

Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center

Wisconsin Educator Needs Assessment 2023 Report

Educator Priorities in Student
and Staff Mental Health,
Wellbeing and Safety

*Partnership and funding
provided by the
Wisconsin Department of
Public Instruction*



Purpose of Needs Assessment and Summary of Results

The Wisconsin Safe & Healthy Schools Training & Technical Assistance Center (WISH) seeks to fulfill its mission to build the knowledge, skills and capacity of educators to positively impact the well-being and equitable outcomes of every student. As part of this mission, the WISH Center surveys districts, schools and educators across the state to understand and meet their professional development needs.

Survey participants explicitly communicated the need for practical tools and systems of support for students, families and themselves to address rising needs in mental health, social emotional learning, school climate and safety, and alcohol and other drug use.

Educators are highly interested in professional learning in student mental health, especially anxiety and depression, social media safety, cyberbullying, substance use trends among students, as well as alternatives to suspension, staff and caregiver burnout, and engaging parents and caregivers in social emotional learning.

Schools want to know best practices for mental health screening, mindfulness practices for the classroom, and how to connect students with mental health services in their communities.



"I am looking for more training for teachers on trauma-informed practices. Something very application based."

"prefer focus on strategies versus background knowledge (in training)"

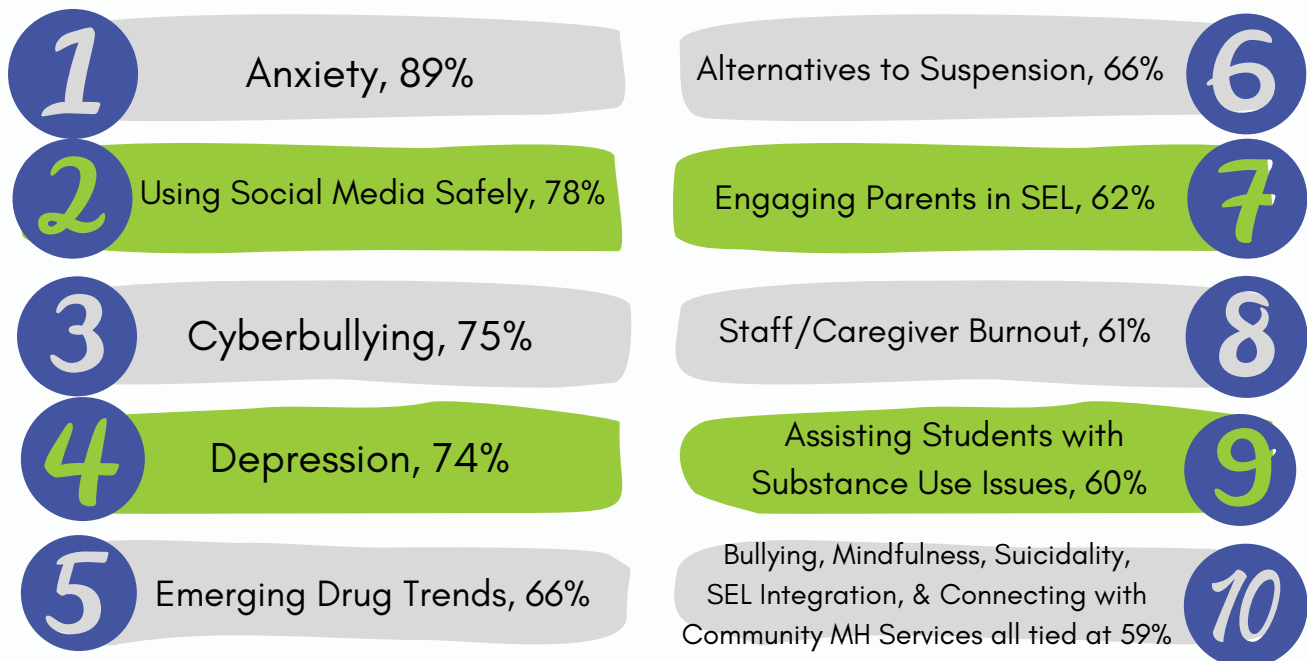
Wisconsin Safe & Healthy Schools Center

2023 TOP IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Online Survey of 1,081 Educators, February-April, 2023

An online survey was conducted assessing the professional development needs for school health and safety. The survey link was emailed to state and local school district email lists and WISH Newsletter subscribers.

Educator roles included: 27% School Counselors, 19% School Social Workers, 11% School Psychologists, 11% Classroom Teachers, 6% School Nurses, 6% District Staff, 3% Building Administrators, 3% Coach or Intervention Specialist, and 14% Other Roles.



