



# SHIP DAKOTA COUNTY SCHOOL WELLNESS REPORT

The report highlights Dakota County Public Health Department's school wellness efforts funded through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) between November 1, 2019 and October 2021. Together, school partners and Public Health planned and implemented dozens of wellness efforts focused on healthy eating, physical activity, health equity, mental health, and youth vaping prevention.

Notably, this school-based work took place during unprecedented times of a global pandemic and social unrest due to historical and systemic racism. The school partners successfully adapted to meet the evolving community and societal needs through new, creative programs and services with a more intentional focus on mental health and health equity.

## OUR REACH



**9** Dakota County school districts

including

**49**

Individual schools engaged in implementing sustainable wellness efforts



**88,300**

estimated students and staff were impacted

## FUNDING

**\$201,811** school wellness mini-grant funding to support implementation of projects

## SCHOOL PARTNERS

Special School District 6 - South St. Paul  
ISD 191 - Burnsville, Eagan, Savage  
ISD 192 - Farmington  
ISD 194 - Lakeville  
ISD 195 - Randolph  
ISD 196 - Rosemount, Apple Valley, Eagan  
ISD 197 - W. St. Paul, Mendota Hts., Eagan  
ISD 199 - Inver Grove Heights  
ISD 200 - Hastings

## SCHOOL WELLNESS PROJECTS

### ACTIVE LIVING

- Safe Routes to School
- Physical Activity Before and After School
- Physical Activity During the School Day

### VAPING PREVENTION

- Policy change
- Staff Training & Curriculum Implementation
- District-wide events on Tobacco/vaping
- Peer education/youth engagement

### HEALTHY FOOD & WATER ACCESS

- Hydration Station
- School Based Agriculture
- Cooking cart with teacher training
- Farm to school
- Early Learning (Pre-K) and School-Age Care Programs

### MENTAL HEALTH

- Outdoor classrooms
- Conscious discipline
- Restorative-and Trauma-Informed Practices
- Change to Chill rooms
- Mindfulness/Stress reduction

### DISTRICT LEVEL/EQUITY FOCUSED\*

- Cultural Family Advocates Collaborative
- Strengthened District-level Policies & Wellness Committees
- COVID Relief – equipment to service food to community
- Students of color leadership program

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## HIGHLIGHTS

### Mindfulness/Stress Reduction and Self-Regulation

8 school districts received MoveMindfully® services including staff trainings, workshops, consultations, and residencies. Additionally, virtual stress management sessions - a new offering in response to increased mental health challenges was valued by all.

- ....► 69 Trainings/Stress Management Sessions
- ....► 34 Workshops / 15 Family Nights
- ....► 55 Training Consultations / 34 Residencies

### Cultural Liaisons and Family Advocates' Collaborative

In efforts to advance equity and authentic engagement practices, Dakota County Public Health engaged more deeply with district cultural liaisons and family advocates representing 7 districts. Through these efforts, SHIP offered trainings, resources and opportunities for connection, while the liaisons assisted with provision of timely COVID-19 response information and well-being resources, oftentimes reaching students or families facing greater barriers.

### School-Based Agriculture

1 district provided the School Yard Garden Conference opportunity for two key members of the community who lead the engagement and education within the site's garden. The goal of this strategy is to encourage healthy eating and exposure to fruits and vegetables while increasing time outside.

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MoveMindfully® partners with Dakota County SHIP to provide stress management and social-emotional learning skills to children, youth and adults during this time of intensified need due to COVID-19 and the impact of systemic racism in our communities. Together we have delivered breathing, movement and relaxation strategies to students, staff, and families in educational settings. These trauma-responsive mind-body practices create cultures of physical, mental and emotional well-being where everyone can thrive

-Chrissy Mignogna, Lead Trainer and Director of Education, MoveMindfully®

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### Students of Color Leadership Program

1 district applied for funding to support the Students of Color Leadership Program. This program educates students and staff on anti-racism and equitable practices, creating space to hear from students and families of color, and to improve the emotional and mental well-being of students.

### Youth Vaping Prevention

5 of the 9 districts worked on a comprehensive and evidence-based approaches to commercial tobacco prevention. Projects included staff training on evidence-based tobacco prevention training, inclusion of a new tobacco curriculum, creation of bilingual educational materials (sent to all district families), updates to district-level tobacco policies or procedures and leadership development of youth advocates.



“Students now have multiple people to turn to and have options when they are ready to seek help or support for their vaping addiction.”

- Chemical Dependency & Wellness Counselor

## HIGHLIGHTS

### COVID Relief & Nutrition Services

2 districts received SHIP funds to assist in obtaining items needed to safely prepare, transport, and serve the meals to students and families during many months of distance learning. This was particularly helpful to families who were experiencing food insecurity confounded by distance learning and the pandemic.

### Farm to Early Learning

14 staff members completed Early Sprouts training. Early Sprouts is a seed-to-table gardening and nutrition curriculum. This site improved Pre-K nutrition by visiting classrooms for cooking lessons, made possible by a donation of a cooking cart and supplies.

### District Wellness Policy and District Wellness Committee

2 school districts received grant funds and technical assistance for creation, implementation, documentation and evaluation of District Wellness Committees and Wellness Policies. Both are foundational to creating and sustaining a healthier school environment.

### Restorative-and Trauma-Informed Practices

Two cohorts of 18 staff at one district engaged in a restorative practice circle training expanding upon the district's previous efforts. 1 school district trained staff on their Student Support Team on the Trauma-Informed Best Practices to better meet the needs of all students.

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*Randolph Schools have made so many positive & sustainable changes due to working with SHIP. We have changed for the good: Food Service, PhyEd/Recess, outdoor classroom, and mental health to name a few. Dakota County Public Health has greatly improved Randolph Schools.*

*-Lori Underdahl, Food Service Director, Randolph Public Schools*

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### Safe Routes to School (+ SRTS Planning Assistance)

2 districts implemented Safe Routes to School infrastructure planning and programming. 1 district implemented a new Walking School Bus program to encourage students who are within the walking zone to safely walk to school as well as a 'Safe Crossing' initiative to educate and alter drivers of pedestrian crossing at concerning intersections.



### Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

3 districts implemented "Change to Chill" by Allina, which included creation of physical calming spaces and tools for students to de-stress.

- ...➤ 3 districts implemented an Outdoor Classrooms.
- ...➤ 2 elementary sites promoted exploration and outdoor learning for their students through a mindfulness lens.
- ...➤ 1 high school engaged with students and staff through their woodworking class to build benches and co-create a health-promoting outdoor learning space for both students and staff.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND 'HOW WELL'?



Dakota County Public Health helped school partners to sustain their project activities:

- ...➤ **80%** reported they met at least 6 of the 7 criteria to sustain change. The goal is 100% of partners meeting the criteria to sustain change.
- ...➤ **97%** of the 364 respondents who attended a MoveMindfully® workshop strongly agreed or agreed the skills learned can be integrated into their work.
- ...➤ **96%** of 364 participants who attended a MoveMindfully workshop agreed or strongly agreed the workshop helped them to improve their skills of mindfulness, movement, and social-emotional learning.

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