



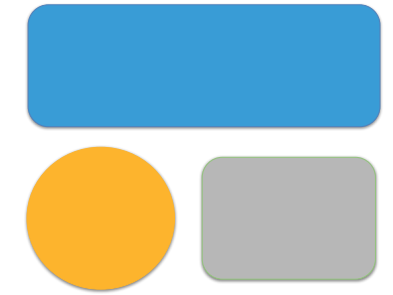
Expanding Access to Mental Health Supports for AAPS Students and Families



**Presentation to the AAPS Board of Education
October 7, 2026**

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Why focus on mental health?



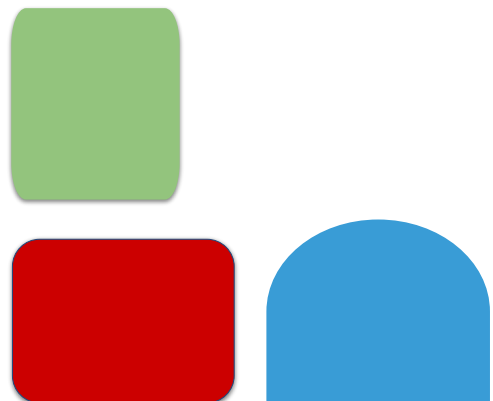
Mental health concerns can impact student well-being in multiple ways, including:

- School attendance and engagement
- Classroom behavior
- Social connectedness
- Academic achievement
- Suicidal ideation
- Substance use

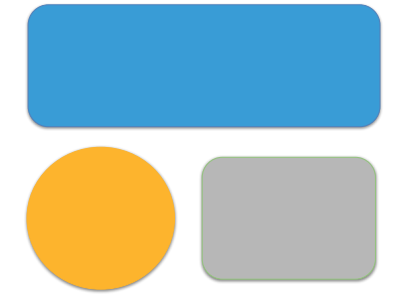
Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

For children and youth, mental well-being includes **reaching developmental and emotional milestones** and **learning skills to cope with challenges and function well** at home, school, and in the community.

--CDC Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools (2024)



Why the need to expand access?



Prior to the pandemic, student mental health needs were rising nationally. Every year since 2009, high school students' reported feelings of sadness and hopelessness and major depressive episodes had gone up.

The pandemic exacerbated pre-existing stressors and introduced new challenges. Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and depressive episodes increased.