Training Logistics & Communication

- 87% report it is very or somewhat important to have access to recorded content/webinars
- 93% prefer to attend training during the school year
- 92% prefer during the school day
- 97% prefer to hear about training and services by email

Top Needs Overall, 2018-2023

2023 Rank	Topic	2023 n=1,081	2022 n=709	2021 n=438	2020 n=600	2019 n= 846	2018 n= 540
1	Working with Students Who Experience Anxiety <i>*new in 2020</i>	89%	92%	73%	71%	N/A	N/A
2	Using Social Media Safely	78%	79%	78%	70%	77%	70%
3	Cyberbullying-Recognize, Report, and Respond	75%	70%	67%	56%	63%	54%
4	Depression <i>*new in 2022</i> (previously helping students with mental health issues)	74%	74%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	Emerging Drug Trends	66%	72%	68%	55%	63%	64%
6	Alternatives to Suspension/ Discipline (substance use) <i>*new in 2023</i>	66%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	Engaging Parents and Families with SEL	62%	62%	55%	50%	64%	N/A
8	Prevention Staff/Caregiver Burnout/ Compassion Resilience	61%	65%	41%	45%	47%	39%
9	How to Assist Students with Alcohol and Other Drug Issues	60%	60%	53%	42%	43%	47%
10	Integration of SEL with Academic Instruction	59%	63%	55%	56%	57%	N/A
10	Mindfulness Practices for Students & Staff	59%	61%	45%	49%	55%	60%
10	Bullying: Prevention and Intervention	59%	54%	47%	45%	52%	43%
10	Suicidality (previously Suicide Prevention)	59%	51%	N/A	38%	41%	39%
10	Connecting Students and Families with Community Mental Health Services <i>*new in 2022</i>	59%	56%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



By Level

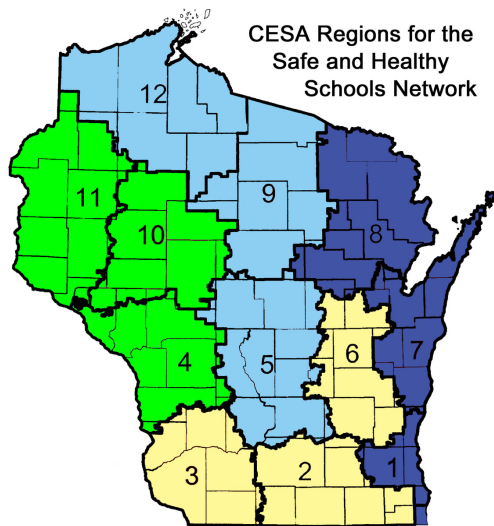
- **49% Pre-K / Elementary School**
- **29% Middle School**
- **28% High School**
- **20% All Levels**
- **1.5% Other**

By Role

- **27% School Counselors**
- **19% School Social Workers**
- **11% School Psychologists**
- **11% Classroom Teachers**
- **6% School Nurses**
- **6% District Staff**
- **3% Building Administrators**
- **3% Coach or Intervention Specialist**
- **14% Other**

WISH Survey Respondents

The WISH Center assessed the professional development needs for school health and safety using an online survey conducted during February and March of 2023. This needs assessment follows similar surveys administered annually beginning in 2012. The survey link was emailed to local school district lists and was shared through statewide listservs and on social media. The WISH Center received 1081 responses from educators throughout Wisconsin.



CESA specific response results are available by request, email Tracy Herlitzke, therlitzke@cesa4.org

	# Resp	%
CESA 1	154	14 %
CESA 2	167	15 %
CESA 3	33	3 %
CESA 4	192	18 %
CESA 5	103	10 %
CESA 6	90	8 %
CESA 7	94	9 %
CESA 8	38	3 %
CESA 9	86	8 %
CESA 10	74	7 %
CESA 11	34	3 %
CESA 12	23	2 %
Don't Know		.3 %

Look Who Took Our Survey!

