

LE SUEUR COUNTY FAMILY SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026



*RATIFIED BY JOINT POWERS BOARD
DECEMBER 19, 2023*

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WELCOME

The Le Sueur County Family Services Collaborative was formed in partnership with school districts, public health, human services, corrections, mental health providers and headstart/community action non-profit. Improving mental health, supporting school attendance and performance, and building community resiliency and protective factors in our communities are critical needs in Le Sueur County. In recognition of this, the Collaborative included these in its Strategic Plan. This plan will be refined as needs, strengths, resources, and viability of the goals become understood. We look forward to providing solutions that support well-being families and generations to come.

- Le Sueur County Family Services Collaborative

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Le Sueur County Family Services Collaborative Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the effort, ambition, and commitment of our members. In presenting this Strategic Plan, we express our profound and enduring thanks to all community members, groups, and organizations who shared with us their ideas, hopes, and dreams of a future with thriving kids, families and communities.

Special Thanks:

Le Sueur County Board of
Commissioners
Le Sueur County Public Health
Le Sueur County Human Services
Minnesota Department of
Corrections
Le Sueur Henderson Public
Schools
Tri-City United Public Schools

Cleveland Public Schools
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown
Public Schools
Minnesota Valley Action Council
Minnesota Department of Human
Services
Family Wise Services
Greater Mankato Area United Way

HISTORY

The Le Sueur County Collaborative was first formed in 1999. At the Collaborative's inception, partners signed an Interagency Agreement and had a board member appointed to the Joint Powers Board. The Collaborative funds have continually supported a Community Service Aide providing bilingual outreach to Spanish speaking residents. The Collaborative employed School Liaison Social Workers from 1999-2009 and again in 2021-2022.



The Collaborative Coordinator role was created in 2023, with the intentions of increasing community impact by bringing the partners of the collaborative together towards shared goals and objectives to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in Le Sueur County.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Collaborative Strategic Plan is the result of a seven-month effort to identify and address service gaps in Le Sueur County. Recognizing that more than half of Le Sueur County students report one or more Adverse Childhood Experiences, that suicide is the leading cause of death for youth, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a lasting impact on mental health and school attendance; the Collaborative recognizes key priorities in our current initiatives and goals. Through input from local data and focus groups, the following strategic plan is a means of enhancing the quality of life for all Le Sueur County residents.

THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

MORE RESILIENT MINNESOTA

- Improve the health and resilience of current and future generations by raising awareness about Adverse Childhood Experiences, collecting community input about children's and families' needs, and develop plans to mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors.

MENTAL HEALTH

- Position the Collaborative to affect changes to, and utilization of, services provided in times of crisis for treatment of mental illness, for early identification and intervention, and in the prevention of mental health symptoms.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Improve school attendance and graduation rates by providing resources and interventions to support students and families in prioritizing school attendance.

COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATION

- Clearly establish structure, committees, roles, goals, and processes.
- Improve connections between agencies and share resources to serve families.

A more in-depth look into the means and measures for achieving these Goals and their corresponding Objectives can be found in The Strategic Initiatives, Goals, and Objectives section of the Le Sueur County Collaborative Strategic Plan.

MISSION, VALUES, AND VISION

COLLABORATIVE MISSION:

To improve the social, emotional, educational, and economic outcomes of children, adolescents, and their families by mitigating risk factors and enhancing protective factors.

VISION:

“Children and youth will thrive in their homes, schools, and communities with the support of multiple agencies working in collaboration to meet the unique needs of the whole family”

2023 STATEWIDE PRIORITY:

Strengthen Resilience & Protective Factors of Families, Schools, & Communities.

2023 LOCAL PRIORITY:

Improve the mental health of children, parents, and families in Le Sueur County by expanding access to, and availability of, mental health resources.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To achieve success with the Strategic Plan, the following committees were established to focus on objectives essential in achieving goals. Each committee has a designated chair appointed from the community. Membership on committees is open to all community members with several having designated seats based on organizational membership and knowledge needs. A complete list of memberships is available from Le Sueur County Collaborative.

GOVERNING BOARD:

Legal and revenue authority of the Collaborative is exercised by the Collaborative Governing Board, hereinafter referred to as the "Board". The Board oversees the Collaborative's Integrated Fund and secures funding necessary to carry out the goals contained within this Strategic Plan. The Board is responsible for the creation and operation of the Collaborative as provided for by Minnesota Law and the Collaborative's Interagency Agreement and Bylaws. The Board is also responsible for the establishment and oversight of the Planning & Steering Committee. The Board's voting membership is composed of a representative and an alternate from each partner organization as well as parent/consumer representatives. The members of the Board consist of the Director/Department Head personnel for each of the partner agencies. Appointments of members and alternates to the Board is determined by a process established by each represented entity.