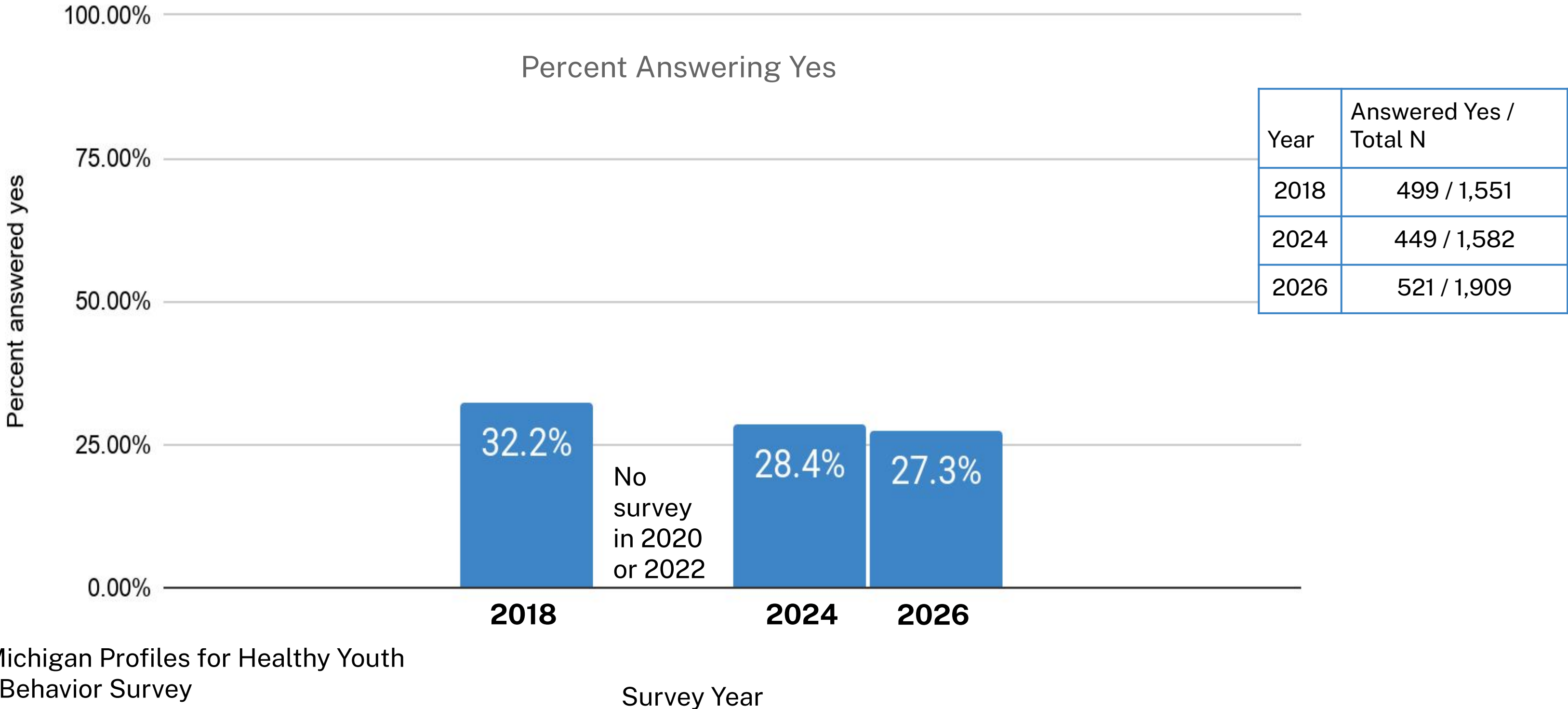
In the past 2 years, the trend has started to decline.

-- From Crisis to Action: A Guide for State and Local Leaders on Youth Mental Health in Schools, Oct. 2025
National Center for School Mental Health



MiPHY* Symptoms of Depression Question, AAPS 9th and 11th grades

“During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”

