

Mental Health and Well-Being

One-Year Action Plan 2026-2027

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) recognizes that good mental health is an important foundation for connection, well-being and learning. The **DDSB 2025-2028 Mental Health and Well-Being Plan** reflects our commitment to cultivate the conditions for meaningful learning environments, where all our students feel they are welcomed and where students are engaged in school life, both in their classroom learning and the larger school environment; where they know they are valued, seen and heard, where their identities are affirmed, where they belong and are connected to adults that care and are present to their lived realities.

At the DDSB, we commit to:

- Supporting the everyday mental health and well-being of students,
- Providing identity affirming supports and resources, as needed, and
- Connecting students and staff to pathways for support.

The **Mental Health and Well-Being One-Year Action Plan 2026-2027** supports and guides the implementation of the DDSB 2025-2028 Mental Health and Well-Being Plan.

Learn to Understand:

- Everyday interactions that help foster schools and classrooms where every student experiences a sense of belonging.
- Mental health and well-being are woven into everyday conversations and practices.

Strengthen to Support:

- Bolster skills to ensure mental health promotion is a part of everyday experiences in classroom and school environments.
- Build and strengthen practices that centre student's identity.

Connect to Pathways:

- Strong pathways to, from and through meaningful support for the mental health and well-being of every student that is identity-affirming and culturally relevant.

Learn to Understand:

- **Everyday interactions that help foster schools and classrooms where every student experiences a sense of belonging.**
- **Mental health and well-being are woven into everyday conversations and practices.**

Key Actions:

Embed well-being into everyday conversations and interactions through:

- Ongoing implementation of school-based well-being leads.
- Ongoing support for educator implementation of the mandatory Grade 6, 7, 8 and Grade 10 mental health modules within the specific curriculum strands.

Provide staff learning on everyday mental health promotion through:

- Ongoing implementation of school-based well-being leads.
- Provision of learning opportunities throughout the school year including but not limited to Community of Practice Learning Series, monthly well-being newsletter, professional development days.

Provide parent/caregiver presentations in partnership with Family and Community Engagement that include but not limited to:

- District parent/caregiver speaker event.
- Participation and support in school-based family wellness events.

Use data to inform daily practice:

- Ensure key actions identified with this plan are informed by relevant data.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Increased sense of belonging**—Students report feeling more connected to peers and adults, with stronger perceptions of being seen, valued, and included.
- **Improved everyday mental health literacy**—Educators and students demonstrate greater comfort discussing mental health and well-being and help-seeking within and throughout school interactions.
- **More predictable and supportive environments**—Classrooms and common spaces reflect consistent relational routines that promote safety, predictability, and trust.
- **Enhanced staff confidence**—Staff feel more equipped to integrate well-being practices into daily interactions without adding to workload
- **Increased caregiver engagement**—Caregivers provided with information on topics relating to student mental health and well-being.
- **Data informed reflection and shifts**—Climate and well-being data show improvements in belonging, safety, and help-seeking behaviours as everyday practices strengthen. School teams reflect use of climate data, student voice, and staff feedback to guide learning priorities and refine well-being practices across the year.

Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 169:

- Enhanced educator and staff mental health literacy
- Mandatory mental health literacy
- Family mental health literacy and awareness
- Multi-tiered system of support

Strengthen to Support:

- **Bolster skills to ensure mental health promotion is a part of everyday experiences in classroom and school environments.**
- **Build and strengthen practices that centre student's identity.**

Key Actions:

Provide strength-based professional learning focused on the continuum of mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention through:

- Ongoing implementation of school-based well-being leads.
- Provision of learning opportunities throughout the school year including but not limited to community of practice learning series, monthly well-being newsletter, professional development days.
- Implementation of mental health and well-being teams, Well-Being School Achievement Working Group.
- Ongoing provision of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), SafeTALK, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO).
- Develop and implement learning plan for trauma informed practices.

Support ongoing leadership capacity building to reinforce, model, and monitor conditions for mentally healthy and inclusive environments through:

- Implementation of school leader mental health and well-being leadership team.
- Provision of relevant training and consultation for school leadership teams aligned with School Achievement Planning (SAP) processes and collaborative release days.

Amplify meaningful, authentic student engagement opportunities. Including but not limited to the following:

- Black Student Association (BSA), Muslim Student Association (MSA), Gender Sexuality Association (GSA)
- Student Mental Health Advisory Council and planning of the 2027 Children's Mental Health Event
- Student Senate
- School based student well-being leadership working groups.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Increased staff confidence**—Staff feel more capable of integrating strength-based mental health promotion into everyday interactions without adding workload.
- **More inclusive classroom environments**—Students experience classrooms that are predictable, welcoming, and responsive to diverse identities, strengths, and needs.
- **Enhanced student belonging**—Students report feeling more seen, valued, and connected.
- **Improved mental health literacy**—Staff and students use shared language around mental health and well-being and help-seeking as part of daily school life as a result of capacity building activities.
- **Positive shifts in climate indicators**—Climate and well-being data reflect stronger perceptions of safety, inclusion, and support.
- **Sustained conditions for well-being**—Schools demonstrate consistent, system-wide practices that reinforce mentally healthy and inclusive environments.
- **Enhanced collaboration**—School based teams and district mental health and well-being teams demonstrate greater collaboration and joint planning related to well-being strategies and initiatives.
- **Enhanced Leadership Confidence**—School administrators demonstrate enhanced understanding and implementation of leadership practices to support student mental health and well-being.
- **Stronger Student Voice**—Students experience more opportunities to influence their learning environment and see their feedback reflected in school practices.

Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 169:

- Enhanced educator and staff mental health literacy and awareness
- Multi-tiered system of support
- Evidence informed interventions
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Multi-tiered system of support
- Evidence informed interventions

Connect to Pathways:

- **Strong pathways to, from and through meaningful support for the mental health and well-being of every student that is identity-affirming and culturally relevant.**

Key Actions:

Enhance Access Pathways through the following:

- Actively promote the DDSB mental health services and relevant referral pathways
- Implement help-seeking campaign
- Review of DDSB mental health and well-being web pages

Implement evidence based mental health services through the following:

- Individual therapy (on-going and single session)
- Group therapy
- Support to parents/caregivers
- Consultation with school teams
- Crisis response

Provide affinity spaces and group programming—programming to include but not limited to:

- Affirm (for 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying students)
- BeMe (Black Excellence Made Evident for Black identifying students)
- GSAs and BSAs
- Trails to Wellness

Strengthen partnerships with community mental health agencies:

- Ongoing review of partnership agreements and Memorandums of Understanding
- Engage in Right Time Right Care process as initiated by community partners and lead child and youth mental health agency

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Increases awareness of and access to professional mental health services—** Increased awareness and uptake of services for students and families/caregivers and clear, student-friendly pathways to mental health services.
- **Access to mental health interventions—**Students receive evidence-based equity-centered, identity affirming mental health supports and services.
- **Enhanced joint local planning—**Continue to actively engage with and collaborate in joint local planning related to student mental health and wellness.

Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 169:

- Multi-tiered system of supports
- Evidence informed interventions
- Virtual delivery
- Joint local planning

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