



February 2023

Since the beginning of the recent pandemic, educators have expressed increasing concern about the mental health needs of their students. According to this [May 31, 2022, press release](#) on the NCES School Pulse Panel, 70% of public schools reported an increase in the percentage of their students requesting mental health services at school. Only 12% of public schools strongly agreed that they were able to effectively provide mental health services to all students in need, while the remaining 88% cited three primary factors that limited their efforts to provide mental health services. These factors included insufficient mental health professional staff to manage the school's caseload, inadequate funding, and inadequate access to licensed mental health professionals. As we share in this month's [R7CC blog](#), this is not a problem that schools, districts, or state departments of education can solve alone. However, Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems that leverage partnerships with community agencies and families do show promise for addressing this challenge.

Recognizing these challenges, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) began taking initial steps to support its districts and schools in addressing the social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of their students. These steps included training administrators, counselors, and mental health professionals; adopting state standards for social-emotional learning; adopting a set of state-approved evidence-informed behavior interventions; and developing a toolkit to provide a framework to support districts and schools in implementing supportive practices. However, MDE leadership also recognized the need to work with districts to bring these services and others together into a comprehensive system to support school mental health and sought R7CC's assistance in these efforts. Below we provide an update on this new R7CC project as well as some related resources that we hope will help you and your team address these needs in your school, district, or state.

Be sure to visit our website and check in with us on social media to keep up with our work.

We are honored to continuously support you during these five years.

Robin G. Jarvis

Robin G. Jarvis, PhD

Director, Region 7 Comprehensive Center



Resources

New R7CC Blog – [Strategies to Address Student Mental Health Challenges: Taking Steps at the Local Level to Create Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems](#)

National Center for School Mental Health – [Advancing Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems](#)

National Academy for State Health Policy – [State Approaches to Improve Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems](#)

National Center for Rural School Mental Health – [Resource Library](#)

R7CC Project Spotlight

Mississippi Comprehensive Mental Health Support System



What we're doing:

R7CC and MDE are currently recruiting 3-4 districts that are interested in developing Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems.



Where we're going:

Universal materials for all districts will be developed based on the resources and experiences with initial pilot districts. These systems and materials will ultimately aim to support the mental health and educational outcomes of Mississippi's students.

What we've done:

R7CC and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) have formed a project team that has reviewed state data on student mental health needs and determined associated district selection criteria.



Black History Month Resources

As Black History Month comes to an end, we wanted to share some great resources to use all year round.

Scholastic – [Celebrate African American Heritage](#)

PBS – [More Than a Mapp](#)

National Education Association – [Black History Month Lessons and Resources](#)



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