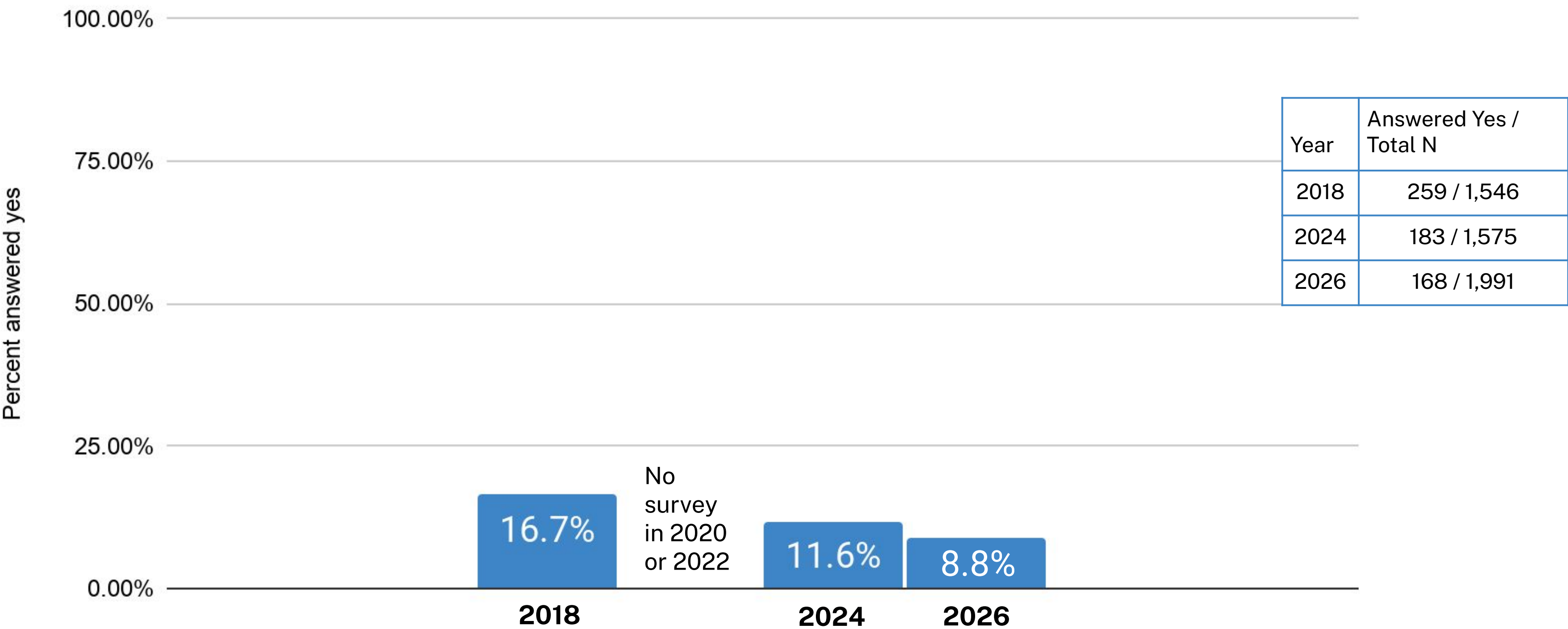


*MiPHY = Michigan Profiles for Healthy Youth
Youth Risk Behavior Survey



MiPHY* Considered Suicide Question, AAPS 9th and 11th grades

“During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider ending your life?”