11%

Pre-K
Level

39%

Elementary
Level

29%

Middle School
Level

28%

High School
Level

20%

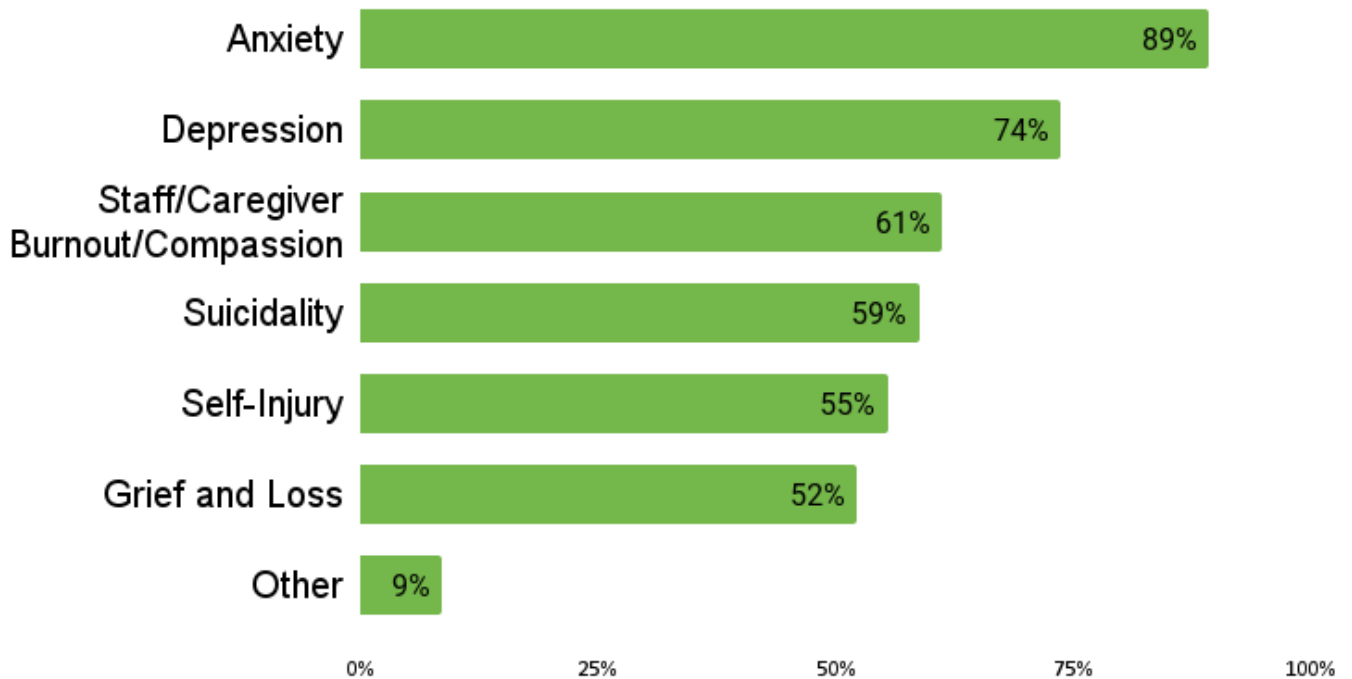
All of the Above

Addressing Mental Health Challenges and Systems of Support

Educators were prompted in the survey to identify their interest in training and support along seven topic areas: Substance Use Prevention and Intervention, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Online Safety, Mental Health Support and Intervention, Mental Health Systems of Support, School Climate and Safety, and Social Emotional Learning.

Mental health challenges stand out in the survey results, as many respondents indicated a need for professional learning in all areas of mental health. Many educators also indicated a need for learning about Trauma Sensitive Schools, support for families with mental health challenges and substance use patterns, and supporting students who identify as LGBTQ.

