

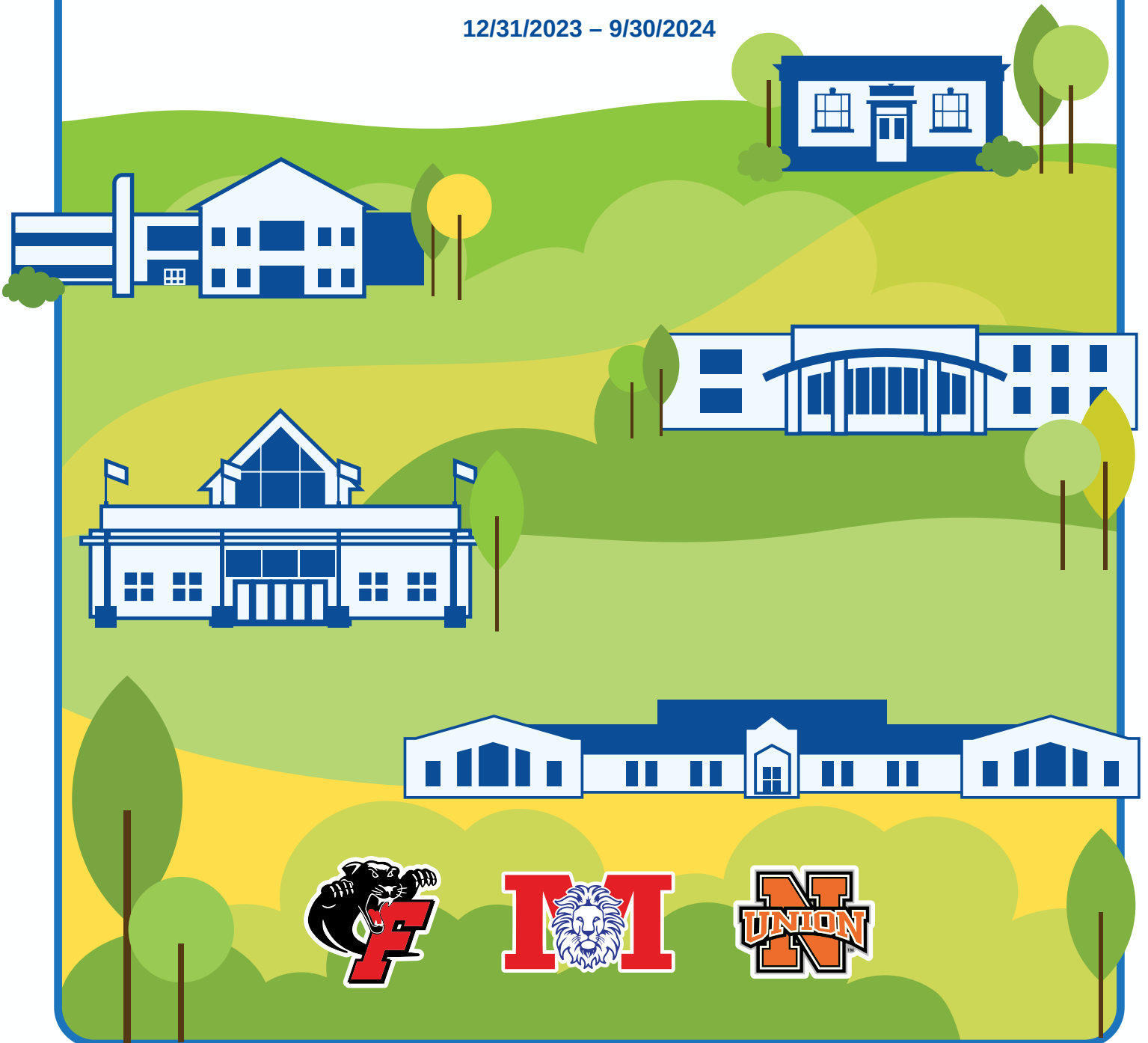


mental health &
recovery board
UNION COUNTY

IMPACT REPORT

YEAR 2

12/31/2023 – 9/30/2024



EVALUATOR'S NOTE

by Tammy L. Collins, PhD, OCPD



The second year of Project AWARE brought about a large increase in the number of students receiving mental health services. Contributing factors include the increasing the number and type of services available as well as the number of mental health professionals working in and directly with the schools.

Built upon the work of the Mosaic Project, the previous system of care project, Project AWARE provided the resources needed for the three Union County school systems to become full partners with the MHRB and community behavioral health services in improving student mental health outcomes. The previous grant succeeded in developing a full continuum of behavioral health care for youth while this grant has increased access to the system of care resources by working with students and school staff through school-based services.

Thirty-four new policy and practice changes to remove barriers and improve student mental wellness were implemented during this 9-month grant period. Professionals and caregivers were trained to improve their mental health literacy which will support student and staff resiliency and coping. A total of 16,327 screenings were conducted in schools, and 760 referrals were made to evidence-based and trauma-informed behavioral health interventions. The increase in screenings and referrals were key to linking students and families to services. There were 192 students newly enrolled in mental health services with 205 students finishing their course of treatment and being discharged within the reporting year.