*MiPHY = Michigan Profiles for Healthy Youth
Youth Risk Behavior Survey

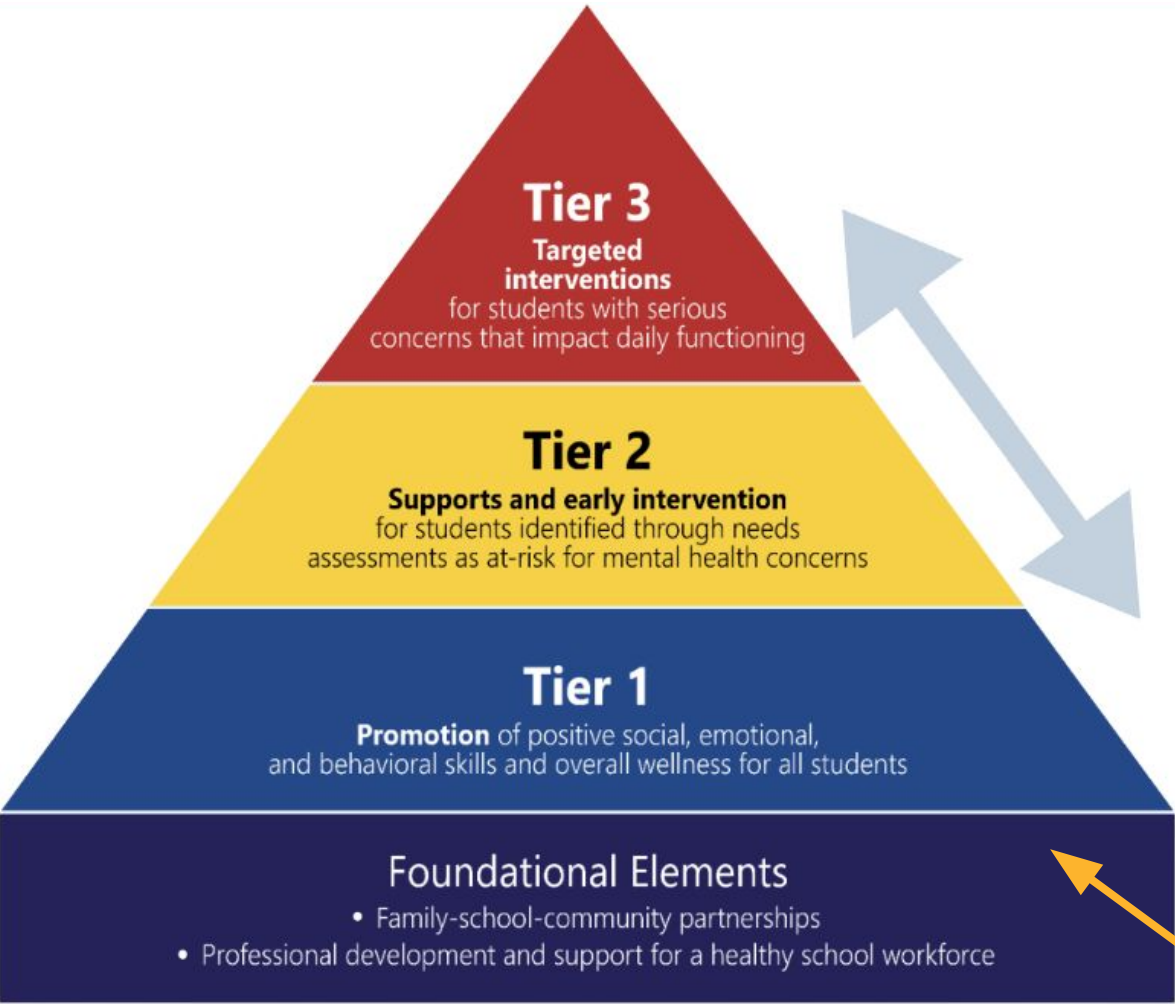


Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for Mental Health

“A central tenet of effective school mental health is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, which organizes prevention and intervention into a continuum.

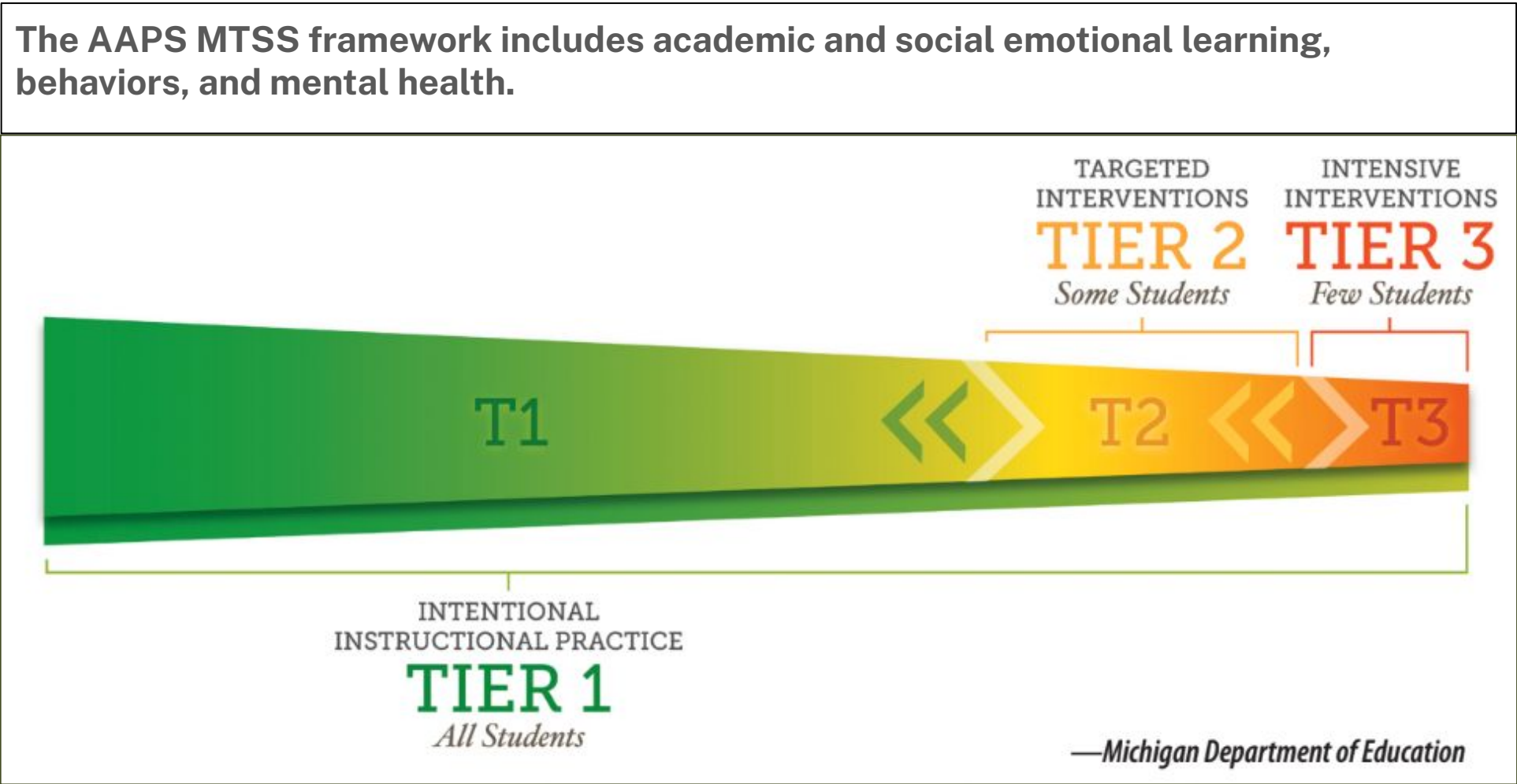
A strong tiered service array ensures that all students benefit from a foundation of wellness promotion while those with greater needs have timely access to progressively intensive interventions.”

