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Resilience Supportive Schools Illinois: Connecting School Nurses with School-Specific Data and Resources to Build Student Wellness and Resilience

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“Kasserian Inger”

“And how are the children?”

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- Student proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) has made noticeable gains. Students in grades 3-8 achieved a proficiency rate of 41.2%, the highest since 2019 (Advance Illinois, 2024).

- Highest graduation rate for Illinois’ high school students in 14 years at 87.7%,

- Illinois has consistently improved its ranking in addressing youth mental health in the four years that REACH has been implemented (Mental Health America, 2024)

“And how are the children?”

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- 42% of 9th-12th grade Illinoisans reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for >=2 weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities, ever during the 12 months before the YRBS survey (CDC, 2021)

- Nearly 40% of Illinois youth who experienced major depressive episodes were unable to access necessary care (Mental Health America, 2024)

Remember this.....

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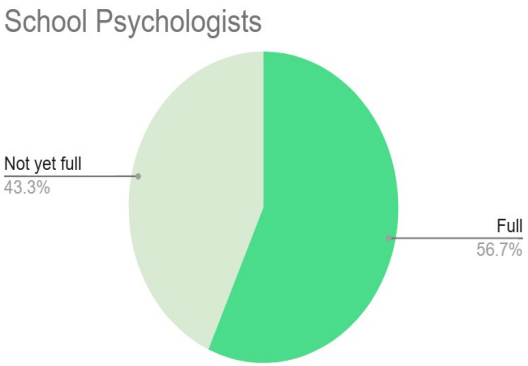
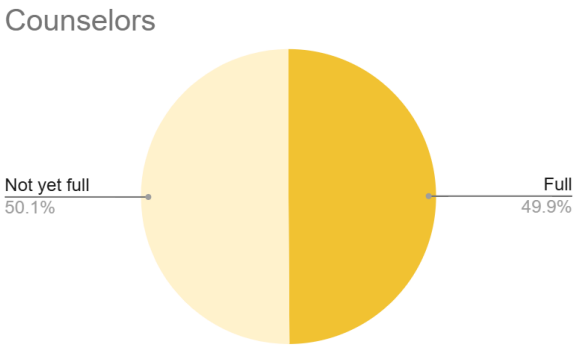
- Can't mental health our way out of this
- Not every child requires mental health treatment
- Every child needs a caring relationship and environment and socio-emotional skill development

In Illinois

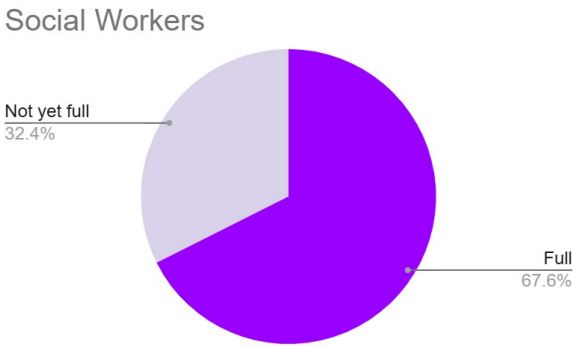
School Psychologists



School Counselors



School Social Workers



(Inseparable.us, 2025)

What is Resilience?

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Resilience is a child's ability to bounce back from challenges and stressful situations, manage emotions, adapt to change, and keep moving forward

Resilient children possess….