Systems Outcomes	Accomplishments	Year 1	Year 2
Improvements in partnerships between schools and mental health organizations	Organizational changes made to improve the youth mental health service system	10	19
Workforce development	Individuals (professionals and caregivers) trained in prevention and/or mental health promotion (some individuals may be counted more than once in the total if they attended multiple trainings)	1,525	383
Changes in school climate and school safety	Policies developed or changed to improve school climate and student mental health	40	15
Improved capacity to identify students in need of support and link them to trauma-informed, evidence-based mental health services and other resources	Screening conducted (some individual students may be counted more than once in the total if they engaged in multiple screenings)	7,589	16,327
Youth Resiliency Outcomes	Accomplishments	Year 1	Year 2
Increased awareness of school-based mental health supports	Referrals made for students to school-based mental health services and support	599	760
Increased student resiliency and coping skills	Students newly enrolled in mental health treatment services	207	192
Improved student mental health outcomes	Students discharged from care	138	205

****Note: Year 1 was January 2023 - December 2023, Year 2 was January 2024 - September 2024

YOUTH SYSTEMS OF CARE OUTCOMES

Existing strong partnerships with Fairbanks Local Schools, Marysville Schools, and North Union Local Schools continue to be expanded upon through Project AWARE. Union County youth behavioral health system and resiliency outcomes have greatly improved through these partnerships.



FAMILIES SERVED BY MOBILE RESPONSE AND STABILIZATION SERVICE

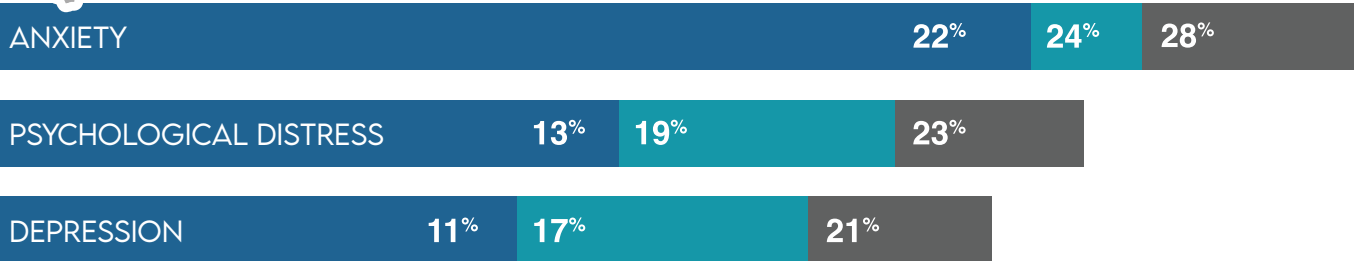


PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

As prevention programming in Union County Schools increased, youth-reported behavioral health challenges are decreasing.



UNION COUNTY
ANXIETY, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS & DEPRESSION



Students who engaged in prevention programming



PROJECT AWARE EDUCATOR INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW PROCESS

As part of the comprehensive evaluation of Project AWARE, interviews were conducted to gather feedback about the Project from the perspective of school leadership working at elementary, middle and high schools throughout the three county school districts.

FINDINGS SUMMARY - OBSERVED CHANGES

Interviewees agreed Project AWARE brought positive changes for both school personnel and students and are optimistic about further improvements as the new services and resources become more established. The additional resources brought in to address student behavioral health needs have fostered a supportive environment for both staff and students which is leading to more confident staff, students that feel heard, and less complaints by parents/caregivers.

Specific project components that were mentioned several times as being particularly helpful were the addition of school social workers and student success coordinators, the addition of BRYT rooms, and timely and helpful professional development for staff.



"Project AWARE has filled in a lot of different gaps."

"We are definitely catching kids that we wouldn't have before for referrals."

"KIDS FEEL SUPPORTED... THEY FEEL HEARD."

"The most salient observation is our staff feeling they are being heard and there is support in place for a lot of questions that we don't typically have answers to as a small school system."

More than half of interviewees specifically mentioned the AWARE Project Director and District Project Coordinators as invaluable assets that have been working hard with them to remove barriers and support each school district.

"They are working to remove barriers, and I am really impressed by that. They are problem solvers."

"They have been incredible resources."

"They know our district, kids and families. We are really blessed with that. They just do a lot for us."

KEY SUCCESSSES

Interviewees highlighted key successes, particularly improvements in communication between schools, the MHRBUC, and local behavioral health providers. Project communication helped stakeholders navigate new laws and access district-wide resources. More than half of the interviewees specifically praised the Changemakers Conference, noting that its topics were timely, and the content was immediately applicable to their roles within schools. Staff expressed enthusiasm about implementing new strategies, and the training opportunities were seen as essential for building both competence and confidence. Additionally, increased awareness and resources for schools, families, and the broader community were recognized as significant achievements.

"OUR DISTRICT IS IN A BETTER POSITION TO HANDLE CERTAIN SITUATIONS THAN WE WERE A YEAR AGO."