-From Crisis to Action: A Guide for State and Local Leaders on Youth Mental Health in Schools, National Center for School Mental Health

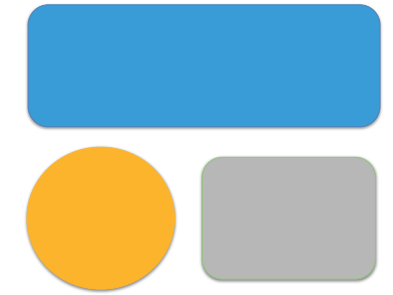


National Center for School Mental Health

Community - school partnerships are foundational



The Role of Schools & School Staff



Why Schools?

- Schools are recognized as logical and effective settings for prevention and intervention.
- Schools offer the advantages of accessibility, integration, and prevention/early intervention.
- Some students may only be able to receive clinical services during the school day.

Source: National Center for School Mental Health



In AAPS...

- We have remarkable social workers, counselors, psychologists, and nurses.
- Their role is support educational access for students, which can mean supportive conversations, check-ins, risk assessments, and skills groups.
- Providing clinical services such as therapy is outside their job descriptions.
- In 2022-23, there was collective recognition of a need for more tangible support for general education students, especially at the elementary level.



How do we increase clinical supports for students with mild, moderate, and severe mental health / behavior concerns?



Strategies for Building a System of Clinical Supports for Students - Both Inside and Outside of School

Strengthen Existing Partnerships and Develop New Partnerships

✓	Expand network of community mental health (MH) connections
✓	Develop and use new MOU template for partners providing MH services
✓	Hold regular meetings with partners to set goals, problem-solve, and review program impact data

Raise awareness of student mental health data and MH resources

✓	Conduct Michigan Profiles for Healthy Youth (MiPHY) survey and well-being screener
✓	Host a Mental Health Partnerships Summit (April 2026)
✓	Provide data and training on resources to social workers, counselors, and others
✓	Communicate about resources regularly with internal staff and AAPS families

Include mental health resources in District initiatives

✓	Updated Rights & Responsibilities Handbook will include MH resources for families
✓	District Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework includes social emotional learning, behavior, and mental health



Tier 1

for all

Promotion of positive social, emotional and behavioral skills, mental health literacy, and overall wellness for all students.

MJRF Champions Program

- Miles J. Roberts Foundation was established in memory of Miles, a Skyline high school student who died by suicide in 2017.
- The Champions program provides presentations to high school athletic teams to **raise awareness of depression symptoms, decrease stigma, and increase help seeking behavior.**
- **IMPACT:** Since the 22-23 school year, the MJRF Champions program has presented to over **2000 athletes in 90 teams. 72 students have requested follow up support.**



