



# Retention of School Mental Health Professionals

*Mental Health Evaluation, Training, Research, and Innovation Center for Schools (METRICS)*  
*April 18, 2024*



# AGENDA

**01** INTRODUCTIONS

**02** STRATEGIES FOR  
RETENTION

**03** SUCCESS STORIES FROM  
THE FIELD

**04** Q/A WITH  
PANELISTS

**05** NEXT STEPS & CLOSING



# Today's Presenters:

## METRICS



**ERIN DOWDY**



**JON GOODWIN**



**SHANNON SULDO**



**EVAN DART**



**KATIE EKLUND**



**ALLISON BRUHN**



**GERTA BARDHOSHI**



**KARI  
VOGELGESANG**



**UC SANTA BARBARA**





Today's  
Presenters:

Success  
Stories from  
the Field



**REBECCA DAMRON**  
Oklahoma State DOE



**LORI CARMACK**  
Hamilton Schools, TN



**KELLIE ANDERSON**  
Anne Arundel County  
Public Schools, MD



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**IOWA**







# METRICS Goals

1. Provide technical assistance to MHSP and SBMH grantees via a tiered approach
2. Disseminate resources related to the recruitment, **RETENTION**, training, supervision, and credentialing of SMH practitioners
3. Support grantees in collecting, analyzing, and reporting performance data
4. Evaluate performance data to identify successes, challenges, and noteworthy trends across grant programs

# WELCOME

**Mental Health Service  
Professional  
Demonstration Grantees**

**School Based Mental  
Health Services  
Grantees**

## How do we RETAIN our Mental Health Service Providers?



Important  
Reminders:

Be Intentional

Retention

Recruitment



# Retention Data

- Within the first two years...
  - 59% of school counselors leave their position
  - 49% of school social workers leave their position
  - 50% of school psychologists leave their position



# Reasons for Leaving the Field

| TRAINING PROGRAMS  | PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS   |
|--|--|
| <b>Misalignment with Career Objectives</b>                   | <b>Occupational Stress &amp; Burnout</b>                               |
| <i>"I didn't know what I was getting myself into"</i>        | <i>"Wow, this job is stressful! I need more time in a day!"</i>        |
| <b>Lack of Belonging &amp; Community</b>                     | <b>Lack of Supervision &amp; Organizational Support</b>                |
| <i>"I don't fit in here."</i>                                | <i>"I need help. I'm all on my own. No one values me."</i>             |
| <b>Financial Stressors</b>                                   | <b>Financial Stressors</b>   |
| <i>"School is expensive."</i>                                | <i>"I could move districts or jobs and make more \$."</i>              |
| <b>Inadequate Advising &amp; Support</b>                     | <b>Administrative Pressures</b>  |
| <i>"My advisor is barely here and barely knows I exist."</i> | <i>"I keep being asked to take on more and I am afraid to say no."</i> |

# Retention Strategies



## Competitive Compensation and Benefits

Retention Bonus  
Stipends for PD & Supervisors  
Licensure/Credential Fees  
Loan Repayment



## Opportunities for Professional Development

Workshops & Conferences  
PTO for PD



## Promote Work-Life Harmony

Use Vacation Time  
Help Managing Workload  
Childcare coverage/costs



## Recognition & Appreciation

Celebrate achievements



## Create a Positive Work Environment

Feelings of support and belongingness  
Teamwork

and More!



Provide Feedback & Set Realistic Expectations

Flexible Work Arrangements



Provide Leadership Opportunities

Establish Mentorships



Shared Decision Making

Role Clarification & Adjustments



Address Burnout

Secondary Traumatic Stress  
Self-Compassion & Time to Debrief  
Wellness Programs



Clinical Supervision

Peer Supervision Networks  
Connect with State/Prof Orgs  
Connect w Local Universities

# Retaining SMH Professionals from Diverse Backgrounds

- Facilitate professional communities with other diverse faculty or professionals.
- Support membership within professional organizations focused on supporting minoritized professionals.
- Establish a workplace climate that is supportive of diversity and celebrating diverse heritages.
- Ongoing professional development for both minoritized *and* non-minoritized colleagues to support equity and inclusion.
- Mentorship from more experienced diverse SMH professionals