PLANNING & STEERING COMMITTEE:

The Planning & Steering Committee has expenditure and oversight authority to develop and carry out plans aligning with the Collaborative's priorities. Membership is determined by the Board and represents partnership organizations as well as other local key stakeholders. Members will include School Principals, Supervisors, and Front Line personnel for each of the partner agencies. The Planning & Steering Committee will be responsible for the establishment and oversight of the Strategic Plan and the Community Workgroups.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY PLANNING TEAM:

The Community Resiliency Planning Team is a sub-committee of the Planning & Steering Committee. This committee is formed to focus on the goals, objectives, and means to support the More Resilient Minnesota Initiative. Members will include the 5 local champions who will be trained to provide ACEs and NEAR Science presentations, as well as school and community leaders who will support efforts to conduct Community Resilience Conversations and/or 100 Cups of Coffee Interviews.

COMMUNITY WORKGROUPS:

As the Collaborative begins to work towards the goals laid out in this Strategic Plan, the Board recommended the creation of teams to work on the unique needs of each community. As such, Community Workgroups were formed in each school district to focus efforts with schools to improve mental health and school attendance. The Collaborative expects these workgroups will adjust their plans as local priorities change, under guidance from the Planning & Steering Committee. Those participating in these Community Workgroups include School Principals, School Social Workers, School Counselors, School Psychologists, Mental Health Providers, City Leaders, parents, and youth. Workgroups formed include individuals from the following:

- Le Sueur - Henderson Community
- Cleveland Community
- Le Center, Montgomery, Lonsdale (Tri-City United) Community
- Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Community

COMMUNITY DATA

A CASE FOR BUILDING RESILIENCY IN LE SUEUR COUNTY COMMUNITIES

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences that a young person may face before the age of 18. ACEs include multiple forms of abuse, neglect, and a range of household adversities experienced by others in the youth’s home that the youth witnesses, such as mental health issues, substance misuse, or domestic violence. ACEs are common, and by the age of 18, most people will experience at least one ACE. In addition, ACEs tend to be interrelated and occur in clusters. The more ACEs an individual experiences, the higher the likelihood that person will develop health problems, like substance misuse, type 2 diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular problems, and depression. The health effects can arise in childhood, or well into adulthood.

ACEs data included in this plan are from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) of 611 students in 8th, 9th, and 11th grades from Le Sueur County. According to the survey, 51% of Le Sueur County youth report one or more adverse childhood experiences, compared to the state average of 47%. **(ACEs are common.)** About half of adolescents experiencing any ACEs report more than one. **(ACEs tend to cluster.)** Le Sueur County’s prevalence of each ACE is equal to or higher than the state average, except for physical abuse. **(ACEs apply to our youth.)**

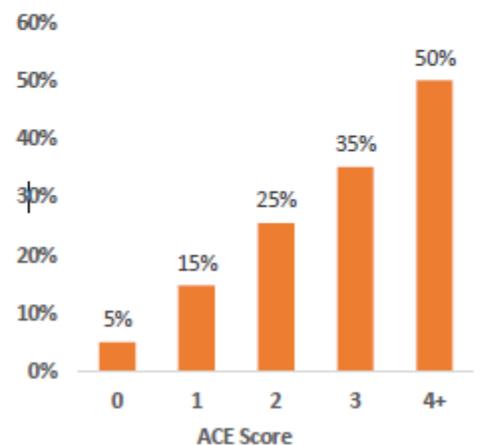
	Le Sueur Co	MN
Living with someone who is depressed or has MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES 	30%	29%
Having a parent/guardian who is currently IN JAIL , and/or has been in jail 	19%	16%
VERBAL ABUSE by a parent or adult in the household 	14%	14%
Living with someone who DRINKS TOO MUCH alcohol 	13%	10%
PHYSICAL ABUSE by a parent or adult in the household 	9%	11%
SEXUAL ABUSE by a family member and/or a person outside the family 	10%	8%
Witnessing DOMESTIC ABUSE of parents/adults in household 	7%	6%
Living with someone who uses ILLEGAL DRUGS or abuses prescription drugs 	4%	4%

When it comes to mental health, students with four or more ACEs are 4.6 times more likely to report feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past 2 weeks (67% of those with 4+ ACEs vs. 15% of those with 0 ACEs). Rates of other mental health issues also increase by ACE score:

- Past 2-week anxiety: 70% (4+ ACEs) vs. 18% (0 ACEs).
- Past-year suicidal ideation: 50% (4+ ACEs) vs. 5% (0 ACEs).
- Past-year suicide attempts: 21% (4+ ACEs) vs. 1% (0 ACEs).

