



The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) is committed to promoting the mental health and well-being of all students; we recognize that mental health and well-being is the foundation of student success.

This 2024-2025 Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan supports and guides the implementation of the DSBN’s 2022-2025 Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy. The Strategy reflects our commitment to ensuring that all students can experience well-being. High-quality, evidence-based programming is provided to students through universal mental health promotion activities, targeted preventative early intervention, and, in collaboration with community partners, more intensive supports.

PRIORITY 1:	PRIORITY 2:	PRIORITY 3:	PRIORITY 4:
Provide equitable school social work services that allow for differentiated mental health interventions based on student need.	Embed social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health literacy into everyday school culture.	Increase educator understanding of the experiences and needs of diverse learners, by building capacity in trauma-sensitive teaching practices.	Expand mental health awareness and promotion efforts to better engage students and families.

The four priorities of our multi-year strategic plan align with the 10 requirements within *PPM 169: Student Mental Health*.

PPM 169 Requirement	1: Equitable Social Work Services	2: Embed SEL and Mental Health Literacy	3: Build Trauma-Sensitivity	4: Student and Family Engagement
1. Joint Local Planning	●		●	●
2. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	●	●	●	
3. Measurement-Based Care	●			
4. Suicide Protocol			●	
5. Virtual Care Delivery	●			
6. Educator Mental Health Literacy		●	●	
7. Student Mental Health Literacy		●		●
8. Family Mental Health Literacy	●	●		●
9. Social-Emotional Learning		●	●	●
10. Mental Health Absences				●



## **PRIORITY 1**

Provide equitable school social work services that allow for differentiated mental health interventions based on student need.

### **GOAL 1**

Review service models to allow for increased time spent delivering targeted mental health interventions to students.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Allocate social workers to equitably distribute supports across the system.
2. Continue support of the new elementary social work delivery model that allocates a case management social worker and intervention social worker to all elementary schools.
3. Provide direction to selected schools around the most effective use of their social worker/youth counsellor team in supporting the continuum of care for students.

### **GOAL 2**

Implement the use of standardized assessment tools for session-by-session progress monitoring.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Full social work team implementation of measurement-based care. Reports will be generated to monitor and measure outcomes.

### **GOAL 3**

Streamline the school process for referring students to the social worker, while promoting seamless care pathways to more intensive community services.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Continue to refine the social work intake and referral process by implementing standard clinical assessment tools.
2. Continue to include a standard screening tool to ensure timely access to care when referring students to intake for community mental health services.
3. Work closely with Niagara's child and youth mental health lead agency in following *Right Time Right Care* and PPM 169 principles to contribute to an improved system of care for child and youth mental health in Niagara.

## PRIORITY 2

Embed social-emotional learning and mental health literacy into everyday school culture.

### GOAL 1

Ensure that universal evidence-based social emotional and mental health promotion programming is available to all classes in our elementary schools.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Ensure all social-emotional learning programs offered by youth counsellors are meeting the needs of students and schools.
2. Provide information to school administrators outlining the key information and goals for each social-emotional learning program that is offered by the youth counsellors.
3. Implement two new social-emotional learning programs to enhance current programming: *Kids in the Know* and *SNAP for Schools*.
4. Promote the role of youth counsellors at selected schools in running small groups to reinforce social-emotional skills for students who require more intensive programming.

### GOAL 2

Provide school-wide training and support to teachers, support staff, administrators, and caregivers in specific social-emotional learning and mental health literacy curricula.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Continue to expand school-wide implementation of *MindUP* curriculum to new schools in each of the four elementary areas, with increased implementation support for schools.
2. Interdepartmental collaboration to support the roll-out of the Ministry of Education's Grade 10 Career Studies mental health literacy modules.
3. Interdepartmental collaboration to support second-year implementation of the Ministry of Education's Grades 7 & 8 Health and Physical Education mental health literacy modules.

### GOAL 3

Develop a plan to effectively disseminate teaching resources from School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON) to educators across the system.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Promote Leading Mentally Healthy Schools resource for administrators.
2. Establish Educator Mental Health Champions in every school. Provide monthly updates to the Champions and encourage them to disseminate resources to their colleagues.
3. Continuously update and promote the Mental Health and Well-Being Staff Portal.



## **PRIORITY 3**

Increase educator understanding of the experiences and needs of diverse learners, by building capacity in trauma-sensitive teaching practices.

### **GOAL 1**

Provide planned professional development and learning opportunities for classroom teachers.

#### ***Key Actions***

1. All social workers will receive training from a trauma expert to offer a standardized two-part in-service for educators, so that trauma-sensitive training will be available to all schools.
2. Mental Health Lead will provide SMH-ON suicide prevention in-service for administrators in order to enhance life promotion within the context of mentally healthy learning environments.
3. Mental Health Lead will provide SMH-ON emotional validation in-service for guidance and student success teachers to strengthen their knowledge and confidence to promote student wellness, identify and support students experiencing mental health problems, and facilitate help-seeking when needed.

### **GOAL 2**

Facilitate in-school consultations with school and community mental health professionals around individual student needs and action plans.

#### ***Key Actions***

1. Allocate a Safe Schools Social Worker who is available to attend all community meetings involving high-risk situations (e.g., Situation Table, Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO)), to consult around individual student needs and work closely with families and schools to develop a plan to reduce risk.

### **GOAL 3**

Interdepartmental collaboration and consultation to ensure that professional development and learning around trauma sensitivity is inclusive of all students and aligns with an anti-oppressive and identity-affirming stance.

#### ***Key Actions***

1. Interdepartmental collaboration to select an expert in the field to engage social work team in deeper learning around identity-affirming approaches to mental health care.
2. Consultation with system administrators.
3. Selected social workers and youth counsellors will be trained in restorative practices and will implement with students in their schools.



## **PRIORITY 4**

Expand mental health awareness and promotion efforts to better engage students and families.

### **GOAL 1**

Start a board-level student mental health leadership team.

#### ***Key Actions***

1. Engage Student Trustee Senate in student-centered mental health initiatives and planning.

### **GOAL 2**

Provide clear and consistent direction and support to schools in starting or maintaining school-level student mental health leadership teams or engagement initiatives.

#### ***Key Actions***

1. Support Educator Mental Health Champions in leading school-level student engagement initiatives, utilizing SMH-ON's student engagement toolkit.

### **GOAL 3**

Regularly provide opportunities for caregivers to engage with their school community in learning about mental health literacy.

#### ***Key Actions***

1. Continue with Caregiver Engagement Social Worker role and initiatives.
2. Create resources for School Council meetings.
3. Collaborate with community partners to offer mental health promotion programs to our caregiver communities (e.g., Triple P, Strengthening Families for the Future).