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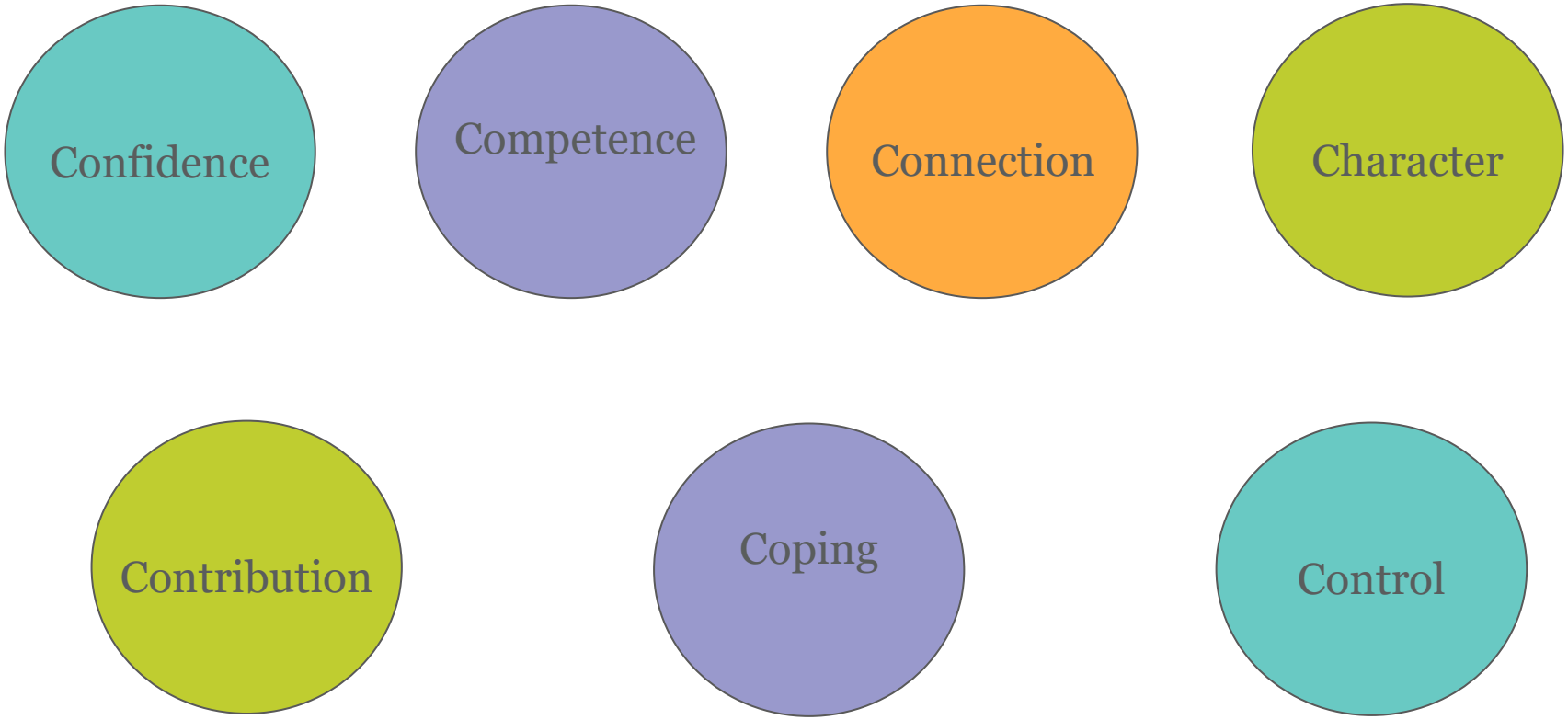

American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006

School Nurses are .....

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- In a unique position to provide direct care and build connections with students.
- Among the first school staff to identify potential mental health concerns.
- Well positioned to collect and manage health data, which can include information related to attendance and social determinants of health to help build a complete picture of the student's health needs and inform referrals.
- Key to prevention, early identification, interventions, and referral for students with mental health concerns.
- In need more support to continue serving in these critical roles.

"We had a student whose teacher was concerned about their behavior and mental health. After an initial assessment, I gathered the school's mental health team, connected with the student's parents, and helped the student access crisis support services. On their last day as a senior, the student came into my office and shared a heartfelt thank you for listening to them that day two years ago."
– Gloria E. Barrera, a school nurse in Illinois

Resiliency Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH)

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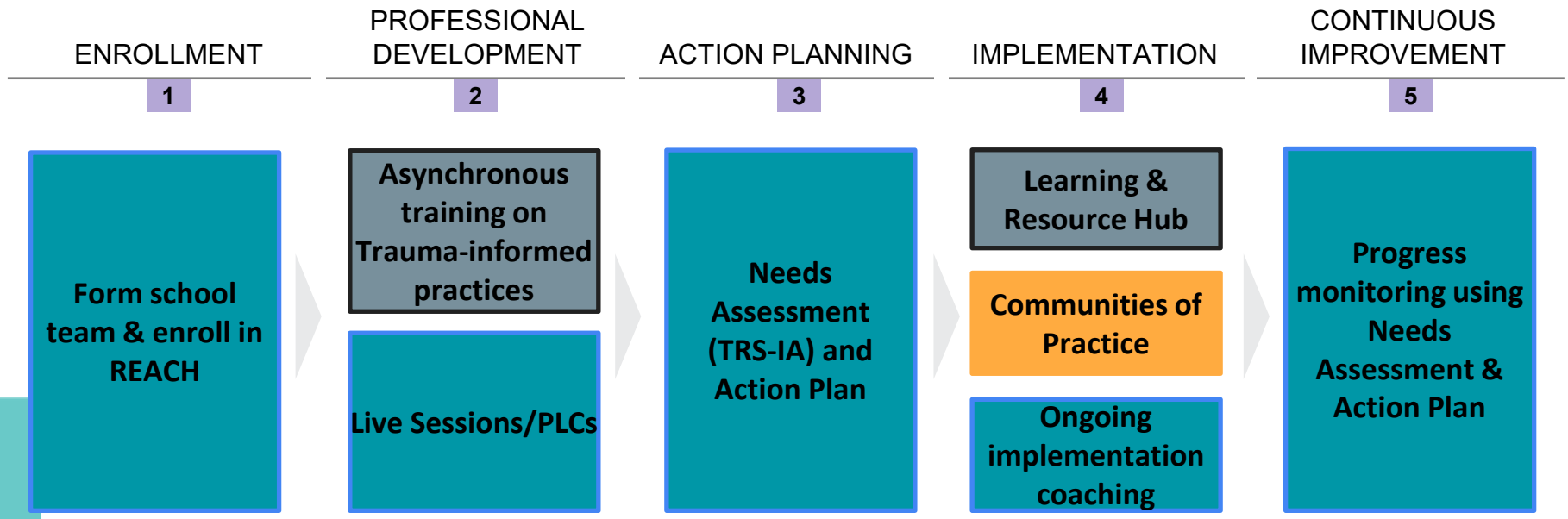