Suicidal ideation and attempts have been slowly increasing each year among students across Minnesota, including in Le Sueur County. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, between 2016-2019, death by suicide and accidental deaths were the most common cause of death for youth (ages 13-19) in Minnesota, with 215 deaths for each. **The National Alliance for Mental Illness reports that 1 in 5 teens and young adults (20%) live with a mental health condition. In Le Sueur County, that relates to 1,341 youth.** The Archives of General Psychiatry report that 50% of all mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75% by the mid-20s.

Of students with 0 ACEs, 5% reported having thoughts of suicide in the past year, compared to 50% of students with 4+ ACEs; students with 4+ ACEs are 10 times more likely to report suicidal thoughts.



When it comes to substance use, compared to youth who are not exposed to ACEs, those reporting an ACE score of 4+ are:

- 13.8 times more likely to report e-cigarette use
 - 15.6 times more likely to report marijuana use
 - 16.2 times more likely to report prescription drug misuse
- ...in the past month.

While the MSS asks about 8 specific experiences to calculate an ACE score, there are other negative experiences that can contribute to dysfunction and health risks. Chronic stress can result from adversity both in children’s communities, as well as in their families. According to the Minnesota Department of Education’s Minnesota Report Card, of the 4,101 students enrolled in Le Sueur County public schools in 2020, 1,360 (33%) were enrolled in the free and reduced-price meal program. Poverty and its attendant issues (such as hunger and homelessness) also have lasting effects.

According to the MSS, children in Le Sueur County also face these adversities:

- 49% of students have been bullied in the past month: Students reported being bullied most for their physical appearance (31%); their weight (26%); their gender expression* (19%); or their race, ethnicity, or national origin (14%).
- 19% have experienced dating violence (including being verbally or physically abused, or being pressured into sex by a girlfriend or boyfriend).
- 13% don’t feel safe at their schools.

When it comes to school attendance, all absences away from school, including excused, unexcused, and suspensions count towards chronic absence criteria, which is defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days (the equivalent of missing one day out of every two traditional school weeks). We intend to emphasize the academic impact of missed school days with the use of community based, positive strategies to improve attendance. According



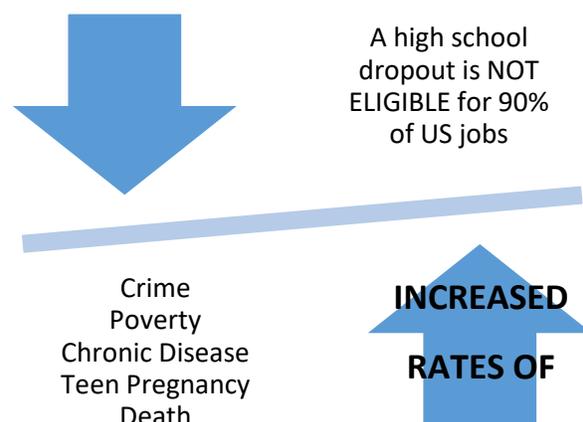
to the Minnesota Department of Education’s Minnesota Report Card, Le Sueur County public schools had 3,768 students enrolled in 2019. **Of these, 358 (9.5%) students were considered chronically absent.** Chronic absenteeism rates were highest for Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (14.2%), followed by Tri-City United (11.7%), Le Sueur Henderson (5.7%), and Cleveland (3.3%).

Unexcused absences are counted and when they meet a set limit, children are referred to truancy and educational neglect interventions by Le Sueur County Human Services. These programs emphasize compliance with state laws and school rules; their solutions rely heavily on legal and administrative actions. For the 2022-2023 school year, 53 truancy referrals were made, with 34 students taking part in Truancy Diversion. So far in 2023, Le Sueur County Child Protection has received 15 educational neglect reports, 2 of which were screened in for assessment. Three reports were referred on to voluntary child welfare services to reduce familial barriers to school attendance by offering support.

According to the United States Department of Education, “children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade. Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.” Minnesota Department of Education’s Minnesota Report Card data shows that in Le Sueur County, of the 271 third grade students tested, 154 (57%) were proficient in reading in 2022, with the other remaining 117 third graders (43%) falling below grade level for reading. Additionally, reading proficiency rates declined by grade level, with just 43% of 11th graders reading at grade level.

