

# PROMISING RESULTS FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION

Early and appropriate interventions show benefits in well-being and achievement for children and savings for schools.

# Trauma and Adversity



- Abuse and Neglect
- Death of Loved One
- Homelessness
- Hunger
- Domestic Violence
- Community Violence
- Poverty
- Persistent Medical Issues
- Parental Incarceration
- Parental Mental Illness



## Effects of Trauma in Education

- \*Failure
- \*Frustration
- \*Climate of Stress
- \*Disrupted Learning
- \*Violence
- \*Burnout
- \*Increased Costs

# Past and Present Initiatives to Address Problematic Student Behaviors

- IST
- SWPBS
- RTII
- Bullying Prevention
- SAP
- School Social Workers
- ES Classrooms
- Alternative Education Schools or Classrooms
- Behavior Specialists
- Peer Mediation
- In-School Law Enforcement

# Costs of Inaccurate Assessments, Interventions and Diagnoses

- Academic failure
- Students labeled
- Low rates of return from outside placement
- Children of color disproportionately placed
- Those who do return are academically further behind.
- Unnecessarily expensive
- Trauma unaddressed will lead to other needs for services.



# Barriers to Success



- Lack of knowledge and training about trauma
- Children given a diagnosis or label just to get some treatment, even if inappropriate.
- Inability of districts to allocate resources unless identified with disorder.

# Barriers to Success (cont'd)

- Fear of extreme behaviors.
- School disciplinary policy often counterproductive to trauma therapy.
  - Academic testing/placement requirements.
- Ineffective transition strategies.



# Trauma-Informed Education

- Fully trained, trauma-informed staff members
- In-district school and classrooms
- Timely observations, consults and teacher support
- Utilization of district curriculum
- In-home counseling
- Coordination and collaboration with other services to support family (nutrition, housing, healthcare, corrections)
- Transition support back to regular classroom
- Continued student and teacher support after transition



# Family and Child Benefits

- Student remains in the district
- Avoids label
- Access to qualified therapist
- Other adults in child's life supported to build resiliency for child and family
- Interventions and academics are aligned to meet the needs of the student
- Family receives support to navigate service systems and alleviate existing adversity
- Student returns at grade level academically

# District Benefits

- Better outcomes for students
  - Cost savings
- More effective staff



# Case 1 – Student Behaviors

- Refused to work or stay seated
- Ripped papers
- Crawled on the floor/under desk
- Hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, scratching
- Dissociative behaviors
- Made animal noises
- Refused to talk
- Refused to move/leave room

# Case 1 – Intervention/Results

- As a result of therapeutic interventions, the child divulged incidents of ongoing sexual abuse within the family. Staff members contacted and collaborated with CYS, the police and the court system to get the student the services and help needed. The result of the reporting led to the child's removal from the home, placement in foster care, and subsequent adoption.
- Outcome: After a rough road, the student is on grade level and performing well in regular classroom

# Case 2 – Student Behaviors

- Hitting/kicking other students
- Destroying property
- Self-harming behaviors
- Hitting/kicking staff members
- Threatening students
- Screaming/yelling
  
- **Background:** Student with family history of poverty, domestic violence, physical abuse and familial incarceration. Academically behind, yet capable of achieving at a higher level.

## Case 2 – Intervention/Results

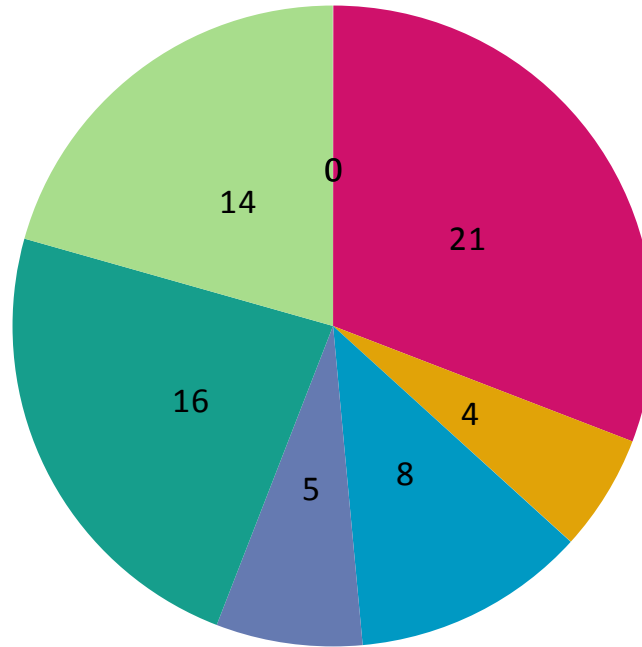
- The student was placed in the trauma-informed classroom within the school, and behaviors stabilized and improved. The child experienced several additional traumatic events resulting in regression in behavior as well as academics. With continued support and interventions, the child is once again stabilizing and is in progress to transition back to the regular classroom. Academics are currently at or above grade level.

# Eastern York School District

## Data:

- (2012-2013) Avg. Daily Membership: 2,690
- (2012-2013) Free or reduced lunch eligibility: 36 %
- Special Education Budget: \$3M (includes alt. ed.)
- Elementary ES placement: \$31,000/year/child
- 0% transitioned back to regular education in years prior to introduction of trauma-informed education program.

# Program Outcomes



■ Sucessfully Transitioned  
■ Moved from Dist.  
■ Currently in Classrooms

■ Transitioning Currently  
■ Specialized Program  
■ Promoted to 6th Grade



# Eastern York School District

Savings in first year = \$300,000

That savings compounds for each year those students successfully remain in regular education classrooms throughout their school career.

Per student cost of approximately \$18,243 for the program – compared to an ongoing cost of \$31,000/year/student in alternative placement outside the school. **For a student served in second grade, the savings is approximately \$322,757.**

# Chambersburg Area School District

- Recent increase in extreme behaviors in elementary schools.
- Utilized variety of initiatives and resources with little to no success.
- Hired consultant to provide resiliency training, in-class observations and support to teachers and individualized behavior interventions for students.
- Visited Eastern model, saw success and began similar model this year. Already seeing academic and behavioral improvements, with some in various stages of transitioning back to the regular classroom.

# Recommendations

- Trauma-informed training for all school personnel
- Development and adoption of assessment tools and trained evaluators
- Deliberate and ongoing high-level collaboration among agencies to eliminate barriers to partnership at the level of caring for the child
- Support for efforts to combat hunger, poverty, violence and other factors to reduce trauma and increase resiliency for children and families
- Importance of relationship is significant: Smaller class sizes will make a greater difference as staff are trauma trained.

# Thank you!

We hope our students' successes can help inform your work on behalf of ALL of Pennsylvania's children and families. We would be honored to assist in any way, and invite you to come visit our classrooms.