



Innovation Committee One Pager Recap: 3/17/22 Meeting the Moment: Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellness

Purpose:

The Innovation Committee aims to understand and uplift innovative solutions that address some of the District's most persistent challenges. Presenters are invited based on data-driven decisions that have resulted in observable, promising practices that can be replicated or scaled. During the Innovation Committee on March 17, 2022, practitioner presenters elevated innovative strategies to support the mental health and wellness of our students and staff. This document serves to share learnings from the committee conversation.

Presenters:

- Jorge Olmos, Principal, [Wilmington Middle School](#)
- Joel Cisneros, Director of School Mental Health, [Los Angeles Unified School District](#)
- William Celestine, Director of Wellness Programs, [Los Angeles Unified School District](#)
- Vivan de la Rosa, Administrative Coordinator, Wellness Programs, Student Health and Human Services, [Los Angeles Unified School District](#)
- Kanchana Tate, Mental Health Clinical Program Manager, [Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's Prevention Services Administration](#)

Synthesized Recommendations:

1. Utilize non-instructional minutes to maximize the impact of instructional time.

- Hire coaches or school staff to lead sports and activities (i.e. board games, visual arts, competitions) during lunch, especially for middle school students.
- Embed brief play-based and socio-emotional learning activities throughout the day.

2. Create opportunities for staff wellness spaces and mindfulness practices.

- Allocate flexible grants (~\$5,000) for schools to create wellness spaces (e.g. massage chairs, workout equipment, comfortable lighting, etc.) based on staff input.
- Begin professional learning or school meetings with mindfulness or stretching activities.

3. Develop a sustainable hiring pipeline and invest in mental health professional partnerships.

- Build pathways for middle and high schools students to pursue mental health professions including peer mentorship, peer support clubs or resource ambassador positions
- Develop a scholarship/grant opportunity for students enrolled in MSW/MFT programs if they provide service in the District post-graduation.
- Develop an incubation academy for small community-based organizations that may not qualify or have capacity to complete the District's procurement process but have expertise in non-traditional therapeutic support (i.e. nature, art, animal and/or indigenous therapies).

4. Engage students and families in developing culturally responsive wellness at school.

- Invest in non-traditional therapeutic approaches determined by community, such as drumming, art, animal therapy, and/or nature walks, etc.
- Ask students what mental health resources or supports they would want to see on their campus before purchasing.
- Consider stipends for families/students to participate in a Mental Health Community Ambassador program and receive training on mental health education and awareness, early identification and navigation of potential resources/referrals.

5. Advocate for policy changes to remove systemic barriers to access to quality mental health supports.

- Create a universal mental health "passport" so that regardless of insurance, students can receive high quality, affordable care at their school or in their neighborhood.