"Because of Project AWARE we've been able to keep our staff motivated with some ways we've use grant funding."

"The ability to leverage resources regarding personnel. There are now people there to meet the needs, so it has influenced referrals. They are confident someone is there to meet the need when a referral is made."

"Parent engagement. The ability to link them with other supports whether it's in the school or out in the community. Project AWARE has lifted the veil on what's out there."

KEY CHALLENGES

Primary concerns expressed surrounded staffing, including concerns about maintaining new services and personnel beyond the grant period and the need for even more behavioral health personnel in the schools.

"Our biggest challenge is not enough adults to help the number of students that need the help."

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The top request was for **sustainability** of new services put into place with funding from Project AWARE

"The biggest long-term issue is how we sustain this. Anytime we bring in grant-funded services, there is going to be a desire locally to keep the positions, like a school social worker. How do we pay for it with local funds? If there are ways to sustain that funding long-term at a community level, we want to work on that. There's a desire to make sure these positions stay in place."





100%

OF PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED AGREED THAT ATTENDING THE CHANGEMAKERS CONFERENCE...

increased their confidence in their ability to use innovative tools and strategies to create transformative change in their community.

increased their understanding of the principles of trauma-informed care and the impact trauma has on the brain and body.

increased their confidence in their ability to build inclusive, empathetic, and supportive relationships to create positive changes for children and families.

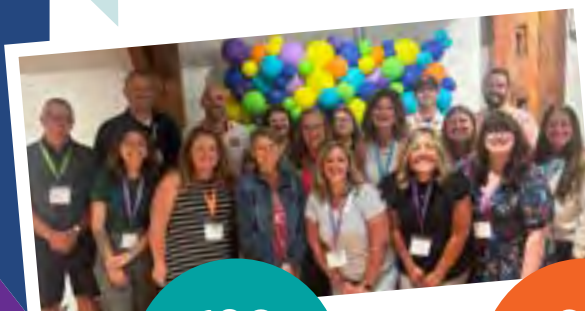


"reinvigorated passion for this vital work"

"truly a memorable and impactful event"

"valuable learning"

"INSPIRING CONNECTIONS"



139 participants

28 organizations

8 presenters

13 sessions



BRYT

BRIDGE FOR RESILIENT YOUTH IN TRANSITION

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, Project AWARE has provided for the implementation of two bryt classrooms at Fairbanks Elementary School and North Union Middle School, in partnership with the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health and The Village Network. bryt is an intensive intervention for students who have experienced a mental health disruption or are significantly struggling with regulation and behavioral health in school.

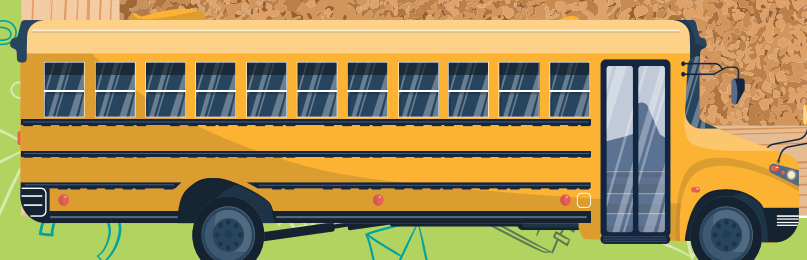
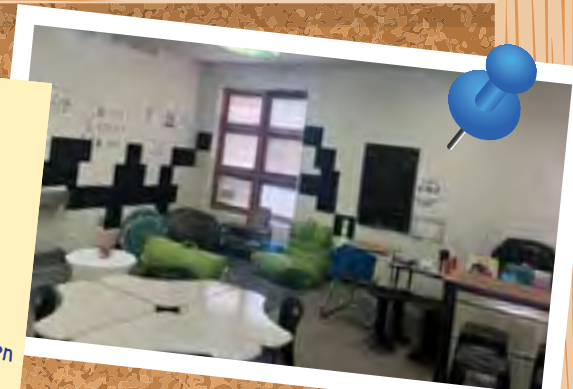
Students enrolled in bryt are transitioning back to their regular schedule after major or minor behavioral health disruptions resulting in missed instruction, or students for whom an intensive intervention may help prevent a serious disruption.. bryt is not a separate placement or stand-alone intervention; it is fully embedded within the culture of the school to provide preventative and responsive supports to identified students in collaboration with teachers and other support staff. bryt supports are customized to each student's needs, culturally competent, clinically informed, and flexible.

Each school's bryt staff includes a licensed behavioral health clinician and an academic coordinator. These staff coordinate resources within the school and the wider community and partner with families to help each participating student make the most efficient transition possible toward effectively functioning in the regular classroom, and to finish the school year ready for successful promotion to the next grade level with their peers. bryt classrooms will provide tremendous support for students and families and will provide essential support for struggling students and families.



BRYT MODEL:

- ✓ clinically informed support
- ✓ academic coordination
- ✓ comprehensive care coordination
- ✓ family engagement





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OhioGuidestone
SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES
& COMMUNITIES



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educational service center
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