Enhancing Supports to Reduce School-Based Arrests: The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative

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Background

Fewer juvenile court referrals, proportion from schools continues to be high

- Approximately 20% of all CT juvenile court referrals

High rates of unmet mental health needs and academic risk among youth who are arrested or expelled

- 20% of children meet criteria for MH diagnosis (160,000 youth in CT)
- Rates are 65-70% among youth in juvenile detention
- 80-90% in detention w/ significant trauma exposure
- Students arrested are 2x as likely not to graduate; increases to 4x if processed through court
Trauma Exposure and Behavioral Health Needs

Prevalence of Mental and Substance Use Disorders and Traumatic-event exposure among Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

Source: National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice
Development of SBDI

- 2008: MacArthur Foundation Models for Change Mental Health Juvenile Justice Action Network facilitated by NCMHJJ

- 2009: Pilot SBDI in 3 schools

- 2010: State agencies sustained by sharing cost, blended funding with collaborative oversight

- 2013: Expanded partnership as evidence increased, tied into larger education and criminal justice reforms

- 2015: Statewide expansion in Governor’s biennial budget under the “Second Chance Society”
SBDI Goals

• **Reduce** the number of discretionary arrests in school; reduce expulsions and out-of-school suspensions

• **Build** knowledge and skills among teachers, school staff, and school resource officers to recognize and manage behavioral health crises in the school, and access needed community resources

• **Link** youth who are at-risk of arrest to appropriate school and community-based services and supports
SBDI Core Components

Professional Development
• Training and Workgroups

Referral and Service Coordination
• Mobile Crisis Intervention Services
• Systems of Care

Discipline Policy Consultation
• Graduated Response Model
• Restorative Practices

Implementation Guided by SBDI Toolkit
Professional Development

Goal: Enhance knowledge, attitudes, and skills among school staff to support arrest diversion principles and practices

Training and Workgroup Modules include:

- Crisis De-escalation and Effective Classroom Behavior Management
- Understanding Adolescent Development and Recognizing Child Trauma
- Effective Collaborations with EMPS Mobile Crisis and Care Coordination
- Multicultural Competence in the Schools and DMC
- Understanding and Partnering with the Juvenile Justice System and Local Law Enforcement
- Engaging Parents of Youth with Mental Health Needs
- Promoting School Climate and Connectedness
- Incorporating Restorative Practices

Engage Statewide Learning Community
Referral and Service Coordination

**Goal:** Reduce burden placed on schools to address mental health concerns

**Community coalition-building**

- Family members and students
- Family Advocates
- Youth Service Bureaus
- Juvenile Review Boards
- EMPS Mobile Crisis Intervention Services
- Care Coordination
- Pediatric primary care providers/SBHCs
- Local police departments/SROs
- Juvenile Probation Officers and Courts
- Community Collaboratives (SOC)
- Local Interagency Service Teams (LISTs)
- Disproportionate Minority Contact Committees
EMPS Mobile Crisis Intervention Services

Component of CT’s behavioral health system
• Funded and managed by DCF
• Available FREE to all CT children

Access: Dial 2-1-1
• Phone support 24/7, 365
• Mobile hours M-F 6am-10pm;
• Weekends/holidays 1pm-10pm

Rapid response to behavioral crises
• 90%+ mobility rate
• On site in 45 min. or less

Crisis stabilization, assessment, brief treatment, linkage to ongoing care
Discipline Policy Consultation

**Goal:** Examine and revise disciplinary policies and practices where needed to support diversion efforts

- Convene a workgroup, ideally building off an existing in-school team to develop a Graduated Response Model
- Include *restorative practices* in disciplinary approach to build community and provide alternatives to exclusionary practices
  - Training and implementation support for Circle Process and Restorative Conferencing
Law Enforcement Engagement

