



Making connections. Informing solutions.

March 2nd, 2026

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Zoom

TCB School Based Workgroup March Meeting Agenda

- 1. TCB Monthly Administrative Updates**
 - a. Workgroup Updates
 - b. TCB Monthly Meeting Updates
 - c. School Based Shared Resources Folder
 - d. Legislative Updates
- 2. School Based Subgroups/ Workgroup Structure for 2026**
- 3. Breakout Rooms**
 - a. School Medicaid Billing
 - b. Infographic Feedback and Community Engagement



Tow Youth
Justice
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Making connections. Informing solutions.

School-Based Workgroup

March 2nd , 2026

Administrative Updates

TCB Monthly Meetings

TCB Meetings are hybrid and held monthly in the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and on Zoom. All meetings are recorded and streamed on the TYJI YouTube Channel and through the Connecticut News Network (CTN)

Meeting Materials are posted on the [TCB's Connecticut General Assembly \(CGA\)](#) website prior to the Monthly meeting

February TCB Meeting: The February TCB meeting was held on **February 11th, from 2:00-4:00 PM** at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) with a Zoom option.

The TCB held the second half of the CVW Summit on the morning of the TCB meeting, convening Committee members, CVW participants, and individuals with lived experience to strengthen communication and shared understanding. The February meeting included a recap of the event, as well as the committee voted on recommendations regarding disordered eating and PRTF infrastructure for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

The next TCB meeting will be held on **March 4th, 2026, from 2:00-4:00 PM** at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) with a Zoom option. This meeting will focus on Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFS).

Legislative Recommendations for 2026

At the December TCB Meeting, two recommendations were presented to the committee: the Draft Cross-Agency Data Sharing Workgroup Recommendation and the Draft UCC PIC Recommendation. Additionally, the CWSCEO presented recommendations regarding disordered eating to be considered. After meeting with the TCB leadership and Tri-chairs, the following recommendations have been included in the 2026 Recommendations in Brief.

All recommendations were passed at the February TCB meeting.

Recommendations Passed:

- **Draft TCB Data Sharing Workgroup Recommendation** (policy recommendation)
- **Disordered Eating Behavior Recommendation** (legislative recommendations)
- **Psychiatric Residential Inpatient Treatment Facilities (PRTFS) Infrastructure for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Recommendation** (legislative recommendations).

Please find TCB's 2026 Recommendations in Brief and Justification Report here: [TCB 2026 Recommendations in Brief & Justification Reports](#)

Workgroup Upcoming Meeting Dates

Workgroup:	Meeting Date:
System Infrastructure	March 17 th , 2026 2:00 – 3:30 PM (ZOOM)
School Based	April 6 th , 2026 3:00 – 4:30 PM (ZOOM)
Prevention	March 19 th , 2026 3:00 – 4:30 PM (ZOOM)
Services	March 11 th , 2026 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM (ZOOM)

School Based Network Resources Folder

My files > TCB School Based Materials

Name	Modified	Modified By	File size	Sharing
April Meeting Materials	April 30	Bohmbach, Emily	7 items	Shared
July Meeting Materials	July 03	Bohmbach, Emily	3 items	Shared
June Meeting Materials	May 28	Bohmbach, Emily	3 items	Shared
May Meeting Materials	April 30	Bohmbach, Emily	4 items	Shared
Meeting Recordings	May 06	Bohmbach, Emily	1 item	Shared
Membership List (living document)	April 30	Bohmbach, Emily	1 item	Shared
Network Resources & Resources Shared in	June 11	Bohmbach, Emily	1 item	Shared
TCB 2025-2028 Strategic Plan	April 30	Bohmbach, Emily	1 item	Shared

Have a resource to share next month?

Contact Any of Us:

