



SD22 - Vernon

Student Mental Health Strategy

Summary

2025-2028

This plan was developed with support from the BC Children's School Mental Health Practice Support Coaching Program

Land Acknowledgement

School District 22 (SD22) respectfully acknowledges that our district is situated on the ancestral unceded territory of the syilx (Okanagan) people. We honour the language, culture, history and teachings of the syilx people that are deeply connected to these lands. SD22 also acknowledges the contributions of the Métis, Inuit, and other urban Indigenous partners that reside in this territory.



Alignment with District Strategic Plan

School District 22's Student Mental Health Strategy (SMHS) directly aligns with the district's core values of Equity, Inclusiveness, Community and Collaboration. Within the Strategic Plan's operational framework, the SMHS specifically advances the Student Success priority by supporting student wellness, improving student voice and choice, and ensuring schools are welcoming places to learn and work. The SMHS also contributes to the Leadership Excellence priority by enhancing evidence-based decision making. Additionally, under the Community Connections priority, the SMHS aligns with goals to fulfill our public responsibility to Indigenous communities—First Nation, Métis, and Inuit—and to increase collaboration between community, regional, provincial, national, and global partners.

Alignment with BC's Mental Health in Schools Strategy

The Ministry of Education and Child Care's [Mental Health in Schools \(MHIS\) Strategy](#) provides a vision for embedding mental health and well-being into all aspects of the K-12 education system. The MHIS strategy recognizes the critical role schools play in promoting positive mental health for British Columbians.

Creating and sustaining environments that support mental health and well-being are key to the work of BC school districts. This district mental health strategy helps to coordinate and communicate this important work.

Every student in British Columbia deserves a safe, caring and healthy environment that helps them to learn, grow and thrive.

([BC Mental Health in Schools Strategy](#))

Our Vision



Together we will nurture a culture of belonging and well-being where every student's mental health is supported, every voice is valued, and community, school, and district partners work in harmony to create equitable, inclusive pathways for thriving.



Our Process

Our team created this Student Mental Health Strategy in partnership with the BC Children's School Mental Health Practice Support Coaching Program. The strategy was developed and refined through:

- A thorough review of the district's strengths and opportunities for growth related to mental health and well-being, including existing policies, practices, resources, and approaches
- An analysis of available data on student mental health and well-being
- Ongoing feedback and engagement with SD22 staff and community partners
- The goals in this strategy were developed based on the data analysis and information collected from the engagement process.
- Our team will support the rollout of this strategy, take shared accountability for its implementation, and engage in ongoing feedback and reflection to monitor and evaluate progress.

Priority Area #1: District Wide Commitment for Supporting Student Mental Health

Goals:



Annually review and update this Student Mental Health Strategy (SMHS), including a review of local and provincial data to inform decision-making.



Align the Student Mental Health Strategy (SMHS) with the FESL.



Align SD22 mental health and substance use initiatives with Ministry of Education and Child Care guidelines.



Enhance communication with SD22 internal partners and committees.



Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives in mental health programming.



Create and foster pathways for student voice, inclusive of priority students.

Priority Area #2: School-based Initiatives for Supporting Student Mental Health

Goals:



Align mental health school plans with the Student Mental Health Strategy (SMHS).



Collect and review school-based mental health data.



Communicate the Student Mental Health Strategy (SMHS) and school mental health plans to staff, school community, and community partners.



Collaborate with school teams to support and build capacity to implement mental health initiatives.



Implement universal, targeted and individual educational programming and services for mental health, social emotional learning (SEL), and substance use.

Priority Area #3: Community Connections for Supporting Student Mental Health

Goals:



Partner with community organizations to support mental health initiatives and opportunities.



Clarify and communicate pathways for families and students to access community mental health services.



Strengthen parent/family engagement and connection.

People Involved in Creating the Mental Health Strategy

- **Christine Love**, Director of Instruction, Inclusion
- **Dianne Ballance**, District Principal, Inclusion
- **Natashia Bacchus**, District Mental Health and Health Promoting Schools Liaison
- **Colline Johnson**, Principal
- **Elsa Haug**, Vice Principal

Closing

School District 22 is committed to creating a culture of wellness where every student feels supported, valued, and empowered. We take a comprehensive, district-wide approach to mental health that includes annual reviews to ensure the Student Mental Health Strategy remains aligned with provincial guidelines, the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL), and Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives.

We strengthen school-based mental health initiatives by connecting school plans with district goals, using data to guide our practices, and build staff capacity through training and development. Through deeper community partnerships and improved communication channels, we create inclusive, responsive, and culturally grounded supports that prioritize student voice and provide equitable access to mental health and substance use resources for all learners.