

# Local Partnership; A Model for Children’s Mental Health—Working Together to Reinforce All Partners (WRAP) Program

Lori Wilder, Superintendent of Student Services, Bluewater District School Board



Children’s mental health has become an issue throughout Ontario as more students show signs of anxiety, depression, behaviour and attention difficulties. The Ontario Child Study states that one in five children and youth suffer from some sort of mental health issue requiring intervention. A partnership to address mental health issues has been heralded as an example of a best practice in children’s mental health service delivery.

Bluewater District School Board, Keystone Child, Youth and Family Services and Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board have received both provincial and national attention for their innovation and ability to make partnerships successful. The multidisciplinary approach has earned much praise for its work.

The Honourable Michael Kirby current chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada has described the Working to Reinforce all Partnerships (WRAP) program as the “best school program in the country.”

The partnership which began in 1998 started with the creation of WRAP teams. These teams consist of a Behaviour Lead Teacher from the school board, a Social Worker and a Community Worker from Keystone Child Youth and Family Services. WRAP teams work together to improve the lives of students with intense needs by wrapping the services required around the child in their school, home and community.

The services required are individualized for each child and family. This provides service delivery which is “tailor made” for the youth, their family and community. The services are based on assessment, creative partnerships and service excellence.

Judith Weiner psychologist and professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in education has cited the WRAP program as an example of how effective partnerships can meet the needs of each child starting in preschool to identify and address problems early.

The partnership has grown since it’s beginning to include partners from the Ministries of Education, Health, and Children and Youth Services. The multidisciplinary cooperation in Grey and Bruce Counties began with leadership from all partners having the conviction that together they could improve the system for those that they serve.

The WRAP program has been able to access the many services provided by Keystone as well as new services added since the partnership began. Telepsychiatric consultations, with University of Toronto psychiatric staff via video link as well as Paediatric consults have been added to the services provided. Birth to Senior Kindergarten Mental Health Program has joined the original WRAP programs. The programs serve to build capacity through a multidisciplinary team approach.

This combination of cooperation and sharing of resources from Keystone, Bluewater District School Board, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board and the medical community has become a standard which has brought much attention to the success of the model. The effective use of partnerships locally has led to the recognition of the programs developed as ‘best practices’ both provincially and nationally and continues to generate interest by other school boards and agencies wishing to learn from the successes here in our community.

Further information regarding the WRAP program is available by contacting Lori Wilder, Superintendent of Student Services, Bluewater District School Board, at 519-363-2014 or by e-mail at [lori\\_wilder@bwdsb.on.ca](mailto:lori_wilder@bwdsb.on.ca).

Comments about this article? Email [lori\\_wilder@bwdsb.on.ca](mailto:lori_wilder@bwdsb.on.ca)

# Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives; Developing and Enhancing School Based Programs for Student Mental Health

Kevin Cutler, Superintendent of Special Education and Safe Schools, Trillium Lakelands District School Board

## Introduction

Student Mental Health is emerging as one of the primary concerns in our schools. Anxiety, depression, eating disorders, addictions, bullying issues, to name just a few are dominating some of our classrooms, impacting student attendance, and ultimately impacting the academic success and lives of many of our young people.

There are services available in our schools presently. There are services available in our communities presently. There are existing partnerships and collaborative agreements in place presently to help address the needs of many of these young people.

What is needed however is a further commitment on the part of all of those involved to coordinate people and resources in order to ensure that those in need of service, receive the services they need from the right people. At the same time, proactive and preventative

