

## Improving Mental Health Services and School Climate for Virginia Students

### Two New Federal Grant Awards

#### *“Now Is the Time” Project Aware*

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Substance Abuse Mental health Service Agency (SAMHSA).
- \$9,743,209 over five years

#### *School Climate Transformation award*

- U.S. Department of Education - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and Office of Safe and Health Students
- \$3,537,191 over five years

Grants are interwoven to create a comprehensive tiered system model for promoting the healthy social and emotional development of students and intervene with those that need additional supports or more intensive services.

### Project Goals

- Transform educational and mental health practices and services at the state and local levels into a systemic approach that enhances the academic, behavioral and social success of all students and is fiscally prudent
- Decrease school discipline, violence, and criminal justice involvement (cradle to prison pipeline)
- Increase student engagement and connectedness to school (attendance) and to mental health and substance abuse services and other health supports
- Achieve academic potential and post-secondary school and/or career readiness
- Create a comprehensive tiered system model for promoting the healthy social and emotional development of students and intervene with those that need additional supports or more intensive services

### **“Now is the Time” will provide:**

- Statewide training for teachers and other public school employees
  - Annual training for as many as 750 teachers and others in “Mental Health First Aid,” an internationally recognized course on identifying and responding to persons who are developing a mental health condition or experiencing a mental health crisis.
  - 20 statewide or regional training and technical assistance events, and 1,200 onsite, technical assistance coaching sessions
  - A state level management team will work to align policies and procedure to overcome barriers hindering local education, mental health and other youth/family services providers
- Pilot programs in three school divisions to create safer learning environments by improving communication and coordination between public schools, mental health service providers and other public and private agencies that focus on the well-being of children and young adults.
  - Montgomery County, Pulaski County and Fairfax County
  - Three school divisions will receive VTSS supports and funding for mental health counselors in their schools as well as Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructors.