

District Mental Health Initiative



JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative

Helping you build strong and supportive mental health systems districtwide.

As a district leader, you know protecting students' emotional well-being is crucial to their safety and their ability to thrive in school and beyond. You also know building strong and supportive mental health services and initiatives is complex and nuanced, and it takes deep expertise.

The Jed Foundation (JED), in partnership with AASA, The School Superintendents Association, is here to help. Our team helps guide your district through a comprehensive process of evaluating current systems of support, identifying strengths and opportunities, and then enhancing those systems to better protect students' mental health by leveraging the latest research in the field.

Our Challenge

- In 2023, 40% of high school students reported experiencing persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness. More than one in five students seriously considered suicide.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 34.
- The suicide rate in students ages 5 to 11 rose 15% every year from 2013 to 2020.
- 75% of mental health challenges arise during adolescence and young adulthood.
- When adolescents experience symptoms of mental health challenges, it takes an average of eight to 10 years to access treatment.

The Solution

The JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative is a two-year partnership tailored to provide expert support to district leaders as they build and improve school mental health systems. As a leader in protecting student mental health and preventing suicide, our mission is to fully support you in making meaningful, sustainable, and measurable improvements in student well-being.

The initiative is grounded in [JED's Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention for Districts](#). This evidence-based framework brings together recommended practices with expertise from the field to help districts create a strong and supportive school mental health system that fosters truly connected, thriving school communities.

Who We Are

About The Jed Foundation (JED)

JED is a nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation's teens and young adults. We partner with high schools, districts, and colleges to strengthen their mental health, substance misuse, and suicide prevention programs and systems. We equip teens and young adults with skills and knowledge to help themselves and each other. We encourage community awareness, understanding, and action for young adult mental health.

About AASA

AASA, The School Superintendents Association, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to equitable access for all students to the highest-quality public education. For more information, visit aasa.org.

JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative Participants Receive:

Comprehensive Assessment

A data-driven analysis of your current system is essential to long-term growth. That's why we begin by administering JED's comprehensive suite of assessments to understand your district's strengths and areas of opportunity. Our assessment tools include a district self-assessment, a districtwide staff survey, a principal survey, and surveys for middle school and high school students. Combined, this data paints a holistic picture of your students' mental health needs, as well as your current capabilities to meet them.

Policy Review

Drawing on the district self-assessment, the team is able to evaluate existing district policies and protocols that support suicide prevention, mental health planning, and crisis planning and response. Our review identifies strengths and areas for improvement by comparing your current policies to recommended practices.

Resource Maps

Our team guides your district to create a system resource map of the programs, services, and supports currently available in the district to support student mental health and well-being, as well as suicide and substance misuse prevention. The system resource map helps leaders visualize the distribution of supports and resources, increase awareness of resource allocation (e.g., staffing, funding, and evaluation processes), and evaluate for gaps.

Customized Feedback

Your district receives a complete professional data analysis and report that includes detailed recommendations and visualizations to help you understand where you are, so you can better plan where you want to go. Combining multiple sources of data, these insights help our team gain a deeper understanding of your district community through a data-informed lens that propels the strategic planning process.

Data-Informed, District-Level Mental Health Strategic Plans

Drawing on the assessment findings and customized feedback, our team works with your district to create a strategic action plan that will serve as your road map for systemic change. The robust plan targets areas in each domain of the Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention for Districts. Our team guides your district to enhance what is already working and support innovation to address unmet needs.

Curated Library of Recommended Practices

Our team is at the forefront of suicide prevention and comprehensive school mental health. Our experts help your district make informed decisions and enhance resources, policies, and programs with access to JED's extensive library of current research on clinically informed and peer-reviewed recommended practices, available only to our partners.

Expert Insight and Technical Assistance

Our District Mental Health Specialists are experienced professionals in school mental health and pre-K–12 education. They understand the challenges districts face today. Through expert insight, technical assistance, in-person site visits, and ongoing consulting services, your district will receive personalized support as you implement your strategic plan and develop your team's capacity so you never have to do this work alone.

Postvention Support and Consultation

Our team of nationally recognized experts works to ensure your district is prepared to respond in the event of a suicide or other tragic event. In the event your district experiences a loss, our team can provide postvention consulting to help navigate the aftermath in your community at no additional fee. Our support is customized to compassionately address your immediate needs, reduce the risks associated with exposure to suicide, and support your students and staff in healing.

Measurable Outcomes and Lasting Impact

At the end of the initiative, the JED team administers post-assessments and provides a comprehensive post-assessment report to reveal growth and continued opportunities for systemwide integration.

Sustainability Plan

At your completion of the JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative, your district will receive a detailed report about its progress in the program and the mental health and well-being of your district community, including data about students, leaders, and staff. As our intensive support winds down, we will ensure there is a sustainability plan in place to document successes and outline future steps to maintain and build on your progress.



Membership in a Professional Learning Community

Districts take part in the initiative as part of a cohort working on the same timeline, with intentional opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve together. The cohort model empowers senior leaders to learn from peers who are equally dedicated to protecting student mental health. Learning experiences include specific tracks by role type. Superintendents gather with other superintendents, and other district leaders similarly gather with their peers to maximize application. You'll also receive free access to newsletters, high-quality trainings by JED and AASA experts, and curated resources to meet today's district mental health needs.

Ongoing Support

Upon completion, your district will be part of a broader alumni community of districts committed to excellence in school mental health. You'll have access to an active network of resources, events, and professional development from JED.

Fees and Funding

JED is dedicated to making our programs accessible to all districts. To learn more about our fee structure and opportunities for funding the JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative, email district@jedfoundation.org.

Learn more about the JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative

Visit jedfoundation.org/our-work/jed-and-aasa-district-mental-health-initiative/ or scan this QR code.



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