Emily ebohmbach@newhaven.edu

Katerina katerina.vlahos@unitedwaycwc.org

Elizabeth elizabeth.connors@yale.edu

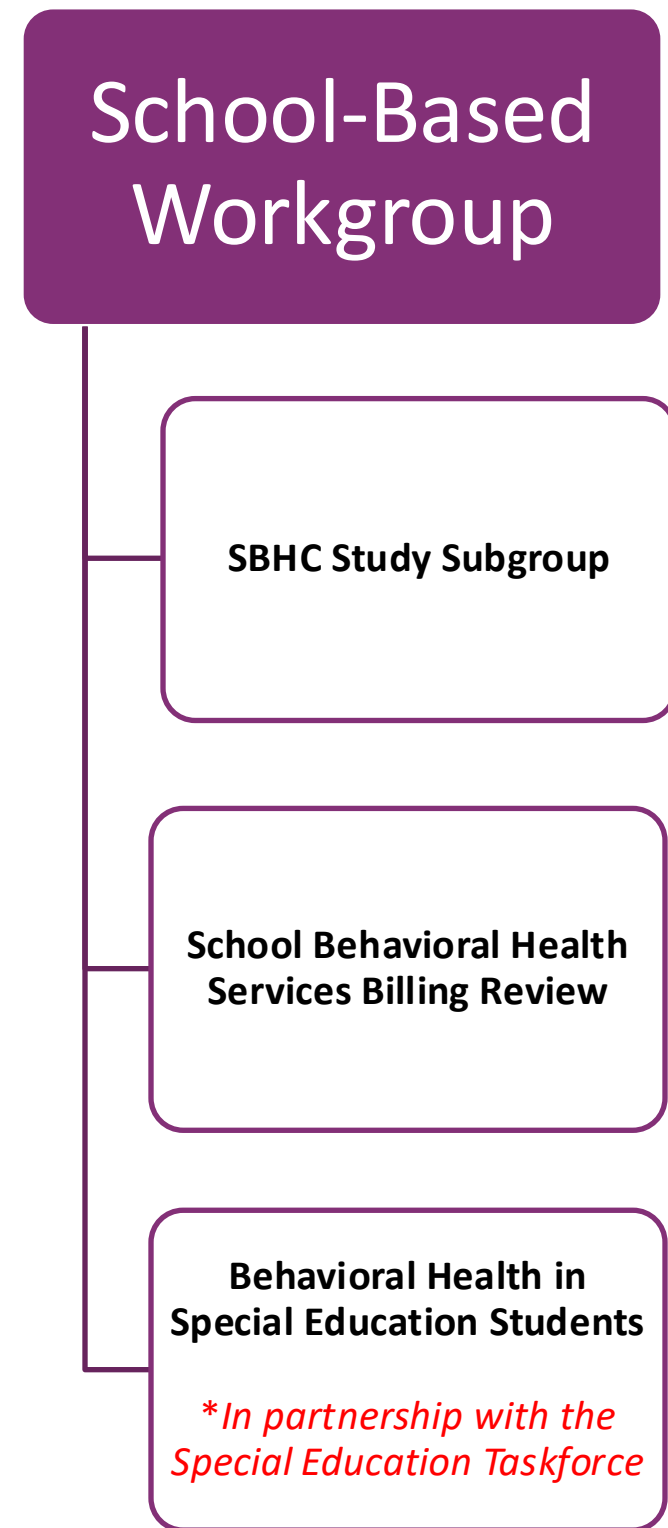
School Based Workgroup Studies

The TCB School-Based Workgroup has/will establish three subgroups to lead the studies outlined in both the TCB Legislative Recommendations and the legislation enacted during the 2025 session. These subgroups will begin having working meetings during the current School Based Workgroup Meetings. Following administrative updates, the workgroup will break out into breakout rooms to work on the three legislated reports.

Subgroups:

- School Behavioral Health Services Billing Review
- Behavioral Health in Special Education Students
- School Based Health Center (SBHC) Study

If you know of anyone interested in joining a subgroup, please use the email templates within the onedrive: [School Based Membership Email Templates](#)



School Behavioral Health Medicaid Billing

DRAFT Intent of the Workgroup/ Background Information: The TCB School Based Billing Review Subgroup will lead the efforts of the School Behavioral Health Services Billing Review that was passed in 2025 legislative session. This would require the TCB to collaborate with CSDE and DSS to develop a framework and operational guidelines to streamline municipal Medicaid billing for Medicaid-eligible school-based behavioral health services. The subgroup will work in collaboration with CSDE, DSS, OHS, and other identified individuals needed to complete the review. This subgroup will sunset upon completion of its goals.

Membership: [School Based Studies- Membership List](#)

Study:	Researcher/Agency Involved:	Scope of Report:	Status of Report
School Behavioral Health Billing	Department of Social Services (DSS), CT State Department of Education (CSDE)	Requires the Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee to develop a framework and operational guidelines to streamline municipal Medicaid billing for Medicaid-eligible school-based behavioral health services The bill requires the Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee, in collaboration with the education and social services departments and by September 1, 2026, to develop a framework and operational guidelines to streamline municipal Medicaid billing for Medicaid-eligible school-based behavioral health services. The committee must report, by October 1, 2026, on the framework and guidelines it develops to the Appropriations, Education, and Human Services committees.	<p>Due Date: October 1st, 2026</p> <p>In February, the School Based Workgroup Chairs met with CSDE, DSS, Superintendents, and School Districts to discuss the legislation and obtain additional resources related to the intent of the bill.</p> <p>Please refer to the School Billing folder to find a meeting summary and informational resources: School Billing Subgroup</p>

Behavioral Health – Special Education

DRAFT Intent of subgroup/ background information: The Behavioral Health Issues in Special Education Subgroup will lead the efforts to complete and submit a report to both the Education and Children’s Committees that examines and provides recommendations about behavioral health issues affecting special education students as identified in legislation passed in 2025. This subgroup will sunset upon completion of its goals.

Membership: [School Based Studies- Membership List](#) - For full legislation – please refer to page 18, Section 14 of HB 5001: [2025PA-00067-R00HB-05001-PA \(1\) \(3\).pdf](#)

Study:	Researcher/Agency Involved:	Scope of Report:	Status of Report
Behavioral Health Needs – Special Education Students	Disability Rights Group, CSDE	The TCB will submit a report to Education and Children’s Committees that examines and provides recommendations about behavioral health issues affecting special education students.	<p>Due Date: January 1st, 2027</p> <p>The Group had met in December for the first official meeting of the subgroup. The group will reconvene in April</p> <p>Barriers: The group is awaiting information from members (resources correlated to the legislation).</p>