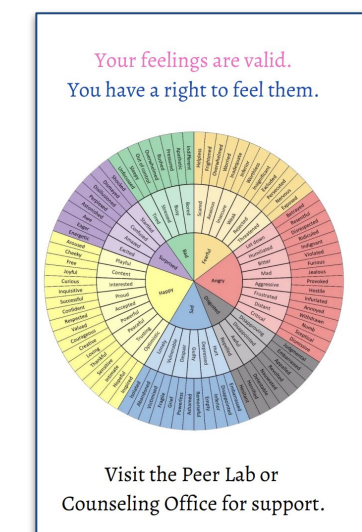
Pioneer Volleyball Team, Sept. 2026

UM Depression Center Peer to Peer Depression Awareness

- P2P is an evidence-based collaboration between the Eisenberg Family Depression Center and most AAPS middle and high schools.
- The program's goal is to promote **early detection of depression, anxiety and related illnesses through education and awareness.** With staff mentors, students lead school-wide campaigns that seek to raise awareness, fight stigma, and encourage help-seeking behavior.
- **IMPACT:** End-of-year surveys of students not in P2P shows they saw and understood at least 2 of the campaign messages.



Slouson door decorating contest



Huron Poster

Tier 2

for some

Supports and Early Interventions for students identified through needs assessments as needing some mental health services.

Est. 2019: UM Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS) Behavioral Health Clinic at Pioneer.

Care Solace

- Started in spring 2024 using grant funds.
- No-cost care coordination for mental health and substance use concerns
- Available to students, staff, and their families.
- Available 24/7, 365 days/year with 200+ languages spoken.
- All care is provided outside of school per family needs and schedule.
- Easy access via phone (888) 515-0595 or caresolace.com/aaps.

IMPACT: Over 1000 students, staff, and families have been matched with providers since 2024.

Corner Health

- Started with SMART Recovery support group at Skyline in 22-23 school year, expanded to Huron and Pioneer as well.
- Piloted Community Therapy Program at Skyline in 25-26 school year; the program continues in 26-27.

IMPACT:

- 25+ students attended SMART Recovery groups regularly last year.
- 30+ students received mental health check-ins throughout the year at Skyline from licensed social worker. Some were referred to ongoing therapy with the Corner.

JFS/Thrive Counseling

- New partnership in 2026-27 school year.
- Providing in-school therapy services for Huron students with mild to moderate mental health needs.
- Two clinical professionals spending 1-2 days/week at Huron to see students in a room in the Counseling Office.
- Thrive works with parents/caregivers to bill insurance (new MOU developed for this).

IMPACT: The program started at Huron last week..

WISD Bridge Team

- Group Therapy (in school) - new Tier 2 service this year from our ongoing partner.
- 8-10 week, 30 minute sessions with small groups of K-12 students.
- Provides emotional and social support to students while enhancing coping skills and improving emotional regulation.
- Counseling topics include anxiety, positive relationships, self-esteem, grief, positive decision-making, and trauma.

IMPACT: Tracking this year.

Tier 3

for few

Targeted interventions for students with serious concerns that impact daily functioning and crisis situations.

Ongoing Crisis Response Partners

- UM Psych ER
- Washtenaw County Community Mental Health
- Ozone House

WISD Bridge Team

- WISD launched program in fall 2022
- Building staff referral for individual students with immediate behavior and MH needs.
- Short term clinical social work provided in the school setting, with wrap-around family services available if needed.

IMPACT: In 25-26, 23 buildings requested Bridge Team Services. 160 students were seen.

Raptor StudentSafe

- Starting in fall 2023, all principals, counselors, and social workers received training to use the Columbia tool (suicide risk assessment) and CSTAG (threat risk assessment)
- The Columbia risk assessment protocol includes referral to clinical services if needed.
- Risk assessments can serve as preventive measures and lead to intervention.

IMPACT: Standardized method for assessing students for suicide risk and referring to outside resources.



New Partnership Resources Since the 2022-23 School Year

Tier	Partner	Services Provided...
Tier 1	MJRF Champions Program	In school (after school)
Tier 2	Care Solace	Outside of school
	WISD Bridge Team	In school
	Corner Health (expansion of services)	In school
	JFS / Thrive Counseling	In school
Tier 3	Raptor StudentSafe (risk assessments)	In school
	WISD Bridge Team	In school

Mental Health Partnerships Summit follow-up: Mental Health Resources Guide for staff, and MH listserv for partners and staff

Youth Voice

Spring 2026 Focus Groups on the MiPHY Results

Who?