2023 Professional Learning Needs - Mental Health

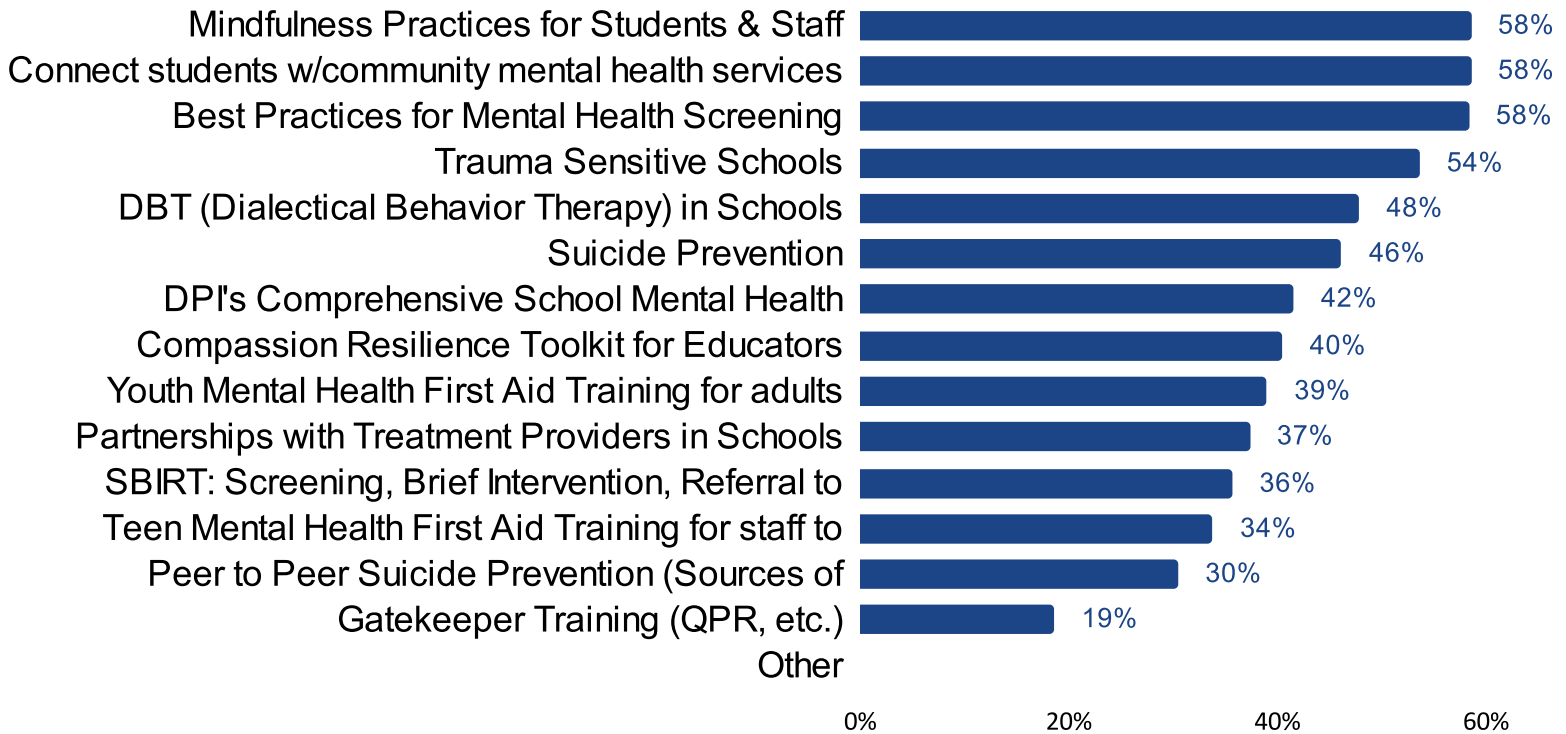


"We have faced all these issues in the last 18 months at our school."

"how to meaningfully intervene and support ALL of the above"

Mental Health Systems of Support

Participants identified several areas for learning about systemic support for mental health, including connecting students and families with providers in the community, best practices for mental health screening, mindfulness for students and staff and Trauma Sensitive Schools.



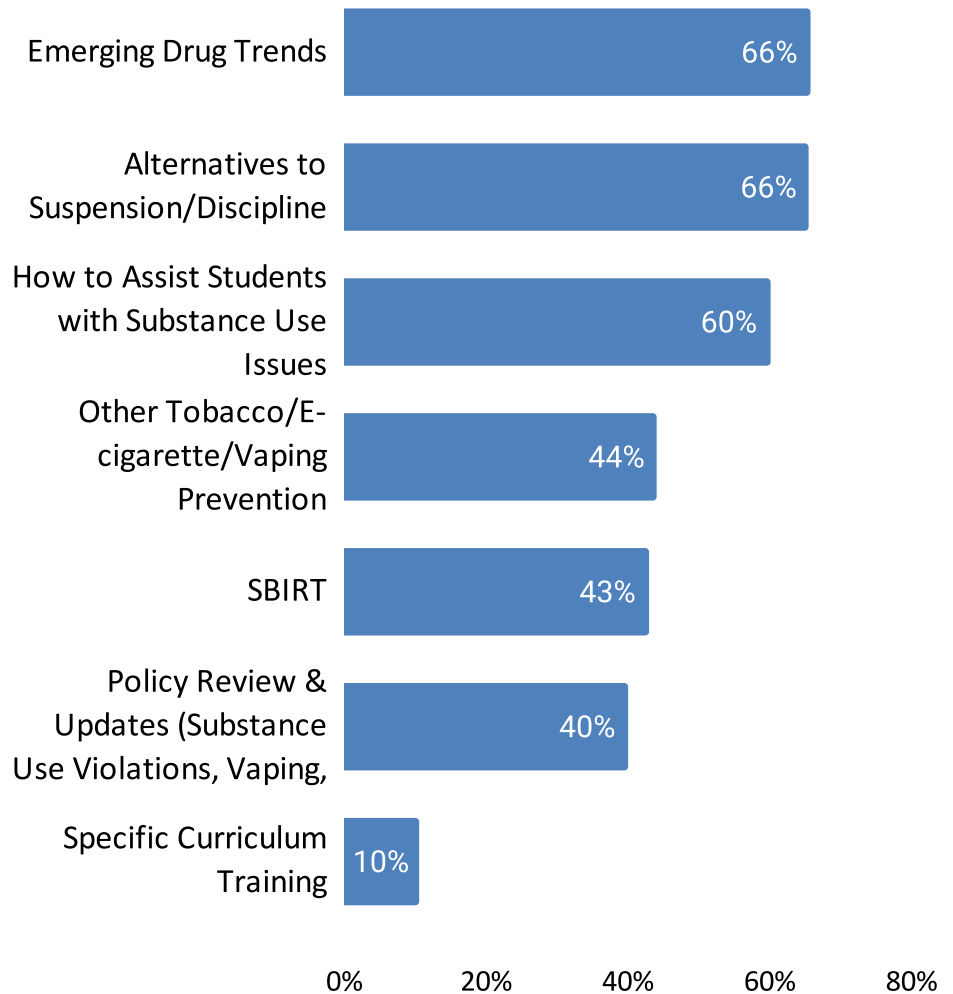
Substance Use Prevention and Intervention

Professional learning is needed in the areas of emerging drug trends, methods for addressing substance use among students, and alternatives to suspension/discipline. Participants continue to seek support for vaping prevention and intervention, and over 10% would like support related to curriculum, particularly at the elementary level.