School Based Health Center (SBHC) Study

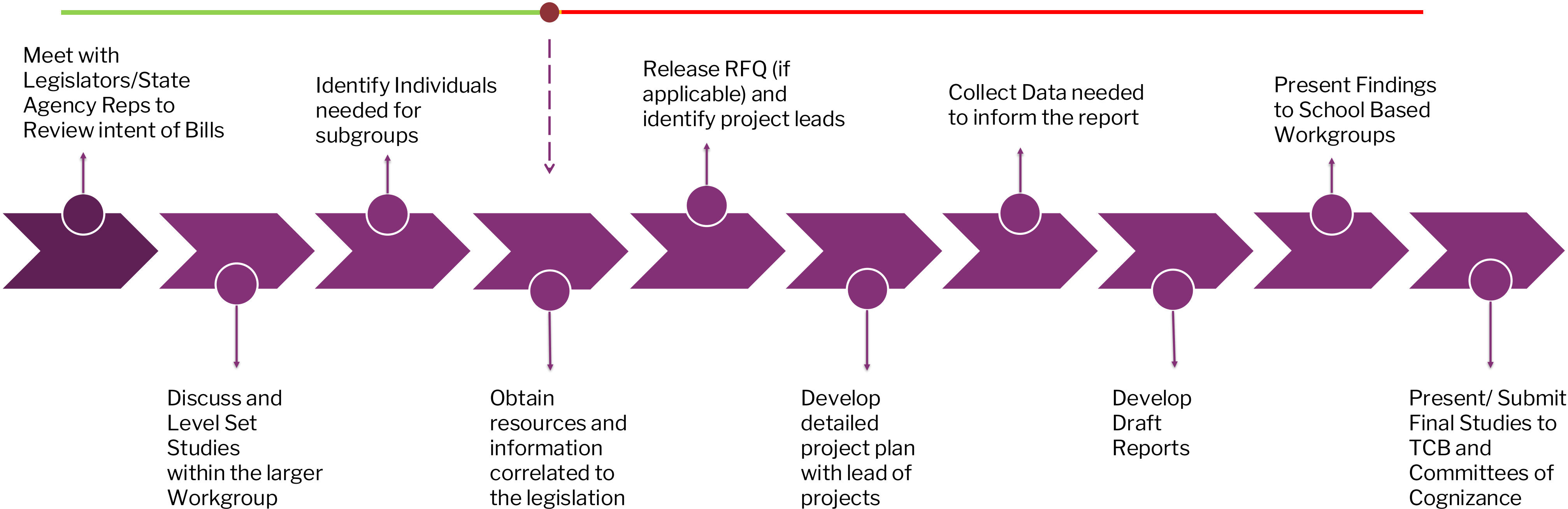
DRAFT Intent of Subgroup/ Background Information: The TCB School Based Health Center (SBHC) Study subgroup will be formed to lead the efforts of the School Based Health Center study that TCB included in their 2025 recommendations in brief. This subgroup will sunset upon completion of its goals.

Membership: [School Based Studies- Membership List](#)

Study:	Researcher/Agency Involved:	Scope of Report:	Status of Report
School Based Health Center Survey	In collaboration with the State-wide Association of School Based Health Centers and Department of Public Health (DPH)	In collaboration with the state-wide association of school-based health centers, develop a survey for administration at such centers that is designed to obtain information concerning existing data collection practices and the anticipated challenges and opportunities presented by the implementation of more comprehensive data collection systems at such centers. Also, in collaboration with the Commissioner of Public Health, develop appropriate reporting requirements for school-based health centers to determine and respond to the needs of school-based health centers.	<p>Due January 1st, 2027</p> <p>TYJI, & the School Based Workgroup chairs met with DPH to discuss next steps regarding the scope of the study and met with the National School Based Health Alliance in early February.</p>

School Based Studies Timeline

Progress:



Comprehensive School Mental Health Infographic

Purpose:

Provide education and clear, inclusive language:

- Map the array of school based behavioral health professionals and models of service
- Create an infographic or other resources to communicate who school-based mental health professionals are in terms of discipline, training, role, employer type, and funding sources
- Compile, discuss and share initial definitions important for active participation, clear communication within the workgroup and future glossary
- Develop and maintain a glossary of terms related to school based behavioral health to promote diverse engagement in the efforts of the workgroup among stakeholders with an array of personal and professional backgrounds and expertise

Progress:



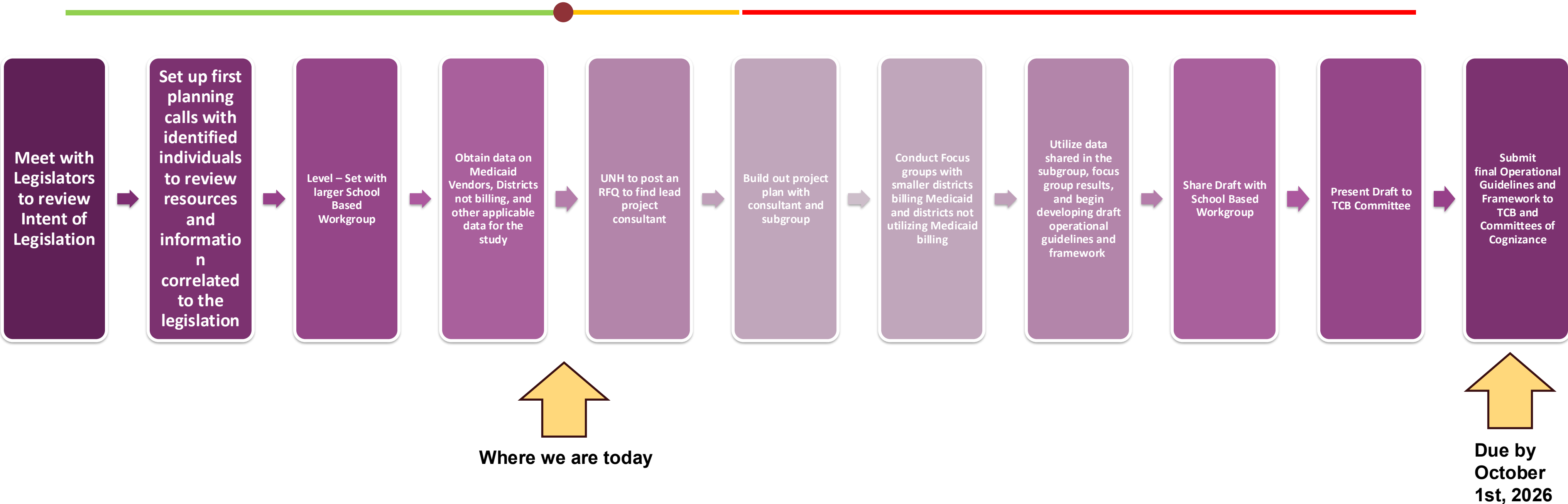
March Meeting Breakout Rooms:

Emily will launch breakout rooms; please pick the room you would like to go to. There will be two breakout rooms today.

- Room 1: School Medicaid Billing
- Room 2: Comprehensive School Mental Health Infographic

School Billing Timeline

Progress:



School-Based Workgroup
March 2nd, 2026
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM
Zoom

TCB March School-Based Workgroup Summary

Attendees:

Katerina Vlahos	Edith Boyle	Nikka Olofson	Femia M.
Lena Esposito	Drew Lavalley	Melanie Wilde-Lane	Kristina Jensen
Kris Robles	Valorie Bruneau	LaToya Hinton	Stephanie Bozak
Elizabeth Connors	Lisa Morrissey	Krista Pender	Brittany Guinan
Miriam Miller	Rebekah Behan	Christine Velasquez	Jennifer Nadeau
Bryan Klimkiewicz	Matt Hoppler	Ellen Brezovsky	Jessica Chan
Sadie Witherspoon	Sone-Moyano Sinthia	Steven Rioux	Kate Bohannan
Tara Viens	Cori Beckwith	Maureen Brummett	Gent Daniels
Emuna Patterson	Chevaugn Wellington		

TYJI Staff:

Emily Bohmbach
Erika Nowakowski
Stacey Olea

Meeting Objectives:

❖ Administrative Updates

- Workgroup Updates
- TCB Monthly Meeting Updates
- Legislative Updates

❖ School Based Subgroups/ Workgroup Structure for 2026

❖ Breakout Rooms

- School Medicaid Billing
- Infographic Feedback and Community Engagement

Meeting Summary:

1. Administrative Updates:

- a. The TCB Senior Project Manager provided detailed administrative updates, beginning with a recap of the February TCB meeting, which included reflection on the Community Voices Workgroup Summit and the approval of several legislative recommendations. These included recommendations regarding the psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) infrastructure for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD/DD), disordered eating behaviors, and the establishment of a cross-agency data sharing workgroup, which will be incorporated into the TCB work plan. Members were informed that additional information, including bill numbers and public hearing details, will be shared once available to support tracking and engagement. TCB Staff also outlined upcoming workgroup meetings and structural updates, noting a shift toward more active working sessions through breakout groups.

2. School-Based Subgroups / Workgroup Structure for 2026

- a. The speaker outlined upcoming workgroup meetings and structural updates, emphasizing a shift toward more active working sessions through breakout groups embedded within regular meetings. These breakout sessions are intended to move beyond general discussion and allow members to focus on advancing the three key legislative studies assigned to the workgroup: school-based behavioral health billing, behavioral health and special education, the Comprehensive School Mental Health Infographic, and the school-based health center study.
 - i. Members were reminded that outreach tools, including email templates, are available to support recruitment of additional participants with relevant expertise.
 - ii. The workgroup went through the timelines of the studies, going into detail of what's to come. For the school-based behavioral health billing study, the subgroup has already met with representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Department of Social Services (DSS), and school district leaders to better understand current billing practices and challenges; supporting materials from those discussions have been compiled and shared. For the behavioral health and special education study, initial discussions have taken place, and the group is awaiting additional information before reconvening, with plans to resume work in the coming months. For the school-based health center study, the group has met with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and national partners, including the National School-Based Health Alliance, and is now working to further define the study scope. Members were also informed that consultants or designated leads are being explored, such as issuing an RFQ for the billing study. An update was also for the Comprehensive School Mental Health in Connecticut Infographic, which remains a key short-term deliverable focused on creating a family- and

student-facing resource to improve understanding and navigation of school-based mental health supports. The infographic is intended to clearly communicate available services, define key terms, and help families understand how to access support and what questions to ask. The project has undergone multiple drafts and rounds of feedback from both workgroup members and community partners. The current fourth draft is being refined with a focus on simplifying language, improving readability, and enhancing clarity for a broad audience. Upcoming steps include gathering targeted feedback from families and community stakeholders, translating the material into multiple languages, ensuring ADA accessibility, and preparing for dissemination in the next school year. The update concluded with appreciation for staff contributions and instructions for members to join breakout sessions aligned with their selected focus areas.

