

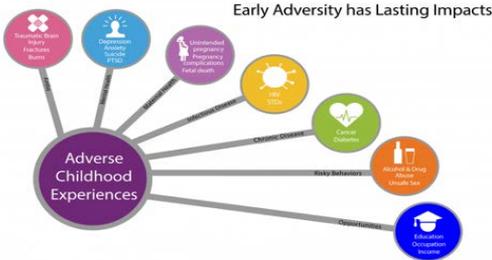
RESILIENT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Adversity, trauma, and poverty are impacting a growing number of students.

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

Students in classrooms across Southern Illinois face profound obstacles to learning due to “**Adverse Childhood Experiences**” (ACEs), which include verbal, physical or sexual abuse; family dysfunction (an incarcerated, mentally ill, or substance-abusing family member); domestic violence; or absence of a parent because of divorce or separation.

ACEs can harm children’s developing brains and change how they respond to stress. Over time such traumatic stress can damage children’s immune systems in ways that show up decades later. ACEs cause chronic disease, mental illness, and are at the root of much violence. ACEs also interfere with a child’s ability to learn and be productive in school and life.



What Tools and Efforts are Available to Help Counter the Impact of ACEs?

The [Partnership for Resilience](#), an Illinois non-profit organization, received funding from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and the Poshard Foundation to build and support *Resilient Southern Illinois* (RSI). The program’s

goal is to provide training and



coaching to district/school-based resilience teams to build capacity among the staff at the schools to understand and respond to ACEs more fully. Teams will establish strategies to help students dealing with ACEs so the children can ultimately succeed in school. Resources being used include materials from the Partnership for Resilience and the [By All Means](#) initiative from the Education Redesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

As educators, we must implement a trauma-responsive lens to build safe, stable learning environments for all students.

Resilient Southern Illinois recognizes that the greatest impacts will be achieved when schools and their community partners work together to address adversity and poverty. Therefore, RSI will work with districts to build community-school partnerships to bolster what the schools are doing.

Schools in these districts will move from being “trauma-informed” to becoming “**trauma-responsive**” schools in which all students feel safe, welcomed, and supported and where addressing trauma’s impact on learning is at the center of its educational mission. Adults at these schools will be prepared to recognize and respond to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress. Students’ academic needs will be met while supporting their physical health and well-being.

What is the Focus of the Work?

Tools and resources focus on the following three areas:

- ✓ Primary Care and Wellness
- ✓ Psychological and Emotional Health
- ✓ Family and Community Support and Education



This work is being accomplished through a mix of professional development, action planning, and coaching. Throughout the process, evaluation systems and the collection of data will help measure how the new practices are impacting student health and academic achievement.

What are the Long-term Outcomes of Resilient Southern Illinois?

- Increased student achievement
- Increased student and staff attendance rates
- Decreased chronic absenteeism rates
- Decreased referrals for behaviors (suspensions, detentions)
- Improved school climate
- Improved primary health care and behavioral health for students



What are the Phases of the Work?

Phase I: Foundation Building

- School districts create collaborative structures/resilience teams to begin building trauma-sensitive schools and communities.
- District resilience teams attend on-going training to become trauma-responsive districts.
- Participants discover the ACEs research, examine components of trauma-informed schools and gather tools to assist students with building resiliency and strengthening their executive function skills.
- Participants assess where their district/school is on the continuum of becoming trauma-responsive.
- Teams develop an Action Plan of goals, professional development activities, and an evaluation.
- Districts engage external partnerships based on each school's student needs and community resources.

Phase II: Deepening and Integrating the Work

- Districts create issue-focused teams, strategies, and partnerships around priorities.
- Teams implement the evaluation plan and make needed adjustments in plans and activities.

Phase III: Planning for Sustainability

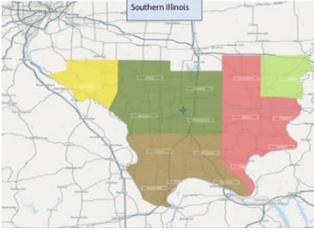
- Districts adopt policies at the board and administrative levels to support a trauma-responsive culture.
- Schools give staff responsibility and authority for managing external partnerships, coaching the resilience team, collecting and analyzing data, etc.
- Districts consider developing an advisory committee to serve as a permanent structure to promote and expand the work.

What's Next?

Resilient Southern Illinois is expanding its focus into **early childhood**. New efforts are being started to better align early education and K-12 school systems to help children of all ages succeed.



What Schools are Participating?



Eighteen school districts from the lower 16 counties of southern Illinois are participating in the program. These districts include: Carbondale ESD #95, Carbondale HSD #165, DuQuoin CUSD #300, Eldorado CUSD #4, Gallatin County CUSD #7, Giant City CUSD #130, Grayville CUSD #1, Harrisburg CUSD #3, Herrin CUSD #4, Johnston City CUSD#1, Meridian SD #101, Murphysboro CUSD #186, Sparta SD #140, Trico School CUSD #176, Unity Point School District #140, Vienna ESD #55, Vienna HSD #13-3 and ROE 21 Project Echo.

There are more than 18,600 students in these districts, with the percentages of students coming from low-income households ranging from 46 – 100% in the various school districts.

For More Information:

- *Illinois Education Association:*
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- *Partnership for Resilience* website:
<https://partnership4resilience.org/>
- *By All Means* website:
<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news-tags/all-means>

Resilient Southern Illinois is a collaborative effort among area stakeholders which started with the Southern Illinois P-20 Education Alliance.

Who are the Partners in the Resilient Southern Illinois Initiative?

- Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools
- Consortium for Educational Change
- Egyptian Public and Mental Health Department
- Harvard University Graduate School of Education-Education Redesign Lab
- Illinois Education Association
- John A. Logan College
- McCormick Foundation
- Poshard Foundation
- Regional Offices of Education (20,21 & 30)
- Shawnee Community College
- Southern Illinois P-20 Educational Alliance
- Southern Illinois University (SIU)-Carbondale
- SIU School of Medicine-Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development
- SIU School of Medicine-Children's Medical and Mental Health Resource Network
- SIU School of Medicine-Population Health and Policy