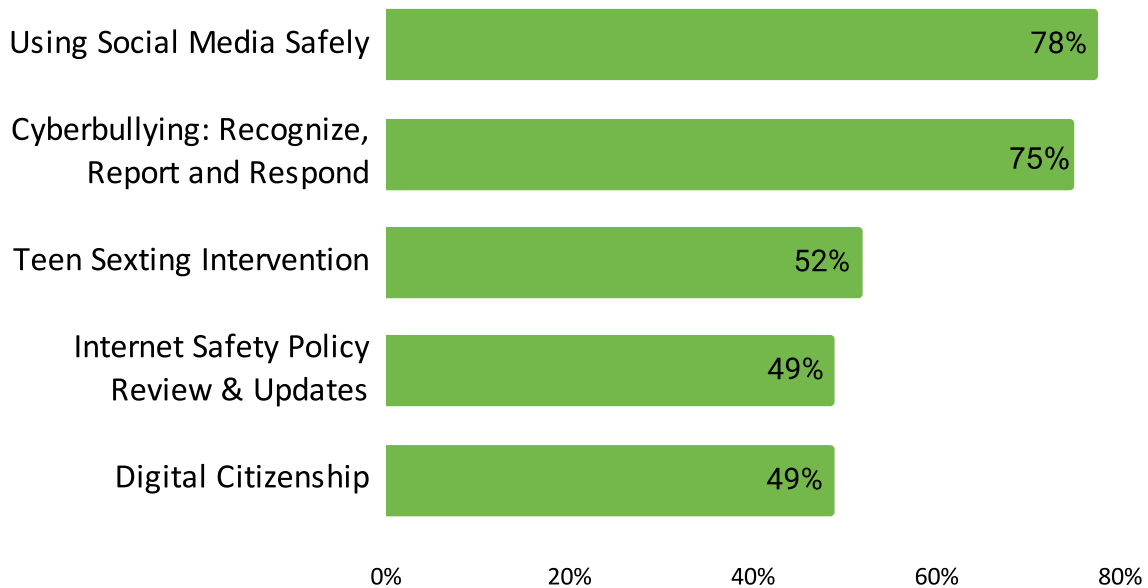
"looking for upper elementary prevention ideas (data shows use is starting as early as 3rd grade)"



Substance Use Prevention & Intervention



Online Safety



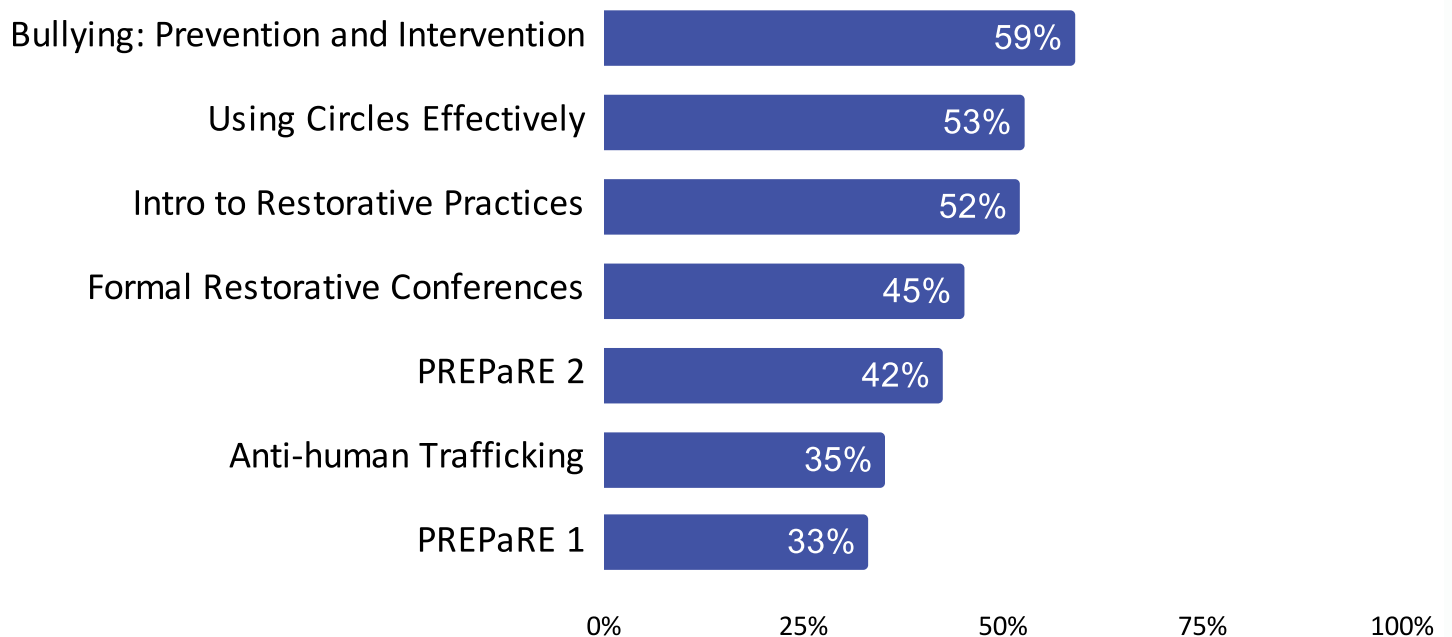
Educators continue to call for training and support for needs related to student use of technology, citing a wish to remove phones and social media from the school environment, concerns about the use of social media leading to human trafficking that affects young people, and concerns about the connection between use of electronics and depression and anxiety.