3. Breakout Rooms

a. School Medicaid Billing

- i. During the school billing breakout discussion, members highlighted significant challenges related to implementing Medicaid billing in school settings, particularly around limited staffing capacity, administrative burden, and low return on investment, especially for smaller districts where staffing is minimal and resources are constrained. Even larger districts noted similar barriers, emphasizing that available staff are often prioritized for direct student services rather than billing functions. Additional challenges included the cost and complexity of infrastructure, such as electronic health record systems, supervision requirements for clinicians, and ongoing documentation and compliance processes. Participants also raised concerns about inefficient reimbursement structures, including delayed payments, funds reverting to municipalities rather than school districts, and extremely low reimbursement rates for services like case management, which limit feasibility and sustainability.
 1. The discussion also explored potential solutions and promising practices, including partnerships with community-based organizations and federally qualified health centers, which can provide the necessary infrastructure and billing capacity, though these models also face challenges such as lost revenue due to student absenteeism and difficulties with engagement. Participants noted that third-party billing vendors can reduce administrative burden by managing billing processes in exchange for a percentage or flat fee, offering a more feasible option for some districts. There was also interest in regional or shared service models to support smaller districts, as well as opportunities to expand billing to include broader services, such as care coordination or early intervention supports, beyond special education populations. Overall, members emphasized the need for a deeper cost analysis, improved reimbursement structures, and more streamlined systems

to make school-based Medicaid billing more accessible, efficient, and beneficial for districts and students.

b. Infographic Feedback and Community Engagement

i. During the breakout discussions, members provided detailed feedback on the school mental health infographic, emphasizing the need to simplify language, reducing text, and maintaining a clear, high-level focus to improve accessibility for families. While the infographic was viewed as visually engaging and informative, participants noted that the content, particularly on the first page, remains too dense and at times redundant, and should more clearly communicate its purpose upfront. There was strong consensus to narrow the audience to parents and caregivers, rather than trying to simultaneously target students, and to potentially develop a separate, youth-focused resource that emphasizes destigmatization and direct pathways to help. Members also recommended refining how supports are presented across tiers, keeping language broad (e.g., “individualized support plans”) to avoid confusion around special education processes, and ensuring clarity around what services schools provide versus how they connect families to external supports.

1. A major area of discussion focused on resource navigation, with participants cautioning against overwhelming families with too many options. Instead, the group recommended a streamlined approach that prioritizes key crisis and access points such as, 211, 988, urgent crisis centers, while also guiding families to trusted local entry points such as school staff, pediatricians, or community organizations. Feedback highlighted the importance of avoiding resources that do not provide direct support or clear navigation, and ensuring families are not directed to “dead ends.” Additionally, members suggested including clearer guidance on when to seek help (preventative vs. crisis) and how to recognize signs of mental health needs, while removing less relevant content such as detailed funding explanations. Overall, the group emphasized creating a clear, practical, and easy-to-use tool that helps families understand school-based mental health support and confidently take next steps to access care.

The next Workgroup meeting is on **April 6th, 2026 from 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM on Zoom.**

Mental Health at School: A Guide for Connecticut Families



What is mental health?

Mental health is how we think, feel, act, and handle life.

Good mental health...

Helps us handle stress, learn and grow, do our best, and help others.

It is important to remember...

Mental health is for everyone and it is a basic human right.

Everyone has mental health, and it is normal to have hard times. Mental health challenges can make learning harder for youth at school, but with support, they can feel better and do well.



Why is mental health at school important?

In the United States, many youth and families get mental health support at school. Schools are an important place for youth and families to find help.



Feeling safe and supported helps students learn and do well in school. But today, our youth are feeling more stress than ever. It take schools, families, and community supports working together to support student mental health.

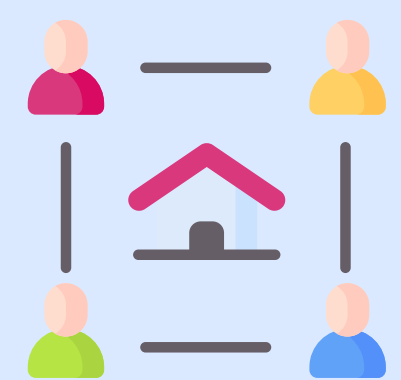
Who works together to support students?

- Schools
- Families
- Communities



Where can families access support?

- At school
- In their community



About This Guide

This guide helps families understand what school mental health supports are, what may be available at their school, and what questions to ask to access and navigate them.

Comprehensive School Mental Health Layers of Support

Comprehensive school mental health means that schools, families, and community professionals work together to support students' mental health.

Support at school is offered in layers. All students should get a foundational layer of support to build their skills and strengths. Some students may need an extra layer of help at times to prevent more serious mental health problems. Schools can also provide and connect students and families to counseling or treatment.



Provide & Connect

Provide and connect students and families with mental health counseling or treatment services.

Prevent

Prevent mental health and substance use challenges by providing extra support early on.

Promote

Promote mental health and wellbeing for all students by teaching social and emotional skills.

At your school, these layers might look like:

Promote

- Health class
- Social Emotional Learning
- Mental health awareness activities
- School climate initiatives
- School staff wellbeing

Prevent

- Small groups to build social skills, resilience, and positive coping
- Peer-to-peer mentoring
- Brief or as-needed counseling

Provide & Connect

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) weekly counseling for students in special education
- Therapy for students in general education with a mental health need

The Road to School Mental Health: Questions You Can Ask

START

Student wellness and success starts with a positive school climate and culture.

Layer 1: Promote



How can I learn what my school offers to everyone?

- School website, social media, principal newsletter

What questions could I ask to learn more?

- How does our school support all students' social, emotional and behavioral skills and general wellbeing?

Layer 2: Prevent



What questions could I ask if my student might need extra support?

- Who is the school social worker or counselor?
- What does their teacher(s) think about whether they might benefit from another layer of support?
- What resources and services are available at school, or in our community, for free or low cost with our insurance?

