



A Celebration of Mental Health Support in Our Schools

Since 2018, the Behavioral Health in the Schools Initiative has boosted mental health services in Routt County schools. The partnership was spearheaded by the thought leadership and financial contributions of the Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation (CSFF), UHealth Yampa Valley Medical Center (YVMC), and Yampa Valley Medical Center Foundation (YVMCF) to support all Routt County school districts and students. The combined investment from UHealth and CSFF since 2018 has been nearly \$1.6M. This effort has integrated mental health education and support into our schools, fostering a stronger focus on well-being. The Yampa Valley Community Foundation and private donors have helped to sustain and expand the program since its inception. Let's acknowledge the progress made in creating a robust support system for students, including prevention efforts and targeted services for those in need.

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The partnership between Steamboat Springs School District (SSSD) and YVMC, made possible through YVMCF's Community Health Benefit Fund, was established over five years ago to better meet the mental health needs of students, and it has been truly impactful. The overall health – physical, mental, social, emotional – of every student is important. By working together, SSSD has been able to bring in uniquely qualified professionals to support students' mental health needs, allowing teachers and counselors to better focus on their primary roles.

The integration of behavioral health into SSSD's curriculum has not only given students better access to resources but has also helped remove some of the stigma of talking about mental health. We've watched the team grow and create and execute plans based on education, awareness, and treatment.

Our hope is that this work can continue, as the need to educate and support the next generations in achieving their extraordinary will remain a priority for both SSSD and UHealth.

**Soniya Fidler, President
Yampa Valley Medical Center**

uhealth

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CSFF is honored to be a long-time supporter of youth wellness in the SSSD in collaboration with YVMC and YVMCF.

Prior to the pandemic, SSSD had already begun shifting towards evidence-based best practices in trauma-informed care to support students of all ages. The fact that infrastructure for school-based therapy and other behavioral health services were being provided before the school closings in March 2020 due to COVID-19 proved to be extremely instrumental to the district's ability to positively respond to the needs of students in the ensuing mental health crisis all communities across the nation experienced.

A critical component to the SSSD's impactful school-based therapy and services developed in 2021 when the SSSD created the Behavioral Health and Restorative Practices Manager position and filled it with seasoned school counselor and remarkable youth advocate Shelby DeWolfe. Shelby, along with the SSSD counseling team, education specialists, lead teachers and administrators, have worked tirelessly since then to strategically fine-tune the behavioral health infrastructure and systems, which are now in place regardless of changing staff positions.

CSFF is grateful for SSSD's deep commitment to addressing youth wellness needs so that all children have equitable access to services to help them reach their full potential.

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It is also important to recognize the Youth Resiliency Program of Northwest Colorado Health, Partners For Youth, Minds Springs Health and Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide (REPS) as essential nonprofits providing youth wellness supports in the schools, ranging from prevention skill building to intervention and crisis management. It is the hope of CSFF that robust state funding will be provided in the coming years to sustain and to continue to enhance the exceptional systems the SSSD has created to support our community of youth.

**Sara Craig-Scheckman
Board President,
Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation**



CSFF

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5-6 Hours

Social-Emotional Education for Elementary and Middle School Students: Elementary and middle school students receive between 5-6 hours a month of social-emotional learning (SEL) education. This process helps them develop healthy identities, manage emotions, feel empathy, establish supportive relationships, and make responsible decisions. It equips them with tools to manage difficult situations and reduces their need for high-level services in the future.

1:250

Robust School Counselor Support: All SSSD schools are fully staffed with school counselors within the American School Counselor Association National Model of counselor-to-student ratios (which is 1 counselor for every 250 students). In 2018-2019, the ratio was one counselor for every 350 students in SSSD.

17.5

Increase in School Health Professional Staff: The number of school health professionals and counselors has grown. In 2018/2019, SSSD had 9.5 school counselors and social workers serving our students. This year, we have 17.5 school counselors and social workers on staff.

Ways We've Expanded Mental Health Programming in SSSD Schools



Sustaining School Counselor Positions: At the conclusion of expiring grants, the Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board has provided annual funding for each of the newly created School Counselor positions to sustain student-facing service providers at each school.



Thought Leadership Growth: Thanks to the partnerships and expansion of our mental health programming, we have been asked to speak and share our strategies with other school districts across the state.