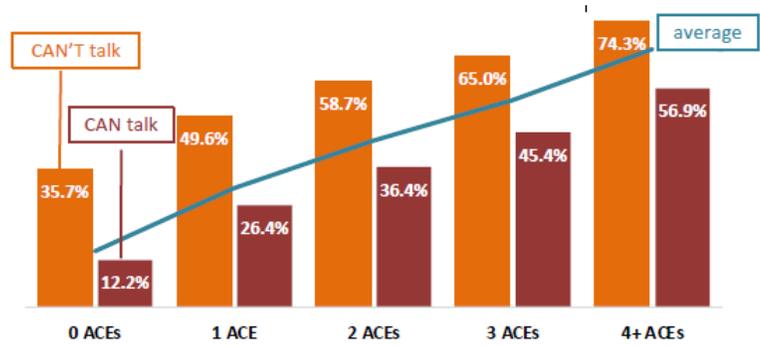
However, according to the United States Department of Education, chronic absenteeism can be a better predictor of whether students will drop out before graduation than test scores. Graduation rates for Le Sueur County’s 320 high school seniors in 2022, averaged 90% (288 graduates).

Forty-two high school seniors did not graduate with their class, averaging 13% across the county. It is widely understood that chronically absent students are more likely to drop out of high school and that youth who drop out of school prior to graduation are linked to poor outcomes later in life, such as poverty, physical and mental health problems, and involvement in the criminal justice system. Bringing the data full circle, these same outcomes are linked to high ACE scores outlined in the beginning of this section.



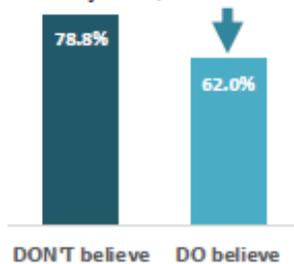
Protective factors are circumstances that exist at the individual, family, peer, school, community level and are connected with decreased risk of poor outcomes such as substance use and mental health issues. ACEs are associated with negative outcomes; however, individuals with higher ACE scores who also have protective factors to provide resiliency are shielded from the harmful effects of these ACEs. Protective factors work to reduce harmful behaviors and lessen the risk of poor outcomes related to ACEs.

For example, according to the MSS, the rates of depression are lower when students feel they can talk about their problems with a parent. This graph compares the rate of depression for students who feel they can talk to their parents about problems with those who feel they can't; it shows that being able to talk to a parent has a protective effect against depression.

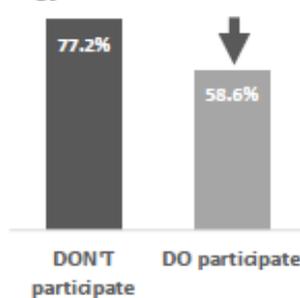


Regardless of the number of ACEs a child has experienced, they still benefit from protective factors. For example, students are less likely to report depression when they believe adults in their school and community care about them, regardless of ACEs. However, when it comes to students who have experienced multiple ACEs, the protective factors are apparent in the reduction in students who report depression.

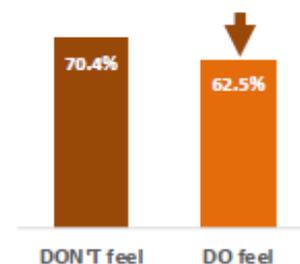
Levels of depression in students with 4+ ACEs decrease when they believe an adult cares about them (parent, relative, school or community adult).



Levels of depression in students with 4+ ACEs decrease when they participate in activities outside of school that give them joy and energy.



Levels of depression in students with 4+ ACEs decrease when they feel that teachers are interested in them as a person.



While the data and focus groups agree that crisis interventions, as well as enhanced services for struggling children and families are needed, preventative steps can stop some of this issues from continuing to grow. The Collaborative can build resilience in our communities by focusing on enhancing protective factors. Below is data from the MSS highlighting caring relationships and other protective factors that can be built upon to support the well-being of children and young people in our communities. These include ensuring that youth:

Protective Factor	Le Sueur Co	MN
Believe AN ADULT CARES about them (parent, relative, school or community adult)	93%	91%
Feel they can TALK TO PARENTS about problems they're having	84%	80%
Feel their RELATIVES CARE about them	77%	74%
Participate in activities that give them ENERGY AND JOY	73%	76%
Feel TEACHERS ARE INTERESTED in them as a person	61%	63%
Feel they can TALK TO A SCHOOL ADULT about about problems they're having	33%	27%
Feel the ADULTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES CARE about them	20%	29%

RESULTS OF 2023 FOCUS GROUPS

During the spring of 2023, the Collaborative began to solicit input from partnering organizations of Le Sueur County to identify community, family, youth, and child needs. Focus Groups were facilitated with 53 attendees. There was good representation from each partner of the collaborative. All groups were engaged and active participants in discussion and were asked to discuss and prioritize areas of need. Based on this information, the Collaborative's Board compiled the four initiatives, which became the foundation of this plan.

