and structures/ how things work at the local and district level.* It helps knowing where the pieces fit and what already exists that you can build on. Understanding the systems and structures is definitely key.

Second, *find your champions (for whatever your policy is).* Find the influencers to champion whatever policy it is that you’re trying to push out.

Build relationships and don’t throw stones: there’s a lot of times state and district policy are disconnected. Sometimes there’s not a real strong understanding of how different districts operate.

Connect everything to outcomes: We’re student focused, student centered, so we connect everything we can to student outcomes (Mental Health → Behavioral Health → Academic Achievements). You’ll gain a lot of ground if you connect to outcomes; otherwise, you just have something extra without really [knowing] how it connects and how it’s going to benefit stakeholders.

Things that are mandated aren’t always well- received. Every year we have a week where we do a series of trainings. Recently, we wanted all administrators to be trained in trauma. We managed to work that trauma training into the annual training week, creating a strong campaign [to shift the understanding and messaging]. Now we have a new teacher Certified Employee Academy, an onboarding program that has all new certified employees trauma trained.

*There was **already an existing structure, so we were able to just add it in and make it fit.** This implementation took months, but now ALL new district employees are trauma trained.*

- Casey Yates



What are ways to invite policymakers and the gatekeepers to move the levers of change?

“ When we were implementing the suicide prevention policy, my colleague and I had the idea to invite the author of the assembly bill to coffee. We had a conversation regarding the reasoning behind the policy. Why did he author it? Did he think about funding for schools when he thought about the policy? Could he attach funding to the policy? It really helped me to think about how to address the “nos” that we come across by learning the rationale and asking for funding from the state to push initiatives.

- Angela Castellanos

“ We always invited our legislators to attend education activities and oftentimes asked them to introduce the event - they embrace to be seen at large events. Then when it came to state education policy questions/debates, they knew our communities and students and our emails would have more impact/influence.

- From the Chat: Cynthia Schumaier

“ One of the other things that comes to mind as far as inviting policy makers is the “Lauryn’s Law” bill that addresses suicide prevention. The mother of the student whose daughter died by suicide has been a proactive advocate for that policy; we partnered with the mother to facilitate, question, persuade, and refer training (QPR) to all grantees. That was very powerful for me personally and it has made a tremendous impact on all that we serve throughout our districts as well.

- Terrell Sample

III. Progress and Possibilities (Where does school mental health policy need to go to be truly equitable?)

When leaders step into roles that require or invite policy design, oftentimes they are stepping into already-existing policies that are antiquated, outdated, or simply not aligned to the current context and needs of the school community. This requires dismantling in-place policies.

School-based mental health policy implementation experienced a historic window of cultural shifts through and from COVID-19. School-based services have always been fundamental to school culture, climate, and health equity. The heightened awareness and shared belief of the importance of school-based services has offered leaders opportunities to carry out pre-pandemic visions of school mental health; it also has required leaders to be creative, attuned, and braid funding streams so that we ensure that what we want to implement from emerging policies is sustainable.



COVID-19 brought health inequities in our country to light. Knowing everything that has happened in our country, how do we motivate people to take on something like policy implementation in the midst of the pandemic?

*“ It’s been really interesting to reflect on this a little bit. The focus on student mental health has been pretty staggering. We’re seeing billions of dollars going into student mental health. I want to hold and acknowledge that the **need for student mental health services has been elevated because of the pandemic, and that need was there before the pandemic.***

*Specifically, what we’re seeing is the growth of telehealth in California. Telehealth is an interesting thing for schools to grapple with because we want adults on campus for students to interact and have good interactions with day-to-day. **New practices adopted during COVID can keep going (due to state level recognition) beyond COVID.** For example, a young person can enroll in a confidential health services program via a phone call; they now have transformed access in a small but very important way.*

- Lisa Eisenberg

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*“ **Lifequakes are integral to our growth and forward momentum.** We don’t like the pain we have to go through to make that happen, but I really see that at district, state, and federal level. Districts are looking at things they need to focus on around suicide intervention and prevention. **Some policies are hard for districts to understand, so we need to really support them in clarifying policy.***

- Jen Baker

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“ One of the gold nuggets that came out of COVID-19 and policy implementation is that we were struggling with HIPAA, access, and consent. We saw quick mobilization because the outcome was “We need to serve the students now” and the question “How do we get access to these kids so quickly?” The continuity of care for students was essential.