- A school-police Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) addresses behavioral incidents through strategies that encourage and support diversion from the juvenile justice system without compromising school safety.
- Partnership to provide Crisis Intervention Training for Youth (CIT-Y)
- Disproportionate Minority Contact Committees (DMC)
## Graduated Response Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAMPLE</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
<td>Classroom Intervention</td>
<td>Excessive talking;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>School policy violation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
<td>School Administration Intervention</td>
<td>Disruptive behavior; Verbal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>student conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
<td>Assessment and Service Provision</td>
<td>Inappropriate behavior; Insubordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4</strong></td>
<td>Law Enforcement Intervention</td>
<td>Weapons violation; Drug possession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Sample Diversion Algorithm

Behavioral Incident

Assess immediate threat of harm to self or others

- Yes
  - Law Enforcement
    - Call ambulance
  - Police
    - Stabilize Situation
  - Refer for MH/SA Screening
    - Yes
      - Behavioral Health treatment referral
      - Graduated Response
      - Restorative Practices
    - No
      - Graduated Response
      - Restorative Practice
- No
  - Crisis Response Team Call
  - CRT Stabilize Situation
  - Track data and outcomes
Data Informed Decision-Making

School and community-level baseline and outcome indicators

• Rates of arrest
• Disciplinary referrals and outcomes
• Student characteristics
• Community-based service referrals

Data tracking helps identify patterns, highlight improvements, address challenges, and plan for sustainability
Data Informed Decision-Making

Identify schools with the highest number of arrests, suspensions, and expulsions

- Need, Interest, Capacity
- Identify rates of arrest per 1000 students

Review arrest data for disproportionality

- Demographic characteristics
- Types of incidents or charges (BOP, Assault 3rd, DC, Threat)

Assess rates of change over time
Participating Schools

Bridgeport Public Schools
Luis Muñoz Marin School
Curiale School
Harding High School

Consolidated School District of New Britain
New Britain High School

CT. Technical High School System
A. J. Prince Technical High School (Hartford)
Eli Whitney Technical High School (Hamden)
H. C. Wilcox Technical High School (Middletown)
Platt Technical High School (Middletown)

East Hartford Public Schools
East Hartford High School
East Hartford Middle School

Hartford Public Schools
Academy of Engineering and Green Technology at Hartford Public High School
Culinary Arts Academy at Weaver High School
Sarah J. Rawson School

Manchester Public Schools
Illing Middle School
Manchester High School

Meriden Public Schools
Maloney High School

Orville H. Platt High School Venture Academy
New Haven Public Schools
New Horizons School
Augusta Lewis Troup School
Wilbur Cross High School

Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School
Southington Public Schools
Kennedy Middle School
Joseph A. DePaolo Middle School

Stamford Public Schools
Coonan Middle School
Westhill High School

Waterbury Public Schools
Crocker High School
Enlightenment School
Kennedy High School
North End Middle School
Wallace Middle School
West Side Middle School
Wilby High School

West Haven Public Schools
West Haven High School
Bailey Middle School
Carrigan Middle School

Windham Public Schools
Windham High School
Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative

Referrals to Behavioral Health Service

UP 94%

School-Based Court Referrals

DOWN 45%

Among the first cohort of 18 schools completing SBDI (2010-2015), court referrals decreased by 45% and EMPS referrals increased by 94% in their first year of participation.

The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative is helping transform school discipline and improve student outcomes. Instead of arresting and suspending children with behavior problems, SBDI schools are connecting them to community-based behavioral health services.

Learn more at:
www.ctsbdi.org
www.chdi.org/sbdi

Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative
Core Components of a Basic Diversion Model

- School-Community-Family Workgroup
- Professional Development
- School Discipline Policy Consultation
- Crisis Response Team (could be school-based or community-based like EMPS)
- Behavioral Health Screening (administered by school personnel ideally)
- Access to Behavioral Health Services (school and community-based)
- Restorative Practices
- Data Collection and Evaluation
SBDI Resources

Available for free download [http://www.chdi.org/SchoolToolkit](http://www.chdi.org/SchoolToolkit)
Additional resources available at [http://www.ctsbdi.org](http://www.ctsbdi.org) and [http://www.chdi.org](http://www.chdi.org)
Contact Us

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