

Resilient SI Updates

November 2020

Overview

Students in classrooms across southern Illinois face profound obstacles to learning due to “Adverse Childhood Experiences” (ACEs), which include one or more of the following: 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 harm children’s developing brains and lead to a change in how they respond to stress and damage their immune systems so profoundly that the effects show up decades later. ACEs cause chronic disease, most mental illness, and are at the root of most violence. ACEs also interfere with a child’s ability to learn and be productive in school and life.

Resilient SI is a multi-year effort to help school districts in the southern Illinois region meet the needs of children impacted by childhood trauma and toxic stress. The initiative includes resources, tools, and networking opportunities for educators and other personnel in these districts designed to support them in addressing the needs of the "whole child."

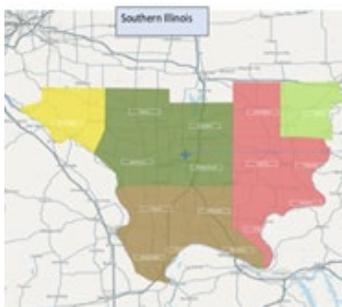


Resilient SI recognizes that the greatest impacts will be achieved when schools and their community partners work together to address adversity and poverty. Therefore, Resilient SI will work with districts to build community-school partnerships to bolster what the schools are doing. Schools in these districts will move from being “trauma-informed” to becoming “trauma-responsive”; schools in which the adults are 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.

Tools and resources focus on the following three areas:

- Primary Care and Wellness
- Trauma and Behavioral Health
- Family and Community Engagement

2020-2021 Member Districts



Resilient SI is working with 15 member school districts that include more than 13,000 students and approximately 1,000 teachers with the percentages of students coming from low-income households ranging from 37%-99% throughout the various school districts. These districts stretch throughout seven counties in southern Illinois and include: Carbondale ESD #95, Carbondale HSD #165, Carrier Mills-Stonefort CUSD #2, Eldorado CUSD #4, Giant City CCSD #130, Grayville CUSD #1, Herrin CUSD #4, Johnston City CUSD #1, Meridian SD #101, Murphysboro CUSD #186, ROE #21-Project ECHO & STARQuest, Sparta CUSD #140, Unity Point CCSD #140, Vienna PSD #55, and Vienna HSD #13-3.

Early Childhood Initiative

Resilient SI also welcomes the early childhood community as active and valuable partners in three pilot districts in a new initiative called Resilient Southern Illinois 2.0. Participating districts include Herrin CUSD# 4, Unity Point CCSD #140, and Vienna PSD #55. Early childhood programs that are "feeder" programs to these districts are being invited to be part of each district's resiliency leadership teams. These teams, comprised of administrators, teachers, social workers, and other staff, help lead the work in their individual districts. By including early childhood program representatives on their teams, these districts are recognizing the importance of a child's first five years of life and providing new opportunities to work together to align practices and create a continuum of



communication, care, and services that help promote student success. While this initiative is still in the early stages, the impact has been positive and the next steps include providing resources to childcare centers throughout the region to create strong partnerships.

Staff Beliefs Surveys



In September, an online beliefs survey was distributed to all staff members in Resilient SI districts and to all early childhood staff members in the three pilot districts. The beliefs survey consists of 33 items and specifically targets staff knowledge of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-sensitive schools, staff comfort level with developing a trauma-sensitive school climate, and effective implementation of a trauma-sensitive climate for students. Participants were asked to rate each item on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The results were shared with each district and analyzed by district teams to guide district action plans and priorities.

Professional Development Opportunities

Due to the current challenges of the pandemic and varying schedules throughout districts, Resilient SI has shifted most professional development opportunities to virtual sessions for the 2020-2021 school year. In October, Resilient SI launched the Bite-Size PD Series. This series includes 60-90 minute virtual training sessions that focus on topics such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), self-care, mindfulness, executive function, overview of trauma-responsive schools, and social-emotional learning. In addition, districts can schedule training sessions based on their district availability.



Resilient SI hosted the first virtual PLC titled *Co-Regulation During COVID-19*. This session was presented by Dr. Matt Buckman from the Stress and Trauma Treatment Center in Eldorado. Dr. Buckman reviewed toxic stress and the toll of COVID-19, discussed the importance of attaining compassion satisfaction as educators, emphasized that relationships are the best protective factor, and reminded participants that support is possible even when fatigued. The live session included representatives from 13 school districts and included 81 total participants. In addition, this session was recorded and shared with districts to reach a broader audience.

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