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TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO: Adverse Childhood Experiences Working Group

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TOPIC: The School's Role in Building Resiliency-Act 43

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INTRODUCTION

- We have learned through the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES) that negative experiences during the first eighteen years of life may have a strong impact on adult health.
- We have also learned that an ACE Study score does not reflect the positive experiences in early life that not only build resilience but also protect a child from the effects of trauma.
- Educators in Vermont are implementing tiered systems of support to provide all students with positive academic and behavior experiences, throughout their school career, that builds resiliency.

BEST PRACTICES FOR BUILDING RESILIENCY IN A SCHOOL SETTING

- Dr. Michael Ungar (Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience, Professor of Social Work at Dalhousie University, and family therapist) reports of ["Nine Things All Children Need to Thrive"](#):
 - structure
 - consequences
 - parent-child connections
 - lots of strong relationships
 - a power of identity
 - a sense of control
 - a sense of belonging/spirituality/life purpose
 - rights and responsibilities, and
 - safety and support.
- These resiliency-building practices are a part of both a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), two system-wide frameworks in place in Vermont schools.
- Both MTSS and PBIS are systemic, not individualistic, with differentiated supports to meet the universal (all), targeted (some), and intensive (few) academics and behavior/social-emotional needs of all students.

WHAT IS WORKING?

- Data collected from Vermont educators this year shows:
 - 100% of our public schools report having a MTSS
 - more than half of public schools are implementing PBIS
 - \$1.7M of Title 1A and Title IIA funds are were allocated to activities that have a direct bearing on five of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors
 - The most common mental health services offered Counseling/Guidance, and School-wide Discipline Plans
 - The majority of the reporting schools offer Behavior Intervention and a Trained Crisis Response Team
 - A substantial number of reporting schools offer access to School Psychological and Social Worker/Clinician services.
 - These services are primarily paid through Local/School Budgets, Medicaid Reimbursement, and Special Education funding sources.
 - The most common behavior support services offered are Extended Kindergarten, and Instructional Coaches
 - The majority of the reporting schools offer Kindergarten Screenings and Trauma-informed Services
 - A substantial number of reporting schools offer programs and supports such as English Learners, Intervention Blocks, Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems, PBIS, and Prekindergarten
 - These services are primarily paid through Local/School Budgets, Consolidated Federal Program Funds, Medicaid Reimbursement, and Special Education funding sources.
 - More than 70 educators participated in the VTPBIS-sponsored webinars and professional learning opportunities
 - The AOE has a contract with Jon Kidde to create a Restorative Practices Resource Guide
 - The AOE has a contract with Joelle Van Lent to support systems level change as part of our State Systemic Improvement Grant

- WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?
 - Re-energize Act 264
 - Learn from schools with vibrant collaboration models between AHS and their multi-tiered system of supports framework
 - Continue to support schools in their implementation of MTSS and PBIS