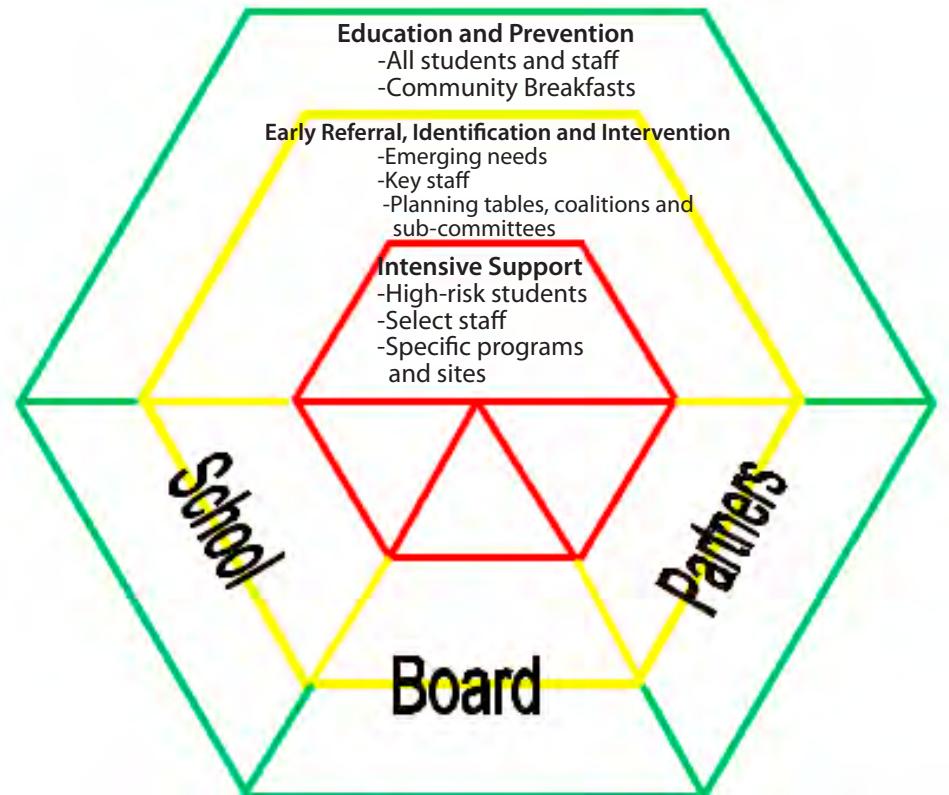
mechanisms must be put in place for all students through universal screening, education and resources.

This article will outline the efforts of the Trillium Lakelands DSB and its partners in 3 geographic areas to accomplish this for our students.

## The Vision

The model for these services is based upon the Pyramid Response To Intervention concept that is already prevalent in school-based special education service delivery and the triage model already prevalent in many health care agencies.

There are three distinct pyramids in the model; services delivered at the school level, services provided by the school district, and services provided by agencies and partners of the school district.



SCHOOL	BOARD	PARTNERS
<b>Green Level</b> -Effective differentiated instruction and character development -Effective bully prevention programs -Mental health components of the health curriculum -Resources available to students and families -Key staff training on symptoms checklists -Student instruction on resiliency -Restorative practices	<b>Green Level</b> -Board website listing all community services in each of our areas -Classroom management/ BMS training for all -Links to agency websites -Aboriginal initiatives -Staff capacity building via PA days and NTIP	<b>Green Level</b> -Teacher capacity building -Curriculum materials -Brochures and educational materials -Presentations to staff, students and parents -Links to websites
<b>Yellow Level</b> -Agency programs at school (e.g. Girlz Unplugged) -IEP strategies -School-based problem-solving teams -Student Success -Check in/check out -Trained guidance personnel at secondary schools -After-school programs -Self-management/self-regulation programs -CASSLE/social skills programs at some schools	<b>Yellow Level</b> -Staff workshops on mental health referral process (particularly SERT and guidance personnel) -Student Service Workers referring students for applicable services -Itinerant contracted art therapist	<b>Yellow Level</b> -Special school-based programs (mental health workers, sexual health clinics, addictions, probation) -Focus groups -Specific staff in-service -Participation in case conferences regarding students
<b>Red Level</b> -Alternative settings within secondary schools and access to section 23 programs -Spaces available in schools for agencies, practitioners	<b>Red Level</b> -Alternative programs (section 23, coaching classes Grades 2-4 and Grades 5-8) -Clinical psychologist/intake officer/case manager	<b>Red Level</b> -Partnerships in alternative programs such as section 23 -Treatment for specific students

The creation of this model in reality will allow schools, through its, partners to offer services that are preventative (green), as well as interventions that are moderate (yellow) and more severe in intensity (red).

The other very crucial piece of this model is the idea of regular and systematic coordination of all of the zones of service with key players from all three distinct areas (school, board, and partners).

Following are just some of the promising programs and practices in Trillium Lakelands which demonstrate this collaboration.