



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHRONIC DISEASE DIRECTORS**
Promoting Health. Preventing Disease.



Spotlight on Success

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Through the National Initiative to Advance Health in K-12 Education by Preventing Chronic Disease and Promoting Healthy Behaviors project, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors is proud to share the state-level school health successes of our members and partners.



Cross-Agency Leadership for Student Health and Well-Being

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is working to build student wellness systems by creating cross-agency partnerships that align guidance, training, and support across education, health, and mental health sectors. Knowing that no one agency can meet the needs of students alone, DESE has partnered with the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to create shared infrastructure and school-based mental health teams across the state. With DHSS and DMH, DESE formed the Inter-Agency School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) Training Team, which provides statewide training grounded in national frameworks like the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model and the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System. This partnership means educators and school health professionals get coordinated, high-quality support in areas such as:

- Team building and role clarity
- Needs assessment and resource mapping
- Tiered systems of mental health supports
- Sustainable funding and implementation

By offering this training in a virtual format, DESE and its partners have opened up access to schools across Missouri, so staff can build stronger systems of support no matter the size or setting.

To bridge state-level strategy with local implementation, DESE supported a Whole Student Wellness Pilot Cohort, where school nurses led wellness teams with school counselors and social workers. Teams participated in:

- A statewide in-person kickoff session hosted by DESE, DHSS, and DMH
- A mental health learning series on school-based challenges
- Structured team building activities to deepen cross-role collaboration



Pilot teams reported increased role clarity, stronger internal coordination, and a deeper understanding of how to connect students to the right supports at the right time.

DESE also convened the School-Based Mental Health Professionals Collaborative, which brought together representatives from key professional associations: school nurses (MASN), counselors (MSCA), psychologists (MASP), social workers (SSWAM). Together, this group is:

- Developed Missouri-specific school mental health framework
- Clarified core responsibilities and collaboration practices
- Ensured professional guidance reflects national best practices and local context

This alignment helps districts understand how each support role contributes to student wellness and enables better teaming at the school level.

DESE and its partners tested this approach with two cohorts of districts and will scale up based on results. By showing what cross-agency teaming looks like, and providing the tools and support to back it up, Missouri is building statewide school-based systems for student mental health and wellness.

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Looking for resources to help your school community with teaming practices?
Visit <https://chronicdisease.org/cahc/school-health/success/>