

Using GIS Mapping to Build and Strengthen Coherent Systems of Student Support in Vermont

ED# 2019-R1-I-0004



High-Leverage Problem

The pandemic has emphasized the need to focus on social-emotional and mental health needs of students and their families. The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) continues to prioritize both supporting student social-emotional and mental health needs and promoting regional equity across the state. The delivery of mental health services is a collaborative effort between the AOE and the Agency of Human Services (AHS), Department of Mental Health, where the AOE supports services provided by school-based staff and the DHS provides service contracts with a designated agency. Currently, there is no process for the two agencies to coordinate services and ensure that mental health service access is equitably distributed across the state.

The AOE requested support in (a) refining Region 1 Comprehensive Center's (R1CC's) Mental Health Support Services GIS map and (b) facilitating conversations with key interest holders to explore solutions for improving the equity of access to mental health services across Vermont. Through this equity discussion, the AOE, AHS, and other designated agencies will coordinate the delivery of mental health services equitably across the state.



R1CC Approach

The Year 4 approach focused on (a) using the map as to inform discussions with key interest holders on how to equitably distribute services, (b) collecting usability feedback from key interest groups and updating the map based on that feedback, and (c) developing resources and infrastructure to support the AOE in maintaining the map beyond the R1CC partnership.

- **Used the map with key interest holders:** Facilitated discussions with Vermont's Success Beyond Six workgroup to review the data and understand how resources are currently distributed.
- **Revised map based on feedback:** Facilitated local usability demonstrations with superintendents and key leaders from AOE, the Department of Mental Health, and the Vermont governor's office to gather feedback on the map. Feedback from these conversations and the Success Beyond Six workgroup were incorporated and the map was updated.
- **Sustainability resources:** Developed facilitation modules on how to use the map and for policymaking. R1CC also created a GIS Maintenance and Utilization memo outlining the necessary knowledge and skills for maintaining the GIS maps. Finally, R1CC developed a GIS super-user training plan defining the requisite skills and training activities for maintaining the GIS map.

● — ⊙ — ⊙ → Key Milestones

- Incorporated data from the Vermont Department of Mental Health.
- In collaboration with AOE, developed a work plan for the creation of resources such as a facilitation module to help users navigate and use the GIS map and a training plan.
- Created a GIS facilitation module that describes how to use the GIS map to identify findings and make policy recommendations based on findings.
- Facilitated a data analysis session with the Success Beyond Six (SB6) workgroup using the facilitation module and collected feedback on the GIS map, facilitation process, and recommendations to improve access to mental health services.
- Developed a memo outlining the knowledge, skills, and time needed to maintain the GIS map.
- Developed a GIS super-user training plan that outlines the curriculum for training the GIS point of contact.
- Demonstrated the GIS map for additional feedback from key stakeholders such as superintendents and leaders from AOE, the Department of Mental Health, and the governor's office.
- Revised the GIS map based on feedback from the SB6 workgroup.
- Revised the facilitation module based on feedback from the SB6 workgroup.

? → Outputs

1. GIS facilitation module.
2. Host data analysis session with SB6 workgroup.
3. Updated GIS facilitation module based on feedback from the SB6 workgroup.
4. Updated and revised GIS map based on feedback from SB6 workgroup.
5. Two presentations demonstrating the GIS map for feedback with key stakeholders.
6. GIS super-user training plan.

Outcomes

AOE, AHS, and other key interest holders have increased their human capacity to navigate and use the GIS map to understand the school mental health services landscape across the state.

“We’ve all been really committed to what the ultimate goal of the project is, and I think that’s been really helpful to keep us honest, all together. I think it’s been a really good working group, good people, good minds.”