Logan-Hocking Local School District

**Initiative Type(s):**
Mental health services; Family engagement and support services; Student services provided prior to or after school; Professional development regarding the provision of trauma informed care

**Community Partner(s):**
Educational service center; Nonprofit organization with experience serving children

**Description of Initiative:**
The program begins when emergency medical services or other first responders arrive on a scene. If a child is present or involved, the first responder sends a notification to the school’s alert system that gives the child’s name and a simple message: “handle with care.” Then, teachers and staff who interact with this student will receive the notification and will pay close attention to the student’s behavior and well-being throughout the day. This process gives school staff the power and discretion to provide supports in school, such as giving the child a break if they are struggling or being lenient with homework, or, if indicated, to ensure that the student meets with the mental health specialist or receives crisis management and other high-level supports.

**Initiative Benefits:**
The Handle With Care program aims to create schools and communities that provide critical supports to traumatized children. The District worked with the Ohio chapter of Handle With Care to create school-community partnerships to ensure that children who are exposed to traumatic events receive appropriate supports and interventions. Program leaders have ensured that all staff—including teachers, bus drivers, nutrition services staff, counselors and administrators—received training on the program, trauma-informed care and best practices for supporting students going through traumatic events. Through this system, supports are automatic and remain anonymous. Children are not aware that staff are looking out for them, which helps them maintain a sense of normalcy in what may be tumultuous times. District staff praise how the program empowers teachers/staff and allows them to be vigilant and proactive in supporting their students. Additionally, the program ensures that staff who interact with students are kept informed and able to provide support. The program has also helped staff see that behavioral incidents may have underlying causes that need to be addressed before disciplinary actions are considered.

**Essential Staff and Partners:**
The success of this program requires everyone in the district—from students, support staff and bus drivers to teachers to principals—to work together to support students who may be going through a tough time. Additionally, having school resource officers on campus to coordinate the program, liaise with other law enforcement, and build relationships with students and families has been critical.

**Action Steps to Get Started:**
To set up this program, staff and leadership at Logan-Hocking Local School District coordinated with staff at Handle With Care and emergency responders (firefighters, sheriffs, police, etc.) in the Logan-Hocking community. Then, program leaders trained all district staff on the functionality of the program and how to provide trauma-informed supports to students.

**For More Information:**
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**NOTE:** Student Wellness and Success Funds were used for this initiative.