Legend – format for program delivery

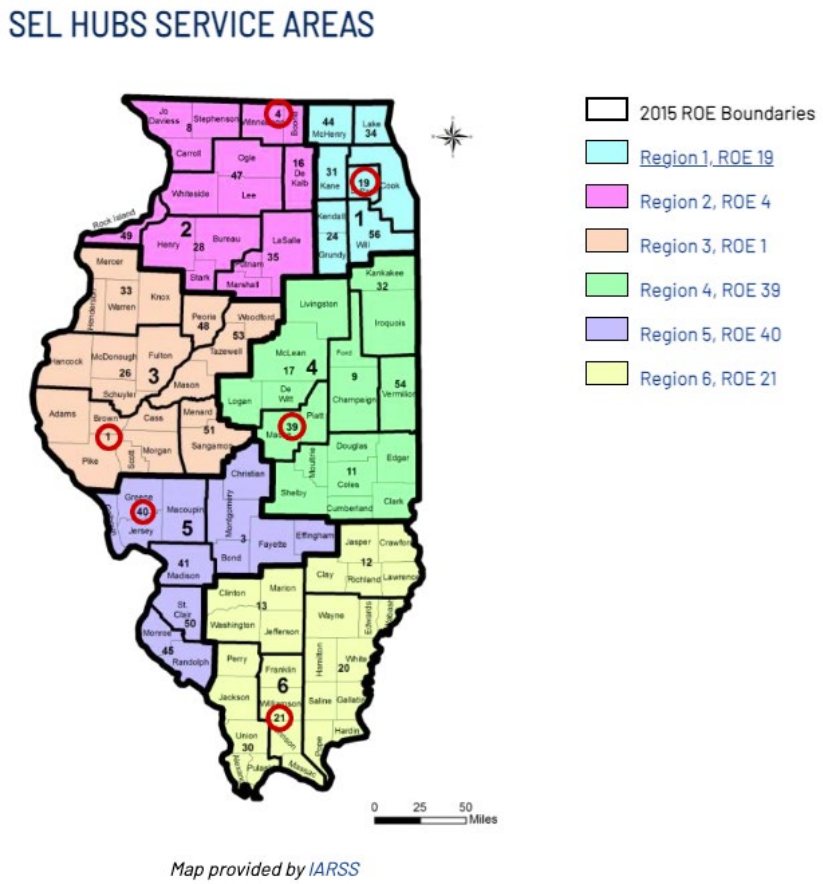
Directly facilitated by Regional Offices of Engagement

Online community, resources, and training

Live & hybrid communities of practice

Note: Professional development topics include Intro to Trauma, Trauma, Racism & Equity; TRS-IA; Action Planning
TRS-IA stands for Trauma-Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment

Recruitment- Partnership with SEL Hubs



Map provided by IARSS

Seven Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hubs are housed within six Regional Offices of Education across the state and Chicago Public Schools.

SEL Hubs are providing professional development, training, and support to districts in their region to establish and expand SEL programs in Illinois schools.

They are assisting school-community leadership teams to implement data-driven strategies to address student trauma and mental health needs and build resilient communities.