School Climate and Safety



Wisconsin educators are seeking strategies to support positive school climate and a comprehensive approach to safety is prioritized, including evidence-based bullying prevention and intervention as well as the use of restorative practices, circles, and formal conferences.

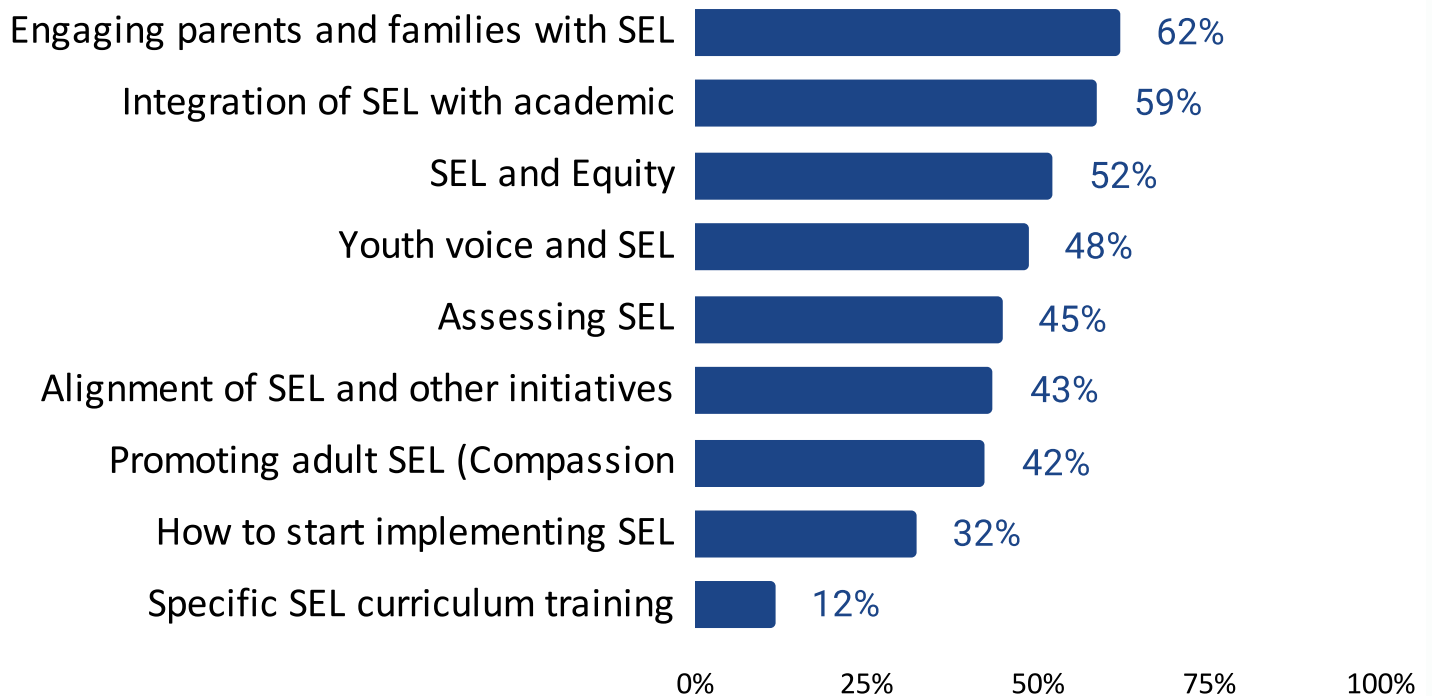
2023 Professional Learning Needs: Climate and Safety



Social Emotional Learning Training and Support Needs

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) continues to be an area of interest for professional learning across the state, especially related to engaging with parents and families about SEL, as well as integrating social and emotional learning within academic instruction.

2023 Professional Learning Needs: Social Emotional Learning



"How to address the faction of the community that is anti SEL"

