

## **Regional Trainings Summary Report: Office of Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Regional Meetings**

In the fall of 2011, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Office of Safe and Supportive Learning Environments partnered with the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center to conduct 16 regional meetings to support schools in creating positive climates for their students, families and communities. Titled *Understanding the Role of a Comprehensive Learning Supports and School Climate in School Improvement*, the meetings sought to:

- Increase awareness about ODE initiatives and model policy on a comprehensive system of learning supports and school climate guidelines;
- Provide information and resources to parents, school-based staff, and community-based staff to support local needs; and
- Facilitate cross-stakeholder group conversations to identify key leverage points and foster collaboration.

The sessions brought together educators and community organizations as well as families and representatives of the mental health, drug and alcohol prevention, health, juvenile justice, and law enforcement fields.

### **Critical Needs by Region and Category**

Meeting sponsors asked participants to identify the CRITICAL NEEDS faced by students, parents/families and professionals in their community. Ten major categories of need are listed on page 2, although not every region identified critical needs in all 10 categories. In three categories – **basic needs**, **education** and **community concerns** – all 16 regions listed critical needs.

Health (10)

- Regions 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Mental Health (13)

- Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16

Basic Needs (16)

- Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Education (16)

- Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Substance Use/Abuse (8)

- Regions 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14

Behavioral Concerns (13)

- Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16

Home Environment (9)

- Regions 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16

Community (16)

- Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Relationships (1)

- Region 3

Cultural Concerns (1)

- Region 11

## Major Themes

The following major themes were identified in each of the categories identified. The information below represents an overall (aggregate) summary of the critical needs identified by regional participants.

Health (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health care, dental care, nutrition, exercise, sleep, hygiene, access to and education about these topics, and the need for/access to health related professionals in the school and community</li></ul>
Mental Health (13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment, prevention, intervention, MH education, skill-building (problem-solving, self-esteem, self-advocacy, coping, communication, character education, social/interpersonal), and the need for/access to mental health related professionals in the school and community to support social, emotional, and behavioral well-being (with communication among these groups)</li></ul>
Basic Needs (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to basic needs (food, clothing, shelter/home, transportation), safety, affordable childcare services, assistance with employment, sense of trust and respect, sense of belonging and being cared for, time/money devoted to supporting at-need families (in poverty), and identification of responsibility for addressing basic needs</li></ul>
Education (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safe and supportive environments, engagement in learning, model that values education, highly qualified educators and administrators, varied teaching methods, positive relationships (emphasizing communication), clear expectations, focus on the whole child, assessment of student needs, availability of supportive academic AND non-academic programming and resources, professional development training for staff, and focus on improving graduation rates</li></ul>
Substance Use/Abuse (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment, prevention, and intervention for drug and alcohol use/abuse, support for students with parents who abuse substances, ATOD education, connection and communication with juvenile justice and drug court entities, and education related to tobacco use</li></ul>
Behavioral Concerns (13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevention and intervention for bullying/cyberbullying, aggression, dating violence, and emotional problems (such as anger), clear behavioral expectations, expectation for respect, skill-building (conflict resolution, peer relationship skills), focus on transition years, need to address crime and criminal activity (such as assaults/fights) and juvenile justice involvement, focus on attendance/truancy issues, and need to address disciplinary referrals and suspensions/expulsions</li></ul>
Home Environment (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive parental involvement and engagement, enhancing communication between families and schools/providers, identifying and addressing issues that originate at home, clear expectations, access to family support mechanisms, parenting skills education, helping families follow-through on service/treatment plans, providing activities for parents and children to do together at home, access to adequate tutoring services, and respect for different values, viewpoints, and cultures</li></ul>
Community (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to and education about available resources and supports, integration of resources/support, fostering a sense of trust, tolerance, acceptance, and belonging, clear mission and vision within community, stability, focus on connections/relationships among key stakeholders, focus on communication and engagement, adequate financial support/funding for what is needed, focus on advocacy, positive use of data, culturally-relevant information, and positive and supportive role models in children's lives</li></ul>
Relationships (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trusting relationships, transparency between students, educators, and administrators, youth-voice incorporated into tools and resources, and the need for all students to have at least one positive adult connection in their lives</li></ul>
Cultural Concerns (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The need for culturally relevant programming and curricula, understanding the changing demographics, recognizing the disparities among racial groups, providing a safe space, and recognizing and addressing socioemotional and socioeconomic differences</li></ul>