REACH in Illinois

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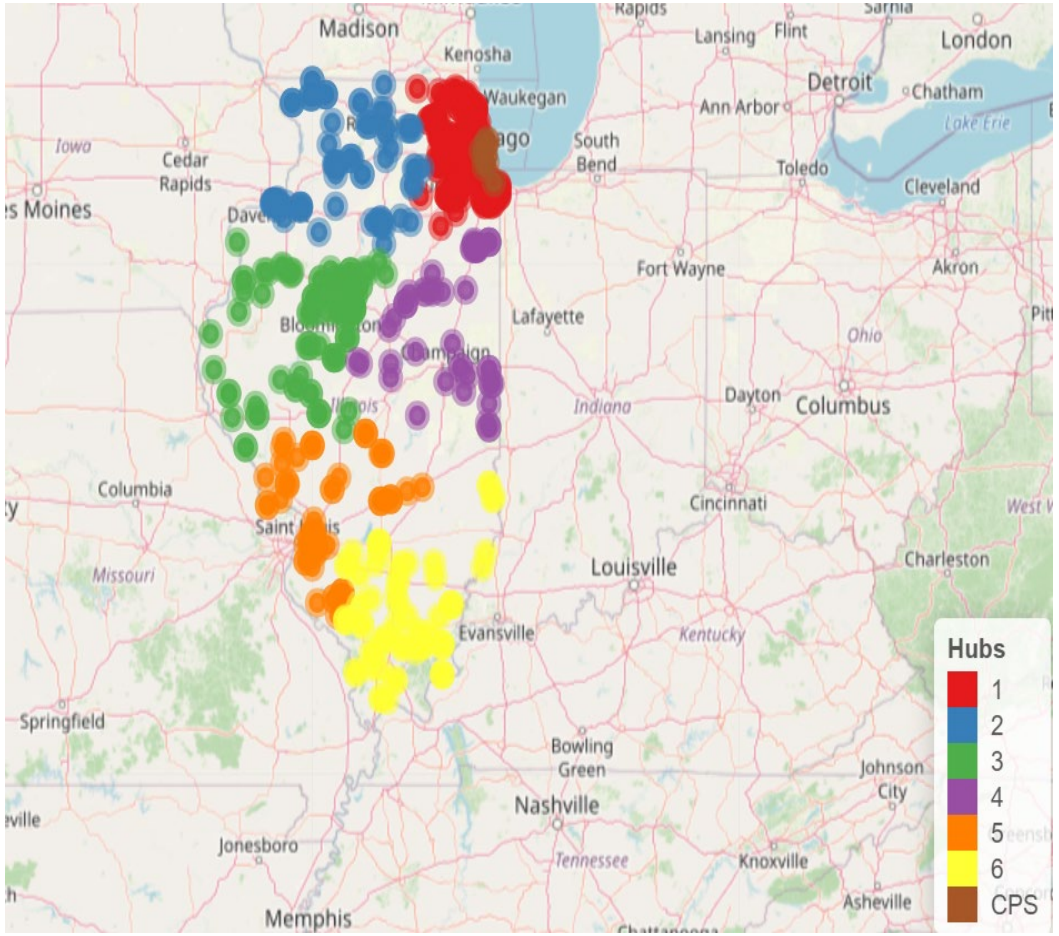
963
Schools



School REACH **Team Membership**

Importance of including different voices:

- School Administrator
- Teacher
- School-Based Mental Health Professional/Counselor
- Parent/Caregiver
- Community partner/After School provider

Essential Roles:

- School Lead
- Parent/Caregiver & Community Partner

Diversity:

- Gender
- Race
- Background
- Years of Experience
- Roles

Current Courses

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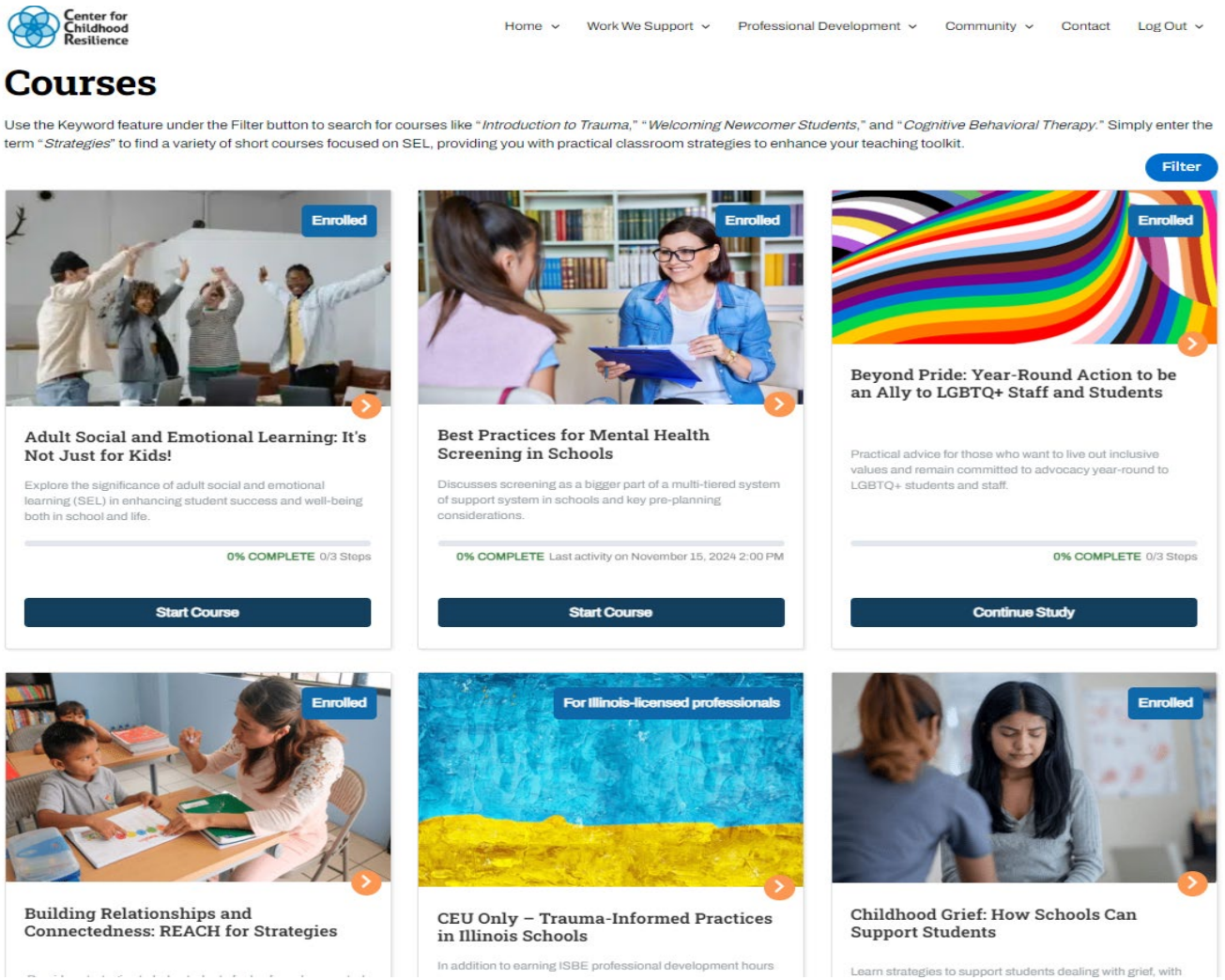
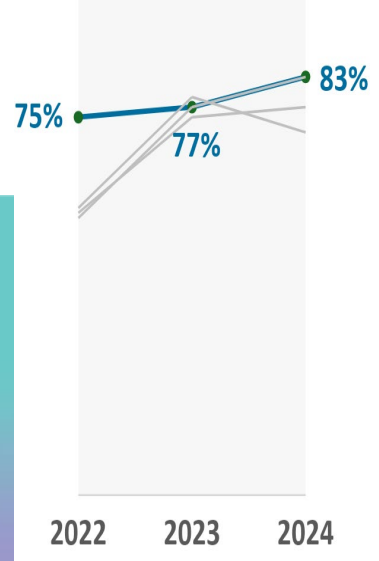
44 Courses



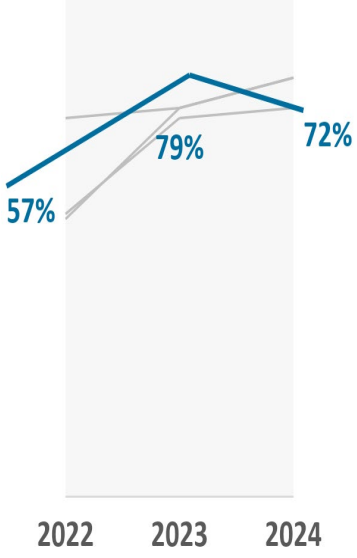
REACH Team Survey Findings

There was an increase over time in the percentage of survey respondents who agreed that:

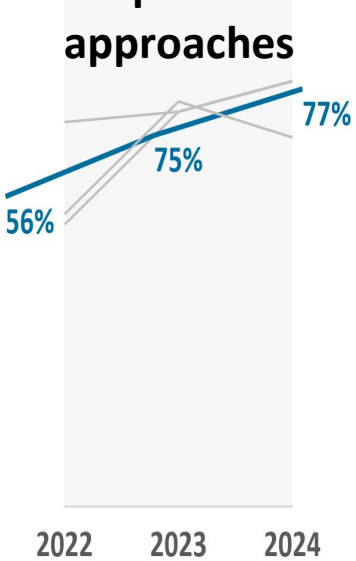
Schools were supported in doing the TRS-IA, found it valuable



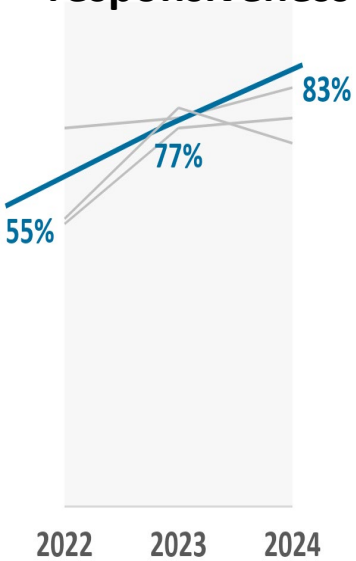
REACH reduces staff stress, improves students' readiness to learn