- Students in Peer to Peer (P2P) Mental Health Awareness Clubs at Community, Huron, Pioneer, and Skyline.

What?

- Shared school-level and district data on depression and serious thoughts of suicide questions.
- **Depression and thoughts of suicide have decreased slightly since 2024. What made a difference?**

“Outside of school I think mental health conversations are changing. Parents are willing to talk and have more conversations about receiving help for their children.”

--Huron Student

“There is P2P, teachers and counselors and the anonymous helpline.”

--Community Student

“Safe spaces like the reset room, organizations like P2P, teachers, counselors.”

--Pioneer Student

“I think the Reset Room helps a lot. Also making resources more known and minimizing stigma. I think groups like P2P, PPI, and Champion Mindset have grown in influence.”

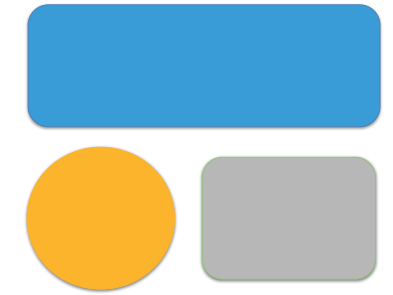
--Pioneer student

“Peer Lab, counseling office. More approachable teachers, more mental health advocates and resources. Posters and posts about mental health.” --Huron Student

“I think that an increase in P2P activity has hopefully helped. I also think that good school help programs like having the learning center have helped reduce school-related stress and MJR has helped athletes.”

--Skyline Student

What's Next?



Continue:

- Strengthening and building new partnerships
- Assessing partner program impact
- Student mental health data collection
- Student voice opportunities
- Convening partners and staff for sharing, discussion, and continuous improvement
- Including student mental health / behaviors in relevant district initiatives
- Keeping up on best practices for supporting youth mental health in schools

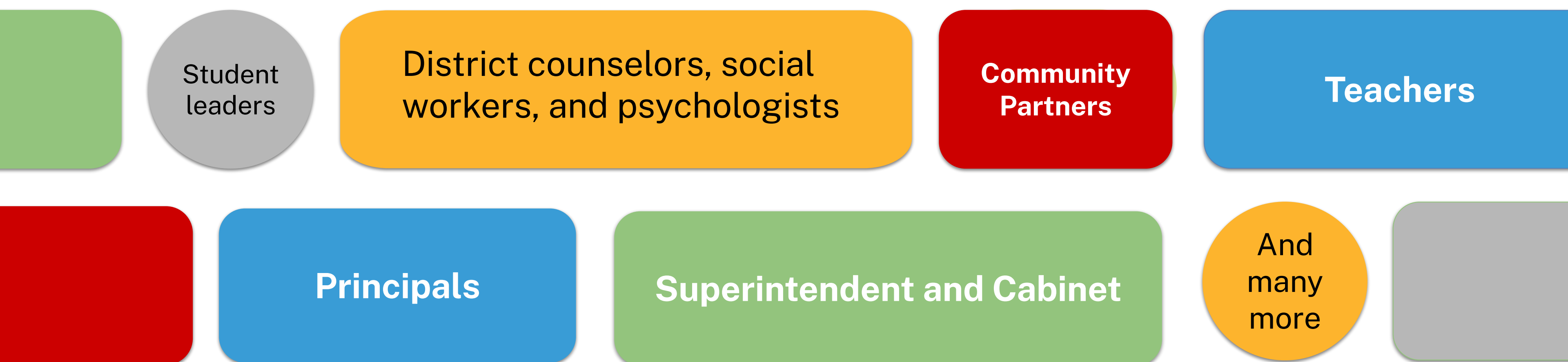
And...

- Explore family engagement opportunities
- Identify Tier 1 and Tier 2 opportunities for elementary school



Many thanks

to the individuals and groups who helped expand services or directly support students



Student
leaders

District counselors, social
workers, and psychologists

**Community
Partners**

Teachers

Principals

Superintendent and Cabinet

And
many
more



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