## Continuum of Resources and Services

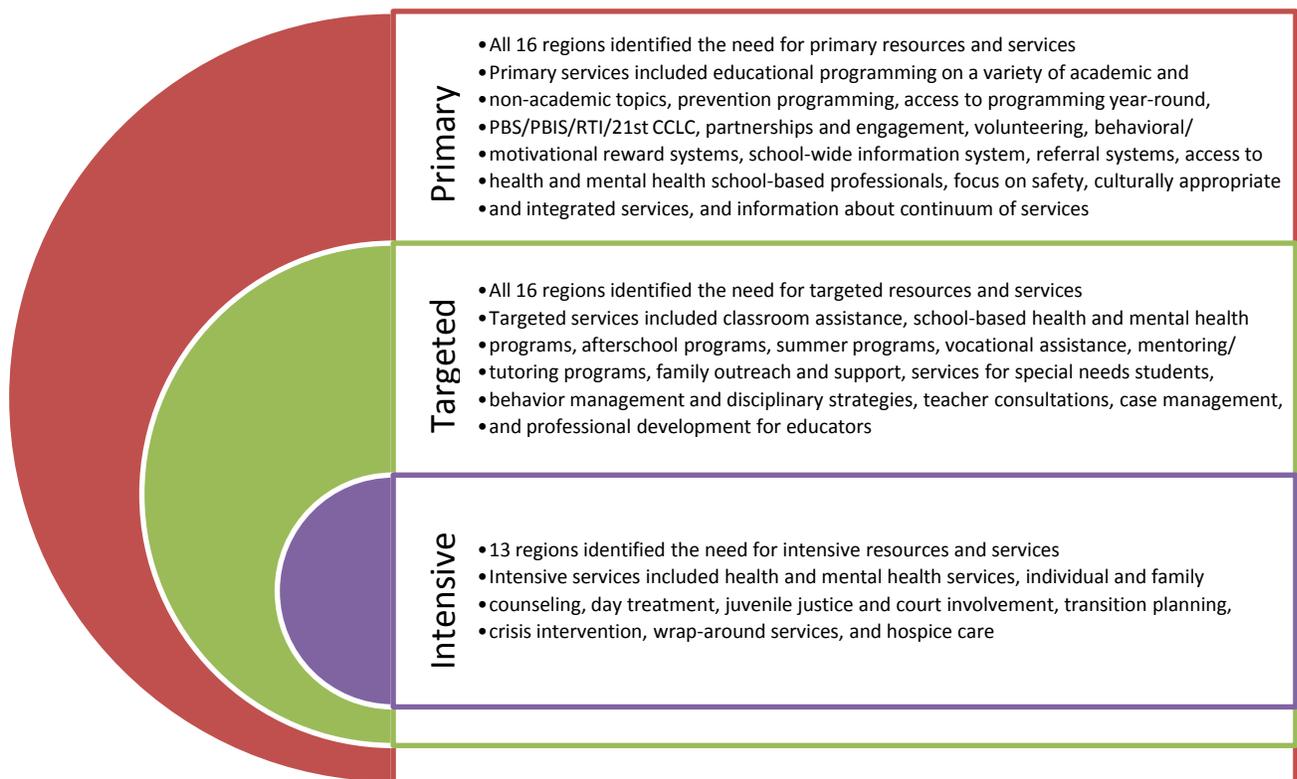
To address the identified critical needs present within the community, a continuum of resources is needed that provides services at the primary, targeted and intensive levels.

Primary resources and services are those that are provided to an entire population (e.g., all students at a school) and are typically focused on prevention.

Targeted resources and services are those that are provided to an identified subgroup that may be at risk for certain health, mental health and behavioral problems. Examples of targeted resources and services include homework assistance for poorly performing students, support groups for students of divorce and vocational counseling.

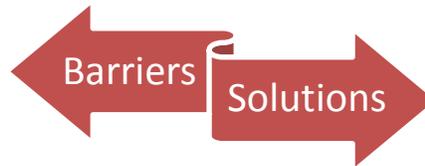
Intensive resources and services are those that are provided to students who need intensive treatment (e.g., substance abuse counseling, therapy following a trauma).

The following primary, targeted and intensive needs were identified during the regional meetings:



## Barriers and Solutions

Awareness of barriers that impede a community's ability to successfully develop a continuum of resources can provide an opportunity for the community to strategically implement solutions. The following list identifies the barriers and solutions suggested by participants during the regional meetings. All 16 regions identified ***people/relationships, needs/resources, and financial*** barriers and solutions, and all but one identified ***time***-related barriers and solutions.



People/Relationships (16)	
Lack of knowledge and awareness about barriers; Lack of communication; Apathy among families; Lack of relationships; Fear of change; Lack of support; Conflicting agendas; Cultural/language differences; Pre-conceived notions; Groups are 'siloed'; Staffing/personnel issues; No 'urgency'; No 'buy-in'	Better communication, partnership, and cooperation; Connections/networking; Professional development, training, and education; Relationship-building/trust; Involvement/engagement among all stakeholders; Support; Role models/mentors; Advocacy; Shared vision/mission; Shared responsibility; Cultural sensitivity
Needs & Resources (16)	
Increased levels of need; Inappropriate and outdated models/resources; No match between needs and resources; Lack of knowledge, awareness of, and access to resources/services; Stigma; No transportation; Lack of coordination/continuity; Restrictive eligibility; No common language; Lack of security	Education/training programs; Transportation services; More programming for a variety of needs; Employee assistance programs; Awareness-raising; After-hours services; Clear definitions and guidelines; Identification of available services; Connections/networking/collaborations; Engagement of policy makers
Financial (16)	
Lack of funding/money; Economic impact of poor economy; Services that are cost prohibitive; Continual shifts in funding; Shifts in personnel; Politics involved in funding; Unfunded mandates; Insurance systems; Financial priorities; Budget cuts; Lack of funding for professional development; Credit recovery	Grants and grant-writing; Access to financial resources; Finding ways to have folks who are unemployed - mentors and volunteers; Change background check protocol; Making sure that services are not cost prohibitive; Fix funding model; Reallocate funding; 21st CCLC funds
Time (15)	
Time; Space limitations; Testing schedule; Calendar and scheduling - need more bridges; Time constraints and scheduling problems; Time to train staff on interventions; Time limitations (during the school day); Lack of follow-through; Conflict of goals and time; Need for more time with students/teachers; Flooding	Protected time for workshops; Piggy-back or tag team; Flexible scheduling model; More time for prevention; Volunteerism; Streamline process from planning to implementation; Engage parents through different means/schedules; Student service system advocate to make connection/streamline processes
Schools (9)	
Competition with proficiency testing and state report cards; Lack of staff/personnel, space, and PD opportunities; Stigma related to alternative school, home school families, and SED; Non-academic barriers to learning (bullying, climate/culture, attendance); Need for protected classroom time, parent education, less paperwork, buy-in, appropriate consequences, and strong leadership; Constant shifts and mobility; Conflict between school and agencies	PD opportunities; Educators' handbook; School-wide information system; Check in/out; Length of school day; Integrate/consolidate services; Shared education/staff; Attendance a priority; Relationship building; Specific goals for school improvement; SEL education for all students; More time/consultations between agencies/schools; Teaching regular educators to meet the all students' needs; Get buy-in
Community/Home Environment (8)	
Difficulties with access; "Turf" issues; Lack of communication and partnership between state vs. local; Laws/regulations/government requirements; Agency rules; Politics; Different missions/visions; Focus only on academics; Cultural/religious differences; Agency fatigue	Shared vision/clear messages; Create regional work/counseling initiatives; Community and state support; Community planning/partnerships with key stakeholders; Relief of overwhelming loads and burdens; County network; Being proactive; Build sense of trust and community; Shares services and resources