# Success Stories from the Field

Kellie Anderson, Anne Arundel AACPS, MD

Lori Carmack, Hamilton Schools, TN

Rebecca Damron, Oklahoma State DOE

- Brief Description of Grant
- Strategies for Retention
- Successful Experiences



# Hamilton County Department of Education

**Lori Carmack, LMSW, LSSW**  
**Coordinator of School Social Work**  
**Social Emotional and Academic**  
**Development (SEAD) Department**  
**Chattanooga, TN**  
**carmack\_lori@hcde.org**

**SBMH Grant:**

***Hamilton County Schools, School  
Based Mental Health Services Project***

## Grant Context

- Goal: hire and retain 8 school social workers
- Increased from 27 to 73 SSWs (8 funded by grant) in about a year along with changing SSW delivery model from family- to student-facing
- Supervision of SSW: coordinator + 2 leads

## Strategies for Retention

- 1:1 supervision with the 3 administrative SSWs
- Monthly peer learning community meetings
- Monthly practitioner-selected PD (1/2 to full day)
- Stipends for clinical supervisors

## Successful Experiences

- Monthly PD blended with restorative circles for processing concerns and successes
- High demand for clinical supervision for LCSW





# Oklahoma State Dept of Education and Pottawatomie County

**Rebecca Damron**  
**Project Manager**  
**Oklahoma City, OK**  
**Rebecca.Damron@sde.ok.gov**

**SBMH Grant:**  
***Project RESPECT***

## Grant Context

- Goal: hire and retain 14 LMHPs, one for each of the 14 districts/grantees in Pottawatomie County

## Strategies for Retention

- Prioritized building relationships with districts, community partners and OSU, county counseling agencies
- Establish and maintain community for hires and school teams, through monthly:
  - LMHP Connect Meetings
  - MTSS Coaching Academy

## Successful Experiences

- School leaders are active participants and champions of mental health integration
- LMHPs feel valued and supported by peers and by school leaders



# Anne Arundel County Public Schools

**Dr. Kellie Anderson, NCSP**  
**Coordinator**  
**Office of Psychological Services**  
**Annapolis, MD**  
**[kjanderson@aacps.org](mailto:kjanderson@aacps.org)**

**SBMH Grant:**  
***Recruiting and Retaining***  
***School Psychologists in AACPS***

## Grant Context

- Goal: hire and retain diverse school psychologists and social workers in AACPS (large district in MD)

## Strategies for Retention

- Start with successful recruitment! Help new hires feel supported, and connected to their work and field
- Increased intern pool (5 to 7-8 school psych interns)
- Social work: created stipend for interns, and employment pathway (intern => LMSW => LCSW, via district-provided supervision); share w/ local universities
- Emphasis on employee job quality and mentoring
  - Paid mentoring for early career diverse hires; travel to 2 conferences; professional dues paid

## Successful Experiences

- Explicit acknowledgment of importance of diversity in student services staff, with intentional placement to schools and mentors with similar identities



# Questions for Panelists

Please ask questions of our wonderful presenters!

- Questions in the Chat Box
- Raise Hands



# Coming Soon: Professional Learning Community

- Designed to facilitate continued conversation and growth
  - "I would appreciate continued conversations with other grantees"
  - "I'd love to have a thought-partner to think about.....how to enhance retention efforts in my rural district"
- Email Coming Soon:
  - Express Interest
  - Consider optimal meeting schedule
  - Structure Example: 1 hr Zoom meetings/1 x month matched with other grantees focused on retention in rural schools





# WRAP-UP

- 01 **SHARE IN THE CHAT:**  
One strategy that you learned today
- 02 **GRATITUDE & REMINDERS**
- 03 **FEEDBACK:**  
Click the link in the chat to provide feedback on the webinar

[https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3DfwYNCe55tx7IW](https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3DfwYNCe55tx7IW)

# QUESTIONS?

Also, you can  
just reach out  
to us!



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