

HEALTHY MINDS
PARTNERSHIP:
WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

HEALTHY MINDS. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES. HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS.

When a local school district partnered with a specialty behavioral health agency, the increased access to behavioral health services resulted in improved student wellbeing and academic performance.

A GROWING PROBLEM

As awareness of youth behavioral health has become more widespread, schools have taken a leadership role in identifying resources for the students they serve. One such school is West Middle School in the Nampa School District. With support from the Southwest Health Collaborative and a variety of community partners, West Middle School formed a partnership with specialty behavioral health providers in the community to help provide access to crucial services for children and young adults.

A UNIQUE SOLUTION

Inspired by the work of other local agencies such as Terry Reilly Health Services and Lifeways, the Nampa School District partnered with Pathways of Idaho to improve access to much-needed



behavioral health treatment for students. With careful consideration, the district selected West Middle School to prototype the school-provider partnership in which a specialty behavioral health provider sets up a treatment space in the school.

As a traditional public school serving the sixth, seventh and eighth grades in Nampa, West Middle School had a high need for specialty behavioral health services, and the school's leaders were ready to collaborate and address that need. The principal and school counselor quickly became involved in the planning, development and implementation needed to make that vision a reality.

Pathways of Idaho proved to be an ideal provider for West Middle School. The Pathways of Idaho clinician had previous experience working in a middle school, and this provided them with unique insight to the needs of staff and students.

The clinician worked closely with the school's administration and counselors to create a weekly check-in for determining which students were in

"We have made a decision that services make such a significant difference for our students that they take priority. Our clinician works to vary which classes students are pulled from weekly. The intent is not to pull from the same classes routinely."

— LOCAL MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

need of support and outreach. The clinician and the school counselor also reviewed the caseload of students, constantly discussing the changing needs of the students based on reports from teachers, parents, and staff.

As a provider, the Pathways of Idaho therapist went beyond the role of clinician. This provider participated in school activities, spirit days and staff meetings. For the students and staff at West Middle School, the provider became a valuable part of the team and an important member of the school community.

A LASTING IMPACT

The partnership between Pathways of Idaho and West Middle School has left a lasting impact. After the 2017-2018 school year, West Middle School staff and leadership reported overwhelmingly positive results among the students who had access to specialty behavioral health services.

Success stories have been shared around the school. In one instance, the principal of West Middle School described a student who had difficulty attending school more than two days a week due to anxiety. Following sessions with the Pathways of Idaho clinician, the student is now comfortable attending school most days of the week.

Additionally, preliminary data associated with the partnership indicates success.



- One school saw more than a 50% reduction in absences among students who received services over the previous year.
- Another school observed a 14% improvement in GPA among the students who had access to services onsite.
- School counselors reported the provider partnership significantly improved their ability to do their job.

Once a school establishes a partnership, expanding into other schools within the district is much easier. Nampa School District plans to implement similar programs at eight schools in 2019.

THE NEXT STEP

The Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health is working to replicate the success experienced at West Middle School. By providing the needed resources and support to schools around the state, we can help provide students with the specialty behavioral health services they need.

If you want to learn about what these partnerships and programs look like and how they work, visit our website at bcidahofoundation.org/healthyminds. We've put together a full "road map to success" to support you in the creation of your own school-provider partnership.

“One of our students had avoided school regardless of the supports that were put into place. This year [with services], his attendance has improved significantly. The referrals for behavior are of a different nature also. In the past, the issues were of disrespect and outward behavior toward other students. Now they are about work avoidance. Increased attendance and more appropriate behavior are steps in the right direction.”

— LOCAL MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL