

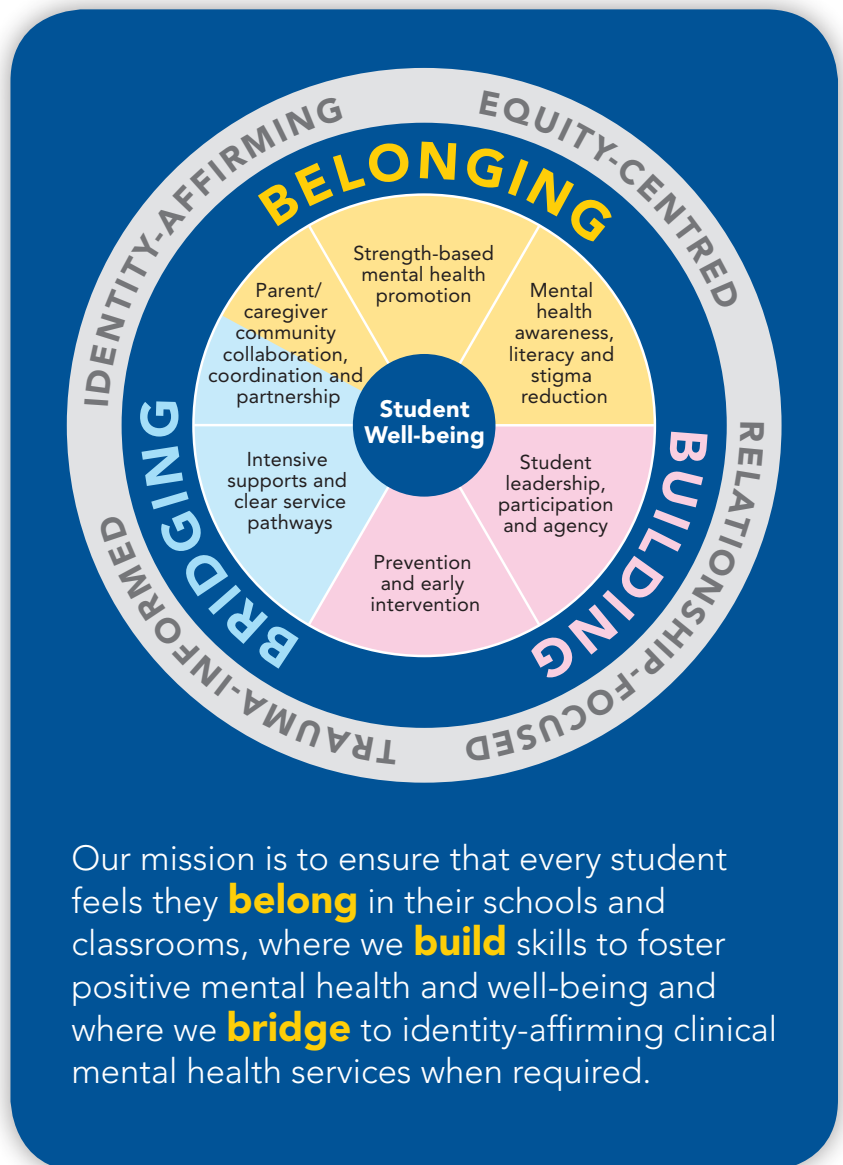


# Annual Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan (2025-2026)

**At the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, we believe that mental health and well-being are fundamental to the success and achievement of each individual learner within the District.**

Schools and classrooms must be places of **inclusion, compassion, connection,** and **belonging** so that all students can thrive. Our 2025-2026 Action Plan ensures staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to nurture school communities where students can safely learn and grow.

The plan outlines six priorities designed to help implement our Mental Health & Well-Being Strategy and is aligned with the Ministry requirements outlined in PPM 169 and School Mental Health Ontario's vision. It was developed collaboratively with staff, families, mental health leadership, equity leads, administrators, community partners and student leaders.



Our mission is to ensure that every student feels they **belong** in their schools and classrooms, where we **build** skills to foster positive mental health and well-being and where we **bridge** to identity-affirming clinical mental health services when required.

# Belonging

**Goal:** To improve **belonging** in our schools and classrooms where every student feels, seen, heard and valued and where mental health is woven into every day conversations and practices.