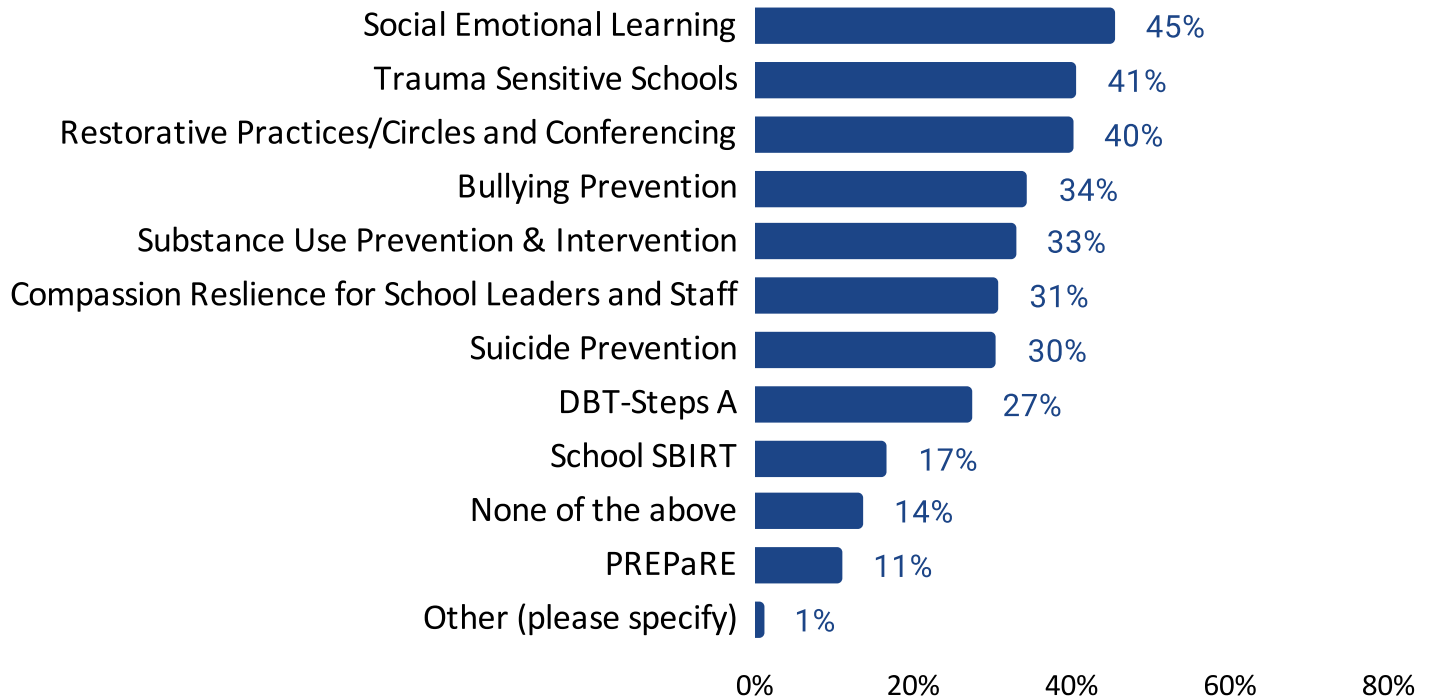


"Honestly this needs to be addressed with instructional leaders and needs to be integrated in core classes and built into their standards."

Need for Technical Assistance and Training

In recent years, the WISH Center has incorporated implementation support alongside training events. Interest in technical assistance and coaching remains strong, in particular in the areas of Social Emotional Learning, Trauma Sensitive Schools and Restorative Practices.

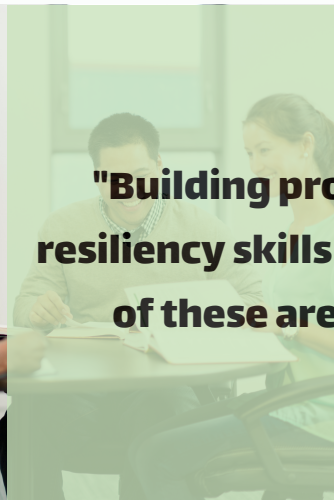
Need for Technical Assistance and Coaching



"culturally responsive practices / problem solving"



"Building protective factors and resiliency skills in students, so that all of these areas are addressed."