- Angela Castellanos

“ For Maryland, part of the extension of the trauma-informed guidelines that I shared earlier, coupled with how we have modeled our Project AWARE initiative, is that we do regional training about mental health and support using some of the [CARES Act](#) money. What we elected to do with our officials at the State Department of Education is to put together a mental health supports initiative that’s actually going to be a regionalized model, which again goes back to sustainability and providing all of those supports regionally for all districts, not just the ones that are listed in the Project AWARE grant.

We’ve taken those particular policies and the models and protocols that were already set in place through AWARE and extended them that so we can build capacity throughout the state for any facet regarding mental health. So, **all of these practices have actually helped change the legislation** during the pandemic. It’s very timely that all of these components are coming to the forefront and putting mental health as the key focus.

- Terrell Sample

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“ Thinking about COVID specifically, I know how overwhelmed new leaders are and **I encourage people to pause and really be okay with being vulnerable and uncomfortable.**

- Claudia Rojas



What have you seen school systems leaders do to braid multiple funding streams to improve equitable access to mental health services?

“ There are a lot of resources for how to leverage [MediCal](#) dollars. **Braided funding is where you have a funding stream that goes to abc, then another that goes to xyz, but the system creates a comprehensive and holistic puzzle. Blended funding is mixing it all together.**

No one funding stream is going to be a perfect solution. To provide comprehensive school mental health services you have to find multiple funding streams.

I do want to acknowledge that oftentimes funding streams, whatever their flexibility, go to pay for services or programs that are often affiliated with adults delivering these services and programs. I think often it misses the mark on who is receiving and participating in the services. It becomes a **conversation about scope and ultimately talks about the adults doing the work versus the children receiving the services.**

Let’s try to divorce it from the adults in the room as much as we can.

- Lisa Eisenberg

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“ As regional Mental Health Coordinators [at a county], we’re using our grant funding to build capacity for school districts, connecting with community resources that can help them bill Medi-Cal, and connecting them to additional grant opportunities and partnerships.

Finding creative ways to reimburse, assessing district capacity, filling gaps in the funding, and finding philanthropic seed money is great for getting something started. We have just been looking at anything and really using that braided funding, and now we have a more comprehensive mental health program.

- Carla Quintero

IV. What is one move that can help us drive our school-based policy leadership?

Leaders on both panels of “The Who and the How: Implementation” shared advice for colleagues in the school mental health policy work. The main theme? It comes down to being ready to be vulnerable, ask for help, share power, and support and resource the ideas and people behind policies.

“ The importance of trusted relationships: we’re not in it alone. We may feel like it but there’s a lot of community partners who want to see the best for our students in our community and ask them to help us lift it up.

- Donna Kitrick

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“ Resilience.

- Kendall Fujioka

“ Youth voices. Please always include them in this important work.

- Carla Quintero

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“ Get in there, wiggle in, and find your alliances.

- Jen Baker

“ Show our own vulnerabilities and be as transparent as possible-that is crucial. Share what makes sense and what doesn't.

It's not realistic to come to the table and pretend you're an expert, so come as you are; don't worry if you don't have all of the answers.

Shine a light on youth advocates and youth leaders: sit with them and listen. They have such a wealth of experiences and ideas; they just need tools and guidance. Encourage them to listen and speak with their hearts.

- Claudia Rojas

“ Relationships. I do think that in work and in life, things happen through relationships, and I think that is probably your strongest starting point with anything you're trying to accomplish.

- Laura Muse

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“ I think relationships are key, but I think you also need to think of all the different connection points of the process, pros and cons. I think it opens up your circle and adds to your network and allows you to identify everyone you need in your boat. And don't think of it as just a boat, think of it as a series of boats- there's a lot of folks that you need to make it work.