## Strength-based mental health promotion

### Key Actions

### Anticipated Outcomes

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer accessible and evidence-informed mental health training including SMHO's MH Lit course for guidance counselors, to enhance mental health literacy, strategies, and support protocols and procedures.</li></ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased confidence, understanding and application of mental health knowledge and of protocols and procedures related to mental health for key staff members.</li></ul>                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focused professional development on restorative practices for educators, in partnership with Safe School Department, through enhanced coaching support to deepen the learning and application of strategies at targeted schools.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved capacity to use a shared language through restorative practices in schools to build belonging, deepen educator-student relationships and use conferencing as a means of repairing harm.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with schools, students, and parents/caregivers to develop and deliver best-practice resources and coaching for effective transitions.</li></ul>                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced confidence in transition support and more efficient and effective processes for transitioning students.</li></ul>                                                                                 |



## Mental health literacy and stigma reduction

Key Actions	Anticipated Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Collaborate with Program Services in implementing Grade 6 mental health literacy modules and enhance educator learning. Continue coaching intermediate and Grade 10 Careers staff for effective delivery of the mandatory mental health literacy modules.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased capacity among educators to effectively deliver mental health literacy instruction, leading to improved student understanding of coping strategies, available resources, and fostering a culture of understanding and support.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand community wellness fairs and student lunch and learns (ie sleep hygiene, stress management, etc) to improve mental health awareness and knowledge of the available resources.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An increase in student self-reported awareness of available mental health resources.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Form a cross-departmental working group focused on the integration of Identity Affirming-Social Emotional Learning (IA-SEL) into the classroom.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Documented evidence of collaborative projects or initiatives implemented at the school and classroom level that explicitly integrate IA-SEL into daily activities.</li></ul>



## Parent/caregiver, community collaboration and partnership

Key Actions	Anticipated Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide parent/caregiver presentations through Parent Conference, Speaker Series, and Parent Councils.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased parental engagement and awareness of mental health resources and support strategies.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver AFFIRM, an affirmative CBT-based group, for parents/caregivers of 2SLGBTQ+ students run by identity specific staff twice a year.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stronger support networks for 2SLGBTQ+ students and their families.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Partner with community partners and FACE to learn the needs identified by parents/caregivers to support their children's well-being.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improved understanding of parental needs, leading to more targeted and effective mental health support for students and their families.</li></ul>

# Building

**Goal:** To **build** and strengthen staff, parents/caregivers and students' skills and understanding of emerging or escalating mental health problems while centering on students' strengths and unique abilities.

PRIORITY

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## Student leadership, participation and agency

### Key Actions

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Expand student mental health champions in every high school who work alongside staff champions and other student youth groups to plan mental health initiatives at individual high schools.
- Increased student-led mental health awareness events, campaigns and activities held at high schools throughout the school year.
- Continue to work with new and existing Youth Action Committee (YAC) members and mental health staff to develop materials including videos on caring for your mental health and well-being.
- Provide monthly by youth for youth messages for students champions with youth friendly activities and resources.
- Build a repository of materials created by youth for youth to support student well-being.

PRIORITY

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## Prevention and early intervention

### Key Actions

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Provide training to staff across the District on Prepare, Prevent, Respond, a suicide prevention program and Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST) to identified staff members.
- Increased self-reported confidence among trained staff to notice students contemplating suicide and respond accordingly.
- Enhanced delivery of key evidence-informed group interventions including STRONG (Supporting The Resilience of Newcomer Group), AFFIRM (an affirmative CBT-based group for 2SLGBTQ+ students), Feather Carriers (Indigenous Life Promotion Program), emotion regulation groups, and healthy relationship groups.
- Participants report increased ability to understand and express emotions, increased knowledge of coping strategies, and awareness of community and school resources.



## Intensive supports and clear service pathways

### Key Actions

### Anticipated Outcomes

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out the Violence/Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) protocol, with a specialized focus on neurodivergent students, and roll out the revised Tragic Event Response Team (TERT) Manual.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlined, comprehensive, and effective response to critical incidents and tragic events across the school community.</li> </ul>                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out attendance strategy to the system ensuring role clarity for staff and administrators and ongoing distribution of materials on best practices for student attendance and engagement.</li> </ul>                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of board protocols and procedures, deepened understanding of clear re-engagement efforts and the associated roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously evaluate and enhance the process for developing partnership agreements with community based mental health providers in alignment with Right Time Right Care, ensuring the inclusion of training on Consent and Confidentiality, Procedure 607 &amp; other mental health related protocols.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced collaboration, streamlined communication, and improved service coordination between the school board and community-based mental health providers, leading to more effective mental health support for students.</li> </ul> |