Teachers understand and are skilled at trauma-responsive approaches

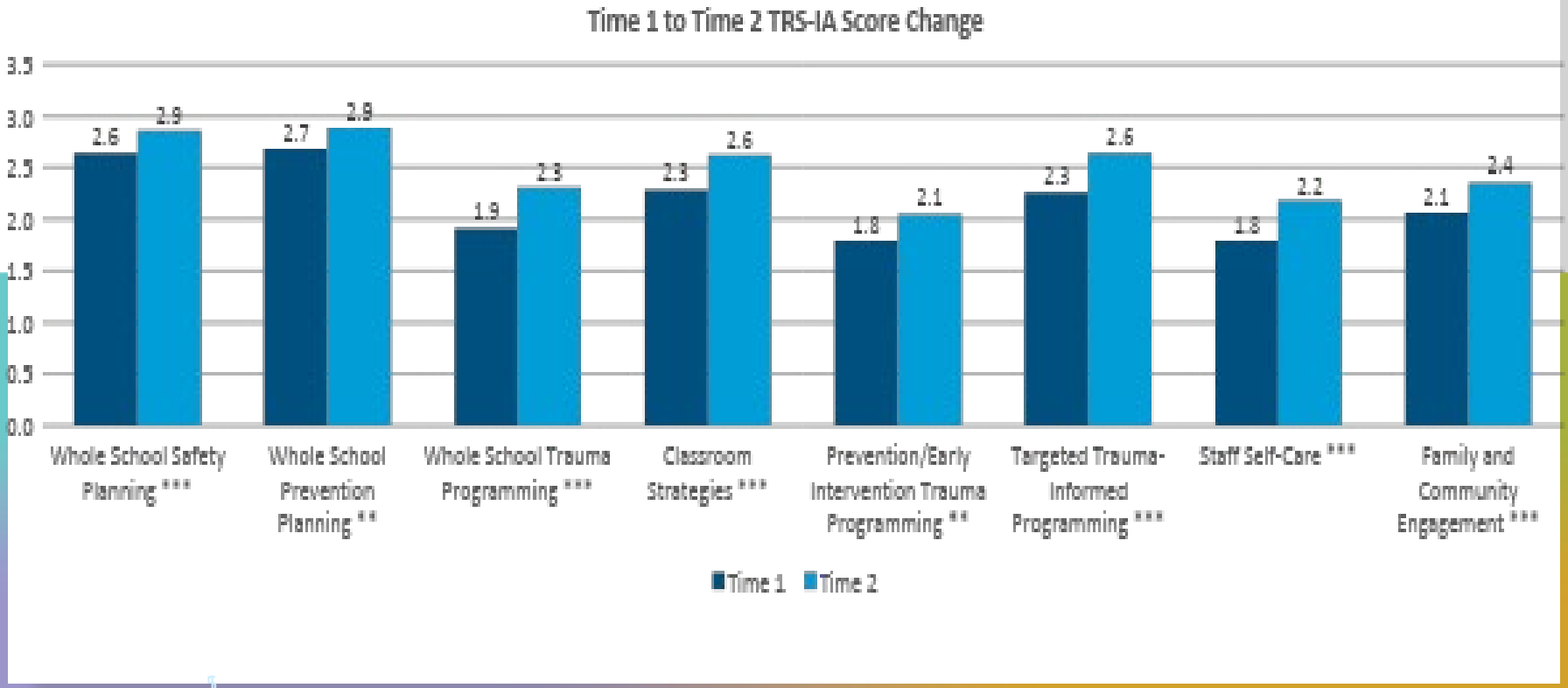


School leaders prioritize trauma responsiveness



Findings: Trauma Responsiveness

Do schools that participate in REACH become more trauma-responsive?



Findings: Teacher and Student Outcomes

Schools that participated in REACH had better **teacher retention** than schools that did not participate in REACH.

Students in "very engaged" REACH schools tended to have slightly lower **out of school suspensions** (< 1%) compared to students in REACH schools that were "not yet engaged"

Students in "engaged" REACH schools tended to have lower **chronic absenteeism** rates (2.1 pp ~ 3 days) compared to students in REACH schools that were "not yet engaged"

Resilience-Supportive Schools Illinois (RSSI)

Self-guided approach using REACH Learning and Resource Hub.

All Illinois schools have access to the Center for Childhood Resilience (CCR) REACH Learning and Resource Hub (RLRH).

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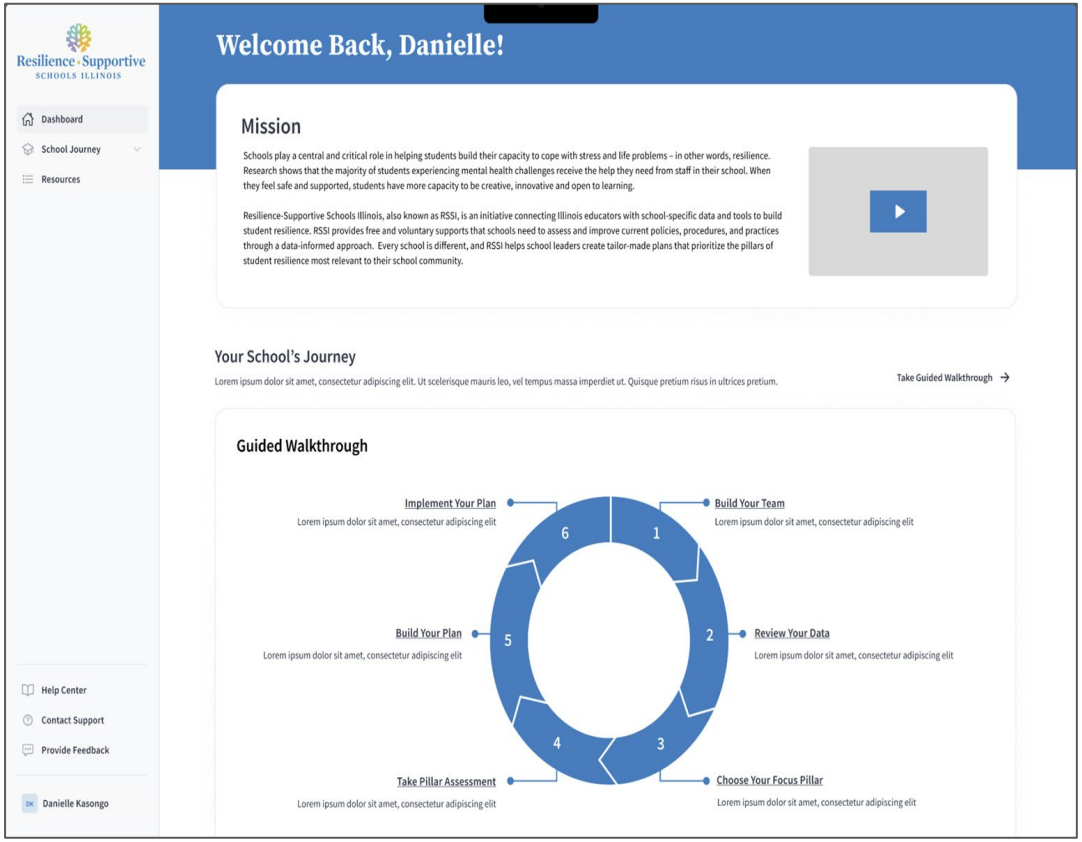
RSSI and the REACH Process

RSSI helps **guide schools through an evidenced-informed process**, even if they don't have support from a coach.

At the same time, RSSI enables schools to **choose their own path** through the key elements of the process - forming a team, choosing a focus pillar, taking an assessment, and building and implementing a plan



Making Connections Series

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- Bridging the gap between Professional Educators and Child Psychiatrists
  - Supporting Students through 504 plans, IEPs, and Accommodations
  - An Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual Disability
  - ADHD and Accommodations
  - Battling School Avoidance

Suicide Screening, Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

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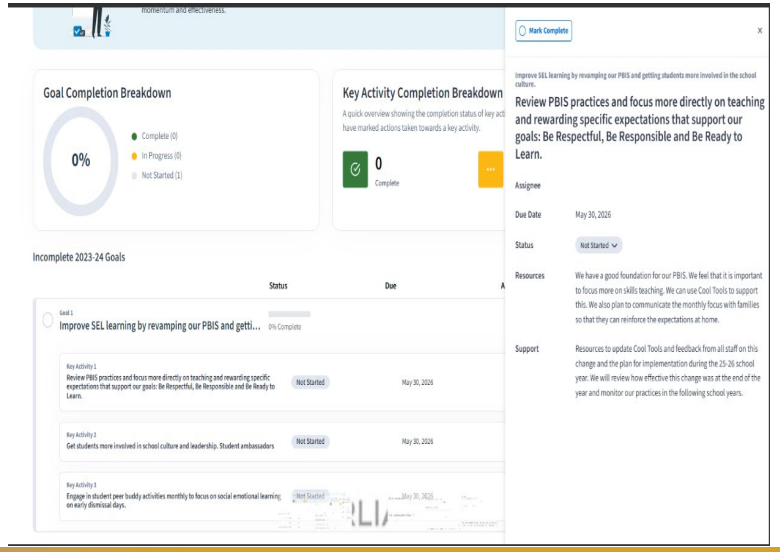
- Screening tools

- Case Simulations on how to detect levels of risk

Case Study: Marquette Elem

- Area 3, District #102
- Introduced to RSSI by SEL Coach
- Team members:
  - principal
  - teachers
  - interventionist
  - special education
  - school social worker
- Required approximately 3 hours
- Appreciated ability to hover over metrics
- Pillar of Choice: SEL
- School-wide assessment tool completion
- Action Plan includes partnership with the Center for Prevention Abuse



Poll

Ways to get Involved in RSSI

If you are an Administrator

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The RSSI screener survey is available in **IWAS**.

1. To access the survey, click on the system listing link in the left -hand navigation bar, then select RSSI screener survey 2025.

1. After you submit your survey, RSSI will notify you when your data snapshot is ready.

1. Once it's available, you can invite other staff members to RSSI to view the snapshot and assist in developing your action plan

If you are not an Administrator

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Check to see if your school has completed a survey.

- If they have, reach out to your administrator and encourage them to invite you to the team
- If they haven't yet, encourage them to complete the survey and invite you to join in.

Take a Course

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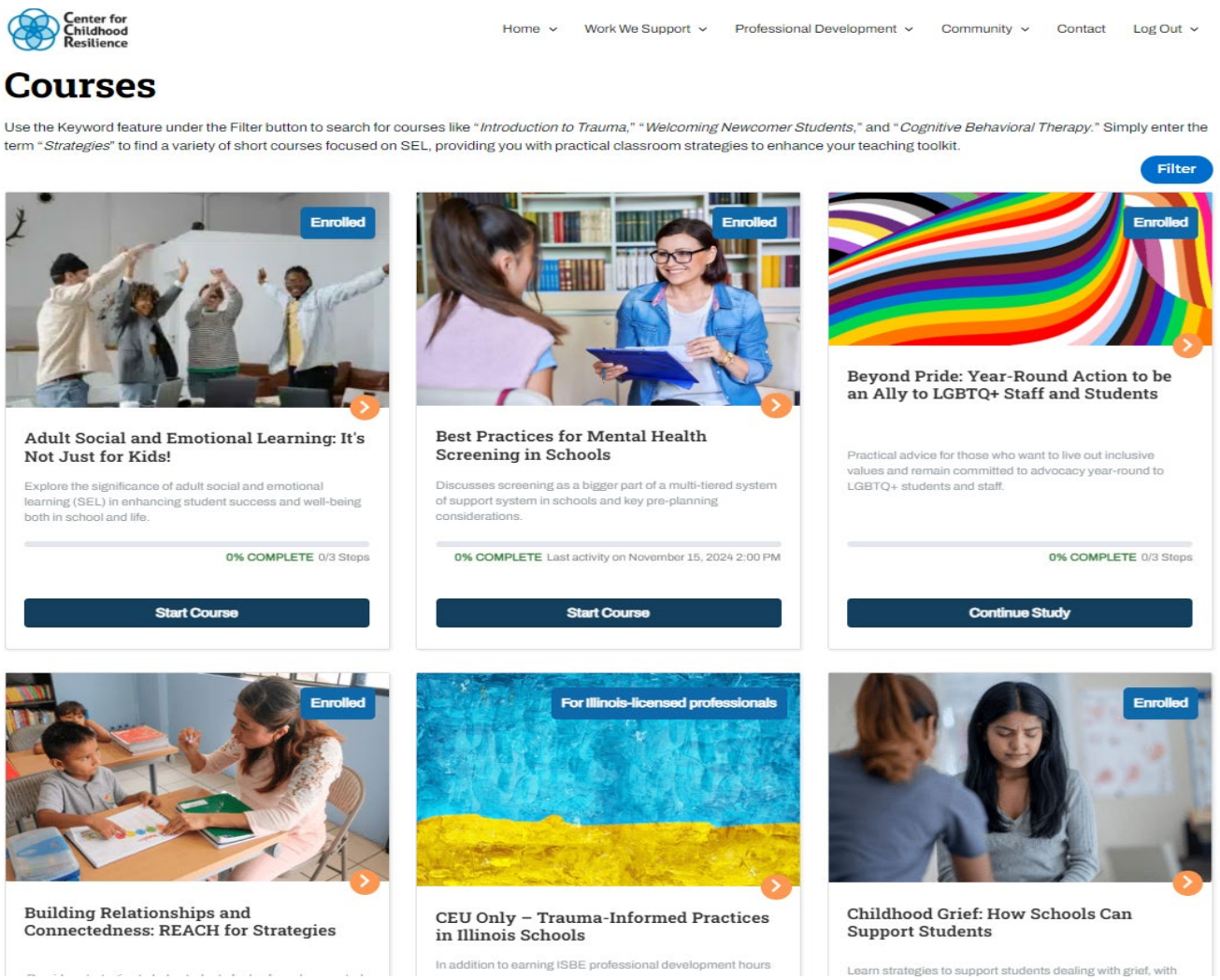
44 Courses



Join your School's REACH/RSSI Team

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- School Administrators
- Security
- Teachers
- Nurses
- Clinicians
- Staff working with Special Ed. students

Universal Screening

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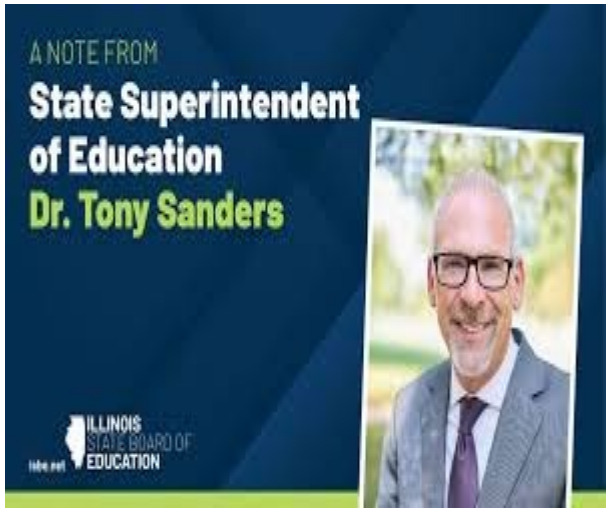
- Screening tool selection
- Outreach/communication
- Training plan
- Partnerships with community-based organizations
- Resource allocation



Q & A

In one word,
what are you leaving with today?

Funding Acknowledgement

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If you have any questions, please contact REACH@luriechildrens.org

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Thank you,
SCHOOL NURSES!

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Feel free to reach out:

massmith@luriechildrens.org