- Dr. Laffite

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“ If there's a policy that's being implemented: support. Without support, the policy won't be implemented or implemented well. It's a lot of work, but if you're just there for your expertise it won't end well. Sometimes that does mean money, oftentimes it does not. A good example: we have a lot of money right now with [ESSER](#) money, but more money doesn't mean more human capital or resources, especially if you can't hire people to do the work.

- Casey Yates

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“ Support. Consult with other folks. Don't reinvent the wheel. There are so many resources out there. There were a lot of “nos,” but I learned to ask for help and get support. But having courageous conversations and networking is so crucial when you're implementing a policy.

- Angela Castellanos

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“ Be steadfast as to what your goal is. Don't forget what your mission is because all of these things collectively help you seize and initiate that conversation; all of these things help to rewrite and to engage to make you successful in whatever it is you aspire to do.

- Terrell Sample

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“ Don't be afraid to fail epically and with fanfare because that means that you have one thing that you know doesn't work.

- Yesmina Luchsinger

Closing

Throughout the conversations, we heard rich advice, reflection, and sharing from leaders across the country. The goal of these discussions was not to create instructional check boxes of how to lead school-based policy, or what implementation should look or sound like. Instead, we aimed to raise the complexity and the craft of being a leader who bridges policy to practice, and, as we heard, practice to policy.

We hope you enjoy and learn from these conversations as we did.

Ensuring that policies in our schools meet the needs of community members' mental health is complex, challenging, and requires tenacity and dedication.

Frequently, our school systems and cultures move fast and are consumed with action. Part 2, though about implementation, is carried by stories of leaders reminding themselves and us to anchor all action in purpose and outcome- the why- so that we can transform our systems towards school-based service equity.

Casey Yates offered this reflection to us during his panel:

“Resource & support your policy: understand it, know it, pace it. Connect the policy to the larger vision, mission. Policy can't be disconnected; message coherence and your WHY.”

Your leadership is extraordinary. Thank you.

Panelists for the Part 2- The Who and the How: Implementation

Angela Castellanos, LCSW, PPSC, ASC NTTAC School Based Services training specialist, former school district mental Health consultant and administrator

Carla Quintero, PPSC, LMFT Regional Mental Health Coordinator Orange County Department of Education

Casey Yates, MA Director of Intervention, Warren County Public Schools, Bowling Green KY (Kentucky AWARE)

Claudia Rojas, MA Newcomer Coach for Los Angeles Unified High School, former Restorative Justice Coordinator and Principal

Donna Kitrick, LMSW Waterloo AWARE Program Manager (Iowa AWARE)

Jen Baker, LMFT Project Coordinator, MTSS, Project Cal-Well AWARE Grant (California AWARE)

Kendall Fujioka, MSW Legal intern, U.S. DOE; former Program Director for School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG) and Project Cal-Well (Now Is The Time/Project AWARE for ABC Unified (California AWARE)

Laura Muse, LCMHC Director, Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) at NC Department of Health and Human Services (North Carolina AWARE)

Lisa Eisenberg, MPP, MSW Policy Director at California School-Based Health Alliance

Louis Laffitte, EdD Assistant Superintendent of Behavioral Health and School Safety, Glendale Elementary Unified School District (Arizona AWARE)

Terrell Sample, MPA, MSOL State Project Director for Maryland Project AWARE & BJA STOP School Violence Initiative (Maryland AWARE)

Moderator: **Yesmina Luchsinger, MS*** NTTAC School Based Services Lead at the Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS), former Director of School Safety & Social Wellness at the Arizona Department of Education (Arizona AWARE)

Resources for and from Session 2

Websites:

- [NTTAC Website](#)
- [Project AWARE](#)
- [Kentucky Student Voice Team](#)
- [Arizona School Safety Task Force Releases Final Report and Model School Safety Plan](#)
- [California School-Based Health Alliance Resource Page](#)
- [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- [Medicaid for School Mental Health](#)
- [Urban Education Network of Iowa](#)
- [North Carolina Has a New School Mental Health Policy](#)
- [Backwards Design - how do we get there: spending classification](#)
- [Arizona Repeals Anti-LGBTQ Law](#)
- [TED Talk: Every Child Deserves a Champion](#)

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