Layer 3: Provide & Connect



Who provides Layer 3 supports for my student?

- Community mental health therapist
- School-based health center
- School counselor or social worker(s)
- School psychologist

This is different at every school - ask your school counselor.



What follow up questions could I ask?

- Does my student receive any special education support? If yes, is it appropriate for my child to receive counseling services through their IEP?
- Does our school refer to or work with a local community mental health organization? Are those services available at school or outside of school?

SUCCESS

Students and families receive the right kind of support, when needed.

How Families Can Access School Mental Health

Who Funds School Mental Health?

Most school mental health services are free for students and families.

They are supported by funding from the following partners:

✓ School District Budgets

- Cover the costs of most school-employed mental health professional salaries, like school counselors, psychologists and social workers. Voted on annually by town/city residents.

✓ Insurance Companies

- Schools and community partners can bill insurance to cover some services.
- Families who are insured can also search for community-based providers covered by their insurance, as additional support outside the school.

✓ CT State Agencies

- Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
- Department of Children and Families (DCF)
- Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Office of Early Childhood (OEC)
- Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

✓ Federal, State, and Foundational Grants

- School districts, community partners, and/or state agencies can apply for and receive grant funds for select initiatives and services at all layers.

Common School Mental Health Terms

When schools, families, and community mental health partners work together, students receive the right supports at the right time to learn and thrive. To strengthen this partnership, it is important for students and families to understand the language used by school systems. Here are some common terms you may hear in school mental health:

Accommodations	Supports and services that the student may require to successfully demonstrate learning. Accommodations should not change expectations to the curriculum grade levels. Examples include access to the counseling center, alternate testing location to minimize anxiety, extra time for assignments or tests, the use of e-books, or alternative assessment formats.
Behavioral Supports	Supports the social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health of students, including prevention and intervention strategies to address barriers to learning. School employed professionals such as school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers provide direct services to individual students and families as well as classes and schools as a whole. In addition, partnership with community providers is important in the coordination of counseling, psychological, and social services.

School Mental Health Terms (Continued)

<p>Early Intervention Supports</p>	<p>Services and supports for students in grades K-12 who have not been identified as needing Layer 3 special education or related services but who need some extra academic and/or behavioral support to succeed in the general education setting.</p>
<p>Individualized Education Program (IEP)</p>	<p>A written education plan for a student with a disability that is developed by the Planning and Placement Team (“PPT”), which includes the student’s parents and professionals (administrators, teachers, therapists, etc.). The individualized goals and objectives in a student’s plan are reviewed and updated at least yearly. They describe the student’s present performance, what the student’s learning needs are, what services the student will need, when and for how long, and identifies who will provide the services.</p>
<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>A state of emotional and psychological wellbeing in which students can use their cognitive and emotional skills, take part in learning, and handle everyday school demands, supported by trauma sensitive school approaches that recognize how experiences impact wellbeing.</p>
<p>School Climate and Culture</p>	<p>The overall feeling and relationships within the school community. It reflects how people treat one another, how safe and supported everyone feels, and the shared values and goals that guide learning and growth. A <i>positive</i> school climate and culture promotes a safe and caring environment that supports students’ social and emotional development, helps them build trusting relationships, and encourages active engagement in learning.</p>
<p>Special Education</p>	<p>Specially designed instruction to meet a student’s unique needs and to enable the student to access the general curriculum of the school district. A student who is eligible for special education services is entitled by federal law to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE ensures that all students with disabilities receive an appropriate public education at no cost to the family. FAPE differs from student to student because each has unique needs. As a parent of a student who has or who may have a disability that requires specially designed instruction, you will work with a team of educators and, as appropriate, specialists to determine the needs of your child and to design an appropriate program to address your child’s educational needs.</p>
<p>504 Plan</p>	<p>A federal civil rights statute that protects the rights of persons with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, which includes public schools. 504 plans provide individual accommodations for student learning needs and are reviewed annually and require documentation from a medical provider (pediatrician, outpatient therapist, etc.).</p>

These definitions were adapted from the following resources. Visit them to learn more:

[A Parent’s Guide to Special Education in Connecticut](#)
[Connecticut School Climate Guidance](#)

[Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee 2025-2028 Strategic Plan](#)
[Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Domains and Definitions](#)

Student and Family Resources in Connecticut

To Get Help Right Away

2-1-1 of Connecticut

Call 211

<https://211ct.org/>

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988

<https://988lifeline.org/>

CT Urgent Crisis Centers

<https://portal.ct.gov/dcf/behavioral-health-partnership/home/urgent-crisis-centers-for-children>

To Learn More and Get Support

Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA)

Hartford Office

2074 Park Street

Hartford, CT 06106

860-570-5327

Website: <https://cca-ct.org/>

Connecticut Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Partnership

Family Resources

<https://ctwholechild.collaboration.uconn.edu/resource-page/?audience=families>

Connecting to Care CT

1-877-381-4193

Option 5

<https://www.connectingtocarect.org/>

Assisted Intervention Matching (AIM):

<https://www.connectingtocarect.org/supports-services/aim/>

Kids Mental Health Info

School Mental Health

<https://kidsmentalhealthinfo.com/key-topics/school-mental-health/>

FAVOR, Inc.

