

## The IDEA Partnership

National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
1-877-IDEA-INFO (1-877-433-2463) email: [partnership@nasdse.org](mailto:partnership@nasdse.org)



### **Title:**

## **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Advancing School-Based Mental Health Conference**

September 28-30, 2006  
Marriot Waterfront  
Baltimore, Maryland

### **Sponsors:**

This meeting was co-sponsored by the

- Center for School Mental Health Analysis and Action (CSMHA), <http://csmha.umaryland.edu> and funded by the Office of Adolescent Health, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Service Administration; and the
- IDEA Partnership, <http://www.ideapartnership.org> and funded by the Office of Special Education Programs housed at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE).

### **Theme:**

Effective Work in Schools: A National Community of Practice on Collaborative School Behavioral Health.

### **Event description:**

This groundbreaking conference made great strides in advancing our shared work through the National Community of Practice on Collaborative School Behavioral Health. For the first time ever, the conference proceedings were guided by the Community, with specialty tracks for each of the national practice groups:

- Connecting School Mental Health & Positive Behavior Support
- Developing a Common Language
- Education: An Essential Component of Systems of Care
- Faith-Community Partnerships

- Family Partnerships
- Improving School Mental Health for Youth with Disabilities
- Mental Health-Education Training and Workforce
- Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Core Group
- Practice Group Facilitators
- Quality & Evidence-Based Practice
- School Mental Health, Juvenile Justice and Dropout Prevention
- Youth Involvement & Leadership

This ensured a wide array of interesting trainings for the 800+ conference attendees involved in the various dimensions of school mental health, from policy to practice, from national to local, and from veteran to newcomer. With over 100 sessions—including intensive trainings, workshops, paper sessions, breakfast and lunch discussion meetings, poster sessions, and plenary sessions—this conference had something for everyone.

The conference included a particular emphasis on youth involvement and leadership. Youth participated in an advisory board meeting, gave a presentation at Wednesday's Community-Building Forum, presented at the poster session, introduced and took an active role in the youth activities on Friday led by Barbara Silverman, Emily Huff, and Olga Acosta Price from the Youth Involvement and Leadership practice group.

Also new also to this year's conference was the initiation of a Graduate Student Forum. Graduate Students from across the country convened in a special Board Room meeting to identify ways in which they could more actively engage with, and benefit from, the National Community. This forum of energetic and talented future professionals hopes to have a growing presence in (1) promoting the practice groups and (2) fostering doctoral training and internship/post-doc opportunities in the field of school mental health.

A highlight of the conference was the full slate of prominent and inspiring keynote and invited speakers:

- Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, III, prominent author and University of Baltimore County President, enlivened the audience with real-life stories illustrating the dramatic role of mental health promotion in fostering the academic success of African American youth.
- Dr. Lucille Eber, Coordinator of Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center, inspired the participants to consider how to link academic and behavioral supports at all levels of intervention. She addressed the important connection between school mental health, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, and Systems of Care
- Kristin Cox, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities;
- Nancy Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Education;
- Kenneth C. Montague Jr., Maryland Secretary of Juvenile Services;

- Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Baltimore City Health Commissioner; Benjamin Cardin, member of the U.S. House Representative from Maryland; and
- Elijah Cummings, delegate to the Maryland legislature.

**Purpose:**

The CSMHA and IDEA Partnership strive to move learning and networking beyond the Conference to occur throughout the year. One mechanism to meaningfully move beyond the “train and hope” model is to connect participants to the national practice groups and the work they will do all year round through the website specifically developed to facilitate communication among community members. Conference participants were introduced to the website and the supportive features, and were given opportunity to practice communicating with others through this shared site.

Other areas of emphasis included:

- Emphasis on youth involvement and leadership;
- Leadership of national community practice groups in developing, coordinating, and directing a national community meeting including the development of specialty tracks

**What’s next:**

Community members are currently holding conference calls to plan and develop the next annual conference. The 12th Annual Conference on Advancing School-Based Mental Health will be held October 25-27, 2007 at the Omni Orlando Resort in Champions Gate, Florida.

**Conference Theme:** What Works in Schools: Sustaining a National Community of Practice on Collaborative School Behavioral Health

**Conference Objectives:**

- Implementing a full continuum of effective promotion and intervention
- Collaborative family-school-community system approaches
- Strategies for fully involving diverse stakeholders including youth, families, educators, community staff, and policy makers
- Building quality assessment and improvement and emphasizing empirically supported practices
- Advancing successful advocacy and policy change

**Where to go for more information – project contact information**

For additional information, please contact **Mariola Rosser** at the IDEA Partnership:

Phone: 703-519-3800 X 324  
 Toll-free: 1-877- IDEA INF(o) (1-877-433-2463)  
 Email: Mariola.rosser@nasdse.org