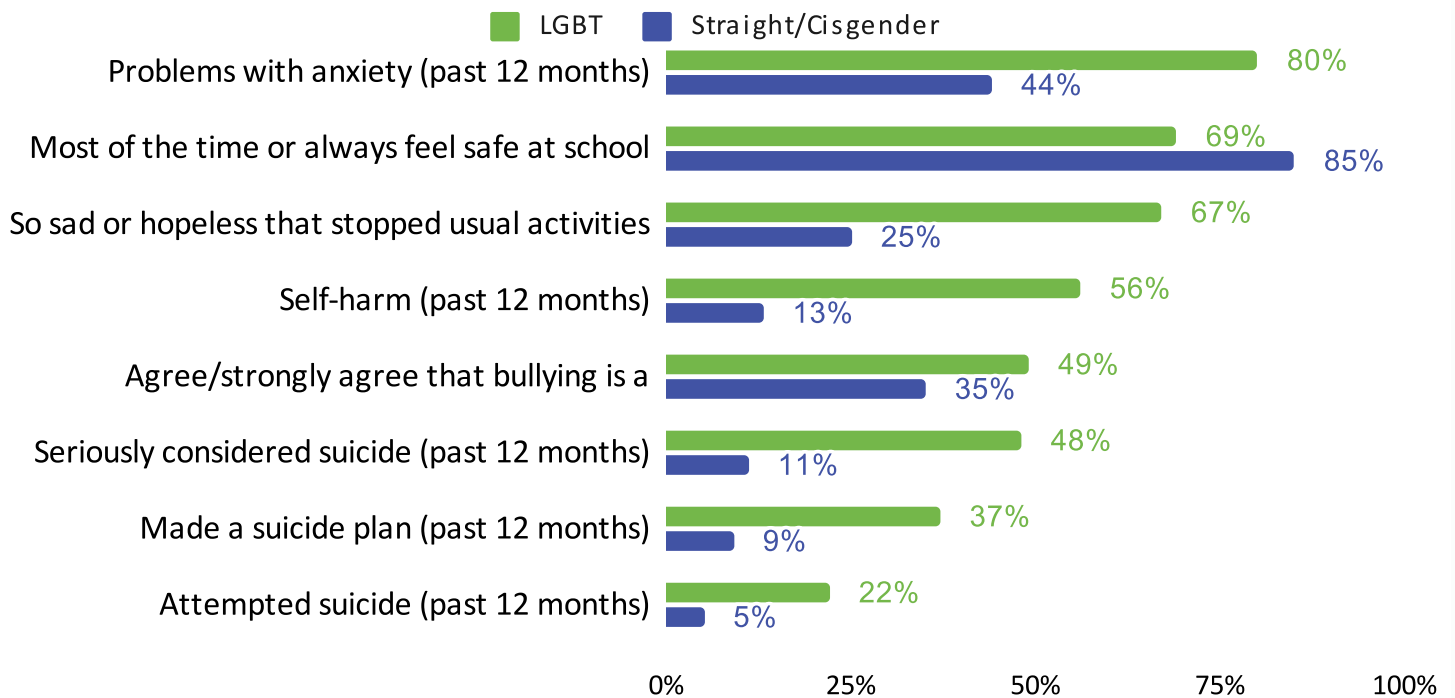


YRBS data

In addition to information from educators, the WISH Center uses the national and state Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to identify the professional learning that supports positive school climates and safe and healthy schools for all students. For a summary and key findings of the most recent results for Wisconsin, please refer to the Department of Public Instruction's [2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report](#).

Below we will highlight one set of data from the YRBS results that stands out: the experience and impact of discrimination on students identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender.

2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results LGBT and Straight/Cisgender



The chart above shows that students identifying as LGBT are twice as likely as the rest of their peers to experience anxiety and sadness and hopelessness. They are four times as likely to self harm, seriously consider suicide and make a plan, and they are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide.

Youth Voice in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Safe & Healthy Schools Center

MONROE COUNTY YOUTH FOCUS GROUP

A focus group was facilitated on April 19, 2023, at the Monroe County Substance Use Prevention Day. 15 students volunteered to participate in the guided discussion during the lunch hour. Questions were developed ahead of time by coalition members and the facilitator related to mental health, belonging, substance use and prevention messages.

Mental Health "is always evolving and {is} impacted by a lot"

Students shared experiences with self-harm, challenges with socialization, and their understanding of depression.

Belonging is "feeling like you can be yourself around people and not be judged by others"

Helpful adults "connect on a personal level about things you care about."

Students use substances: "To fit in better with kids that are doing it. Take away the stress."

- Students shared their overall understanding of mental health
- Students identified their beliefs and experiences about belonging
- Students identified characteristics of adults that make them feel comfortable sharing information
- Students explained why they thought people choose to use substances (alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, other drugs)

Take Aways from Focus Group:

Students care about mental health and substance use in their school and community. They demonstrate knowledge about mental health and substance use and are willing to talk about it. In this focus group students shared they want adults in the school and community to do something when they see a young person struggling with mental health concerns or using substances. They were not in agreement on specific prevention strategies, consequences or solutions, but they were clear that supportive actions by adults are important and necessary. Students can and will share the pulse of what's going on in schools and communities related to mental health and substance use. It is the responsibility of the adults to listen to student voices and engage them in evidence-based prevention and intervention practices, programs, and policies.

Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference

2023 NEEDS ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK + RECOMMENDATIONS



81% report it is very or somewhat important to have access to recorded conference sessions



Respondents (n=94) attended the 2022 conference because of...

- Topics of interest - 77%
- Location - Wisconsin Dells - 36%
- A colleague recommended - 30%

"The pre-conference was excellent!"

"...extremely beneficial by providing solutions and awareness for various topics"



Respondents (n=899) did NOT attend the 2022 conference because...

- Couldn't get away from school - 46%
- Didn't know about it - 41%
- Can only attend 1 conference per year - 14%
- Date - first week in December - 12%
- Other: Lack of funding

BHSS Specific Questions for the Needs Assessment:

- How important is it for you to have access to recorded content from the conference?
- Did you attend the Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference in 2022?
 - Yes: Why did you attend the Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference? (Select your top 2 responses.)
 - No: Why did you NOT attend the Building the Heart of Successful Schools Conference? (Select all that apply.)



Thank You, Wisconsin Educators!

The WISH Center team wants to thank every one who participated in this year's Needs Assessment Survey, as well as the CESA Statewide Network and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Student Services, Prevention & Wellness Team for their partnership with the WISH Center in meeting the professional learning needs of Wisconsin educators.

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