185 Silas Deane Highway

Wethersfield, CT 06109-1219

860-563-3232

<https://www.favor-ct.org/>

National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)

1-800-950-6264

Text "NAMI" to 62640

<https://www.nami.org/>

State Education Resource Center (SERC)

100 Roscommon Drive

Middletown, CT 06457

860-632-1485

<http://www.ctserc.org>

To Find Statewide Programs and Services

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)

450 Columbus Boulevard

Hartford, CT 06103

860-713-6543

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde>

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

505 Hudson Street

Hartford, CT 06106

860-550-6300

<https://portal.ct.gov/dcf>

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

410 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06134

860-418-7000

<https://portal.ct.gov/dmhas/>

Department of Public Health (DPH)

410 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06134

860-509-8000

<https://portal.ct.gov/dph>

Comprehensive School Mental Health Infographic Feedback
March 2, 2026 Workgroup Meeting – Breakout Working Session

Breakout Session Objective:

Discuss feedback received on School Mental Health Infographic Draft 3 and edits to be made for Draft 4, prior to community feedback.

Document Strengths

Workgroup members thought that the infographic was:

- Visually appealing (e.g., graphics and layout are engaging)
- Easy to read
- Included helpful resources

Document Revisions

To improve the infographic further, workgroup members suggested:

Location	Feedback	Suggested Edits from Workgroup
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify language and reduce text • Focus on readability • Prioritize what we want to communicate 	<p>Keep it high level – what are the types of supports schools may have (subsequent infographics can be on special education navigation and other specific topics) Point out where people can get additional information</p> <p>Be clearer up front on the overall goals (not tier 2/3 specific but rather about student mental health and wellness, and what schools may offer, what questions to ask if you're unsure what your school offers) Examples: Your child's mental health impacts their ability to access their education All students have mental health All students should have access to a positive school climate and social emotional learning supports that is taught in their regular classrooms or through assemblies Some students many need more support This document provides questions you can ask</p> <p><i>Update: These edits will be made prior to March 2nd for continued feedback</i></p>

<p>Layers (pages 1-2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Layers of Mental Health Support” title – keep or revise? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Individual Education Plan in and of itself is not a mental health support. It is a legal, educational document</i> • Refine page 1 layer examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Individual counseling is not tier 2, an IEP is not Tier 3 and we should be very careful on how we are supporting information for SWD – discuss rewording in March</i> ○ <i>restorative practices is a multi-tiered approach, not just layer 1 - done</i> ○ <i>PBIS is a framework not a layer - done</i> ○ <i>A survey is not a support, although data is very important to this process and topic - done</i> ○ <i>Remove "lunch bunches" from the example, and just say - small groups to build social skills - done</i> 	<p>Recommendation to remove special education completely from this</p> <p>There is not an exceptionality for mental health in an IEP Ok to keep in 504 Plan Keep special education and mental health separate CSMHS includes general and special education. <u>Discuss further in March</u></p>
<p>Page 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layer 3 rephrased and edits to the special education information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Rephrase the first follow up question b/c I hope a family would know if their child received sp. ed. already (e.g., "My child is in Special Education. Is it appropriate for my child to receive counseling services through their IEP?")</i> ○ <i>Page 2: Does my student receive any special education support? Perhaps add "or 504? What about SRBI RTI, tiered support for learning should</i> 	<p><u>Discuss more appropriate Tier 3 follow up questions in March workgroup</u></p>

	<i>something be added (albeit more academic)? perhaps under school terms.</i>	
Page 2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on how families can access their local and/or district specific resources 	Document should provide general overview and directions to access local resources should be inclusive for districts statewide <u>Ask workgroup in March how to do this</u>
Page 2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding legislative information so families know their rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Adding legislative requirements to this map so families understand their rights</i> 	This seems out of scope for the focus of the document
Page 2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe more supports within special education system and how to navigate them, family rights 	Exclude for the scope of this document? CSMHS includes general and special education. <u>Discuss further in March</u>
Page 2?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include questions to ask or actions to take to access resources 	High level overview, with access to more resources that point families in the right direction to access local supports Keep layers to ensure this stays in the document
Funding (page 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should we include Page 3 section “Who Funds School Mental Health?” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Question of whether families need to know this and if yes, how much do they need to know? ○ Clarify purpose of funding sources and most important information 	<u>Discuss further in March</u>
Common School Mental Health Terms (pages 4-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should this be a separate document? • Refer to the terms throughout the document and make it an appendix • Identification or evaluation of student needs in special education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Should a comment be added under terms about child find that schools must</i> 	Discussion of separate documents and the current infographic is a landing page/starting point for families <u>Discuss further in March</u>

	<p><i>identify, locate, and evaluate any kids who need special education?</i></p>	
<p>Resources (page 5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more resources (<i>see below</i>) • Add a brief description of page 5 resources (<i>e.g., their purpose and who they serve</i>) • Include information on what families can look for, how to know if their child needs support, how to advocate for their child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>[Families] would benefit with information about, for example, how to recognize if child is exhibiting mental health challenges so that they know how to access resources. What steps should they follow?—the document mentions “how to navigate school mental health” and if I were a parent with no knowledge of how the system works, I would be confused by what is mentioned there. Also important- how to advocate for their child; clarification that mental healthiness is a continuum; clarify role of parent and school personnel in their child’s mental journey -- again probably for future iterations of this guide</i> • Should we include citations on pages 1-3? (<i>e.g., comprehensive school mental health definition, why does school mental health matter content</i>) 	<p><i>Discuss further in March – and see section below</i></p>

Additional Resources to Include Discuss further in March

Workgroup members suggested the following resources to include:

Resource	Decision (Y/N)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT Parent Advocacy Center, Inc. (www.cpacinc.org) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ CT's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center (email: cpac@cpacinc.org or call (860) 739-3089) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids in Crisis 24/7 Helpline (serves the state of CT https://www.kidsin crisis.org/get-help/24-hour-helpline/ call 203-661-1911) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online resource page, organization, or entity that directs families to local or regional resources 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct phone numbers for each of the four UCCs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Legal Fund (www.spedlegalfund.org) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAMHSA Back to School Toolkit (https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/back-to-school) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Mental Health Toolkit – Resources for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers (https://studentmentalhealthtoolkit.com/parent-resources/) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide – Behavioral Health Toolkit (https://sptsusa.org/behavioral-health-toolkit/) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SERC – <i>does not provide support for students or families</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State agency website homepages – <i>State agency websites typically do not provide information for families on statewide programs and services. If that information is on a particular website, it may be difficult for families to navigate there from the homepage.</i> 	



Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee (TCB) School Based Workgroup and Subgroup – Membership Email Template

Workgroup Co Chairs: Dr. Elizabeth Connors & Katerina Vlahos

**Please CC Emily Bohmbach, Senior Project Manager on Communications at ebohmbach@newhaven.edu*

TCB School Based Workgroup Template – Request to Join	<p>Hello (<i>insert name</i>),</p> <p>I hope this email finds you and your communities well. I’m reaching out as a member of the Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee’s (TCB) School Based Workgroup to see if you would be willing to join us?</p> <p>The TCB, established in PA 23-90, exists to strengthen and align Connecticut’s system of care by acting as a vehicle for legislative recommendations and strategic reforms to promote children’s behavioral health and well-being through increasing access to services and a sustainable continuum of care.</p> <p>In 2025, the TCB Enacted the School Based Workgroup, which is co-chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Connors and Katerina Vlahos. The purpose of the workgroup is to promote mental health, well-being, and academic success for children birth to age 22 by increasing the reach and quality of school-based behavioral health services.</p> <p>I believe this workgroup would benefit from your perspective as a (<i>insert role</i>).</p> <p>This workgroup currently meets on the first Monday of the month from 3:00-4:30PM via Zoom. Please refer to the 2026 School Based Workgroup Meeting Schedule for upcoming meeting dates.</p>
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	<p>To join the workgroup, or to inquire about any additional information regarding the workgroup or the TCB, please reach out to the TCB Senior Project Manager, Emily Bohmbach at ebohmbach@newhaven.edu.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>
<p>TCB School Billing Subgroup Template – Request to Join</p>	<p>Hello (<i>insert name</i>),</p> <p>I hope this email finds you and your communities well. I’m reaching out as a member of the Transforming Children’s Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee’s (TCB) School Based Workgroup to see if you would be willing to join a special subgroup we have?</p> <p>The TCB, established in PA 23-90, exists to strengthen and align Connecticut’s system of care by acting as a vehicle for legislative recommendations and strategic reforms to promote children’s behavioral health and well-being through increasing access to services and a sustainable continuum of care.</p> <p>In 2025, the TCB Enacted the School Based Workgroup, which is co-chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Connors and Katerina Vlahos. The purpose of the workgroup is to promote mental health, well-being, and academic success for children birth to age 22 by increasing the reach and quality of school-based behavioral health services.</p> <p>Within the School Based Workgroup, there are subgroups on legislation tasked to us. I am reaching out about your interest in joining the School Medicaid Billing Subgroup, which is tasked with leading the efforts passed in House Bill 7287, Section 369.</p> <p>I believe this subgroup would benefit from your perspective as a (<i>insert role</i>).</p> <p>Together, we can ensure that our approach reflects the needs of students and schools across the state. On this email, I have cc’d Emily Bohmbach, Senior Project Manager of the TCB Tow Youth</p>



	<p>Justice Institute. Emily serves as the Project Manager for this initiative and is working closely with the School-Based Workgroup to support its progress.</p> <p>She will reach out with next steps and details regarding the School Medicaid Billing Subgroup.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting the well-being of our students.</p>
<p>Behavioral Health Concerns in Special Ed Students Template-Request to Join</p>	<p>Hello (<i>insert name</i>),</p> <p>I hope this email finds you and your communities well. I'm reaching out as a member of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee's (TCB) School Based Workgroup to see if you would be willing to join us a special subgroup we have?</p> <p>The TCB, established in PA 23-90, exists to strengthen and align Connecticut's system of care by acting as a vehicle for legislative recommendations and strategic reforms to promote children's behavioral health and well-being through increasing access to services and a sustainable continuum of care.</p> <p>In 2025, the TCB Enacted the School Based Workgroup, which is co-chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Connors and Katerina Vlahos. The purpose of the workgroup is to promote mental health, well-being, and academic success for children birth to age 22 by increasing the reach and quality of school-based behavioral health services.</p> <p>Within the School Based Workgroup, there are subgroups to lead specific legislation tasked to us. I am reaching out about the Behavioral Health Concerns in Special Education Students Subgroup, which is tasked with leading the efforts passed in House Bill 5001, Section 14.</p> <p>I believe this subgroup would benefit from your perspective as a (<i>insert role</i>).</p> <p>Together, we can ensure that our approach reflects the needs of students and schools across the state. On this email, I have cc'd Emily Bohmbach, Senior Project Manager of the TCB Tow Youth</p>



	<p>Justice Institute. Emily serves as the Project Manager for this initiative and is working closely with the School-Based Workgroup to support its progress.</p> <p>She will reach out with next steps and details about the Subgroup.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting the well-being of our students.</p>
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