FINDINGS

OVER-BURDENED MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM:

Focus groups unanimously and fervently shared that Le Sueur County and the surrounding area struggle with a general shortage of behavioral healthcare providers, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the mental health needs of children, youth, and families in our communities and schools. Groups reported many youth struggling with their mental health often do not have providers and services in place to help them, leaving families, school districts, law enforcement, and local hospitals to shoulder the response to mental health. Groups shared concern for a **lack of professionals**, treatment options, and support systems in place to meet the demand. Responding to **the increased volume of unmet mental health needs for youth in schools** has shifted the focus of teachers, paraprofessionals, social workers, school counselors, and administrative staff onto responding to behavioral problems in schools, or managing mental health crises, rather than supporting building positive relationships with students, teaching curriculum, and providing educational and career guidance. This had led to **increased staff turnover in our schools**, and damaged the morale of students and staff alike. This exasperates the difficulty of meeting mental health needs for children and youth. Our school staff are overwhelmed and burnt-out, and they need more help.

ASPIRATION TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

Our local school districts voiced aspirations to **improve student attendance**, family engagement, school performance/grades, and graduation rates. Focus groups recognized that there are systemic, economic, familial, and cultural barriers that influence children and youths' ability and desire to attend school. Focus groups would like to see resources available to ensure children and youth are able to attend school. Schools also wish **to improve communication, teamwork, and problem solving** between families, schools, and the county when truancy and educational neglect become a concern for families. Schools and human services agree that having clear expectations to handle truancy and educational neglect concerns is paramount to improving partnerships and ensuring successful outcomes for the most at risk students. All groups desired to see children have positive experiences and feel supported and safe at their schools.

DESIRE TO BUILD RESILIENCY IN COMMUNITIES:

Many focus group attendees were familiar with the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study and how childhood-trauma can impact individuals, families, and communities. Most focus groups agreed that further training on the topic was desired, with an emphasis on how to **build resiliency in our communities and schools to protect against ACEs**. Focus groups unanimously agreed to apply for Minnesota Department of Human Services grant program, More Resilient Minnesota, provided by FamilyWise Services. This grant program offers free training about ACEs, support for the Collaborative's strategic planning process, and micro-grant funding for initiatives.

NEED FOR COLLABORATION OF GROUPS ACROSS LEVELS:

All focus groups emphasized a need for improved care coordination across disciplines for families in need of complex, multi-agency supports. Groups desire to understand one another's roles and resource better, to **work as a team to provide streamlined and effective services for families**. Groups agreed that the system of care is complex and difficult for families to navigate, and even professionals are not aware of all resources that might be available. Focus Groups agreed that the Collaborative could build a structure to bridge the gap between disciplines to bring organizations together in partnership on a family level as well as for the local system of care.

KEY NEXT STEPS

A community-based strategic planning document is only a first step towards improving mental health awareness and access to appropriate treatment. The Planning and Steering Committee respectfully submits to the Governing Board the following recommendations for critical first steps in reaching our goals:

- 1.) Add mental health as a strategic priority for each of the partnering organizations to guide efforts towards goal setting and resource allocation discussions.
- 2.) Review and share potential funding and resource ideas to support the goals of this plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEANS

The following sections provide a detailed look at each Initiative, Strategic Goals and the corresponding Objectives, broken down into "Means of Achieving Objective", and how the overall success of the Objective will be measured.

MORE RESILIENT MINNESOTA

GOAL 1: *Improve the health and resilience of current and future generations by raising awareness about Adverse Childhood Experiences, collecting community input about children's and families' needs, and develop plans to mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors.*

Objective 1: Phase 1: Host 5 presentations on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) for professionals, parents, and community groups within Le Sueur County.

Means of Achieving Objective:

1. Schedule presentations on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) at each school within Le Sueur County (Le Sueur Henderson Schools, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, Cleveland Schools, and Tri-City United), and in the county office, in partnership with FamilyWise Services.
2. Encourage attendance at presentations for staff employed by partner organizations and local professionals serving children and families in Le Sueur County.
3. Market and encourage attendance by diverse sectors and community groups through use of school communications platforms, e-mail, and social media posts.
4. Host these presentations to highlight information about NEAR Science (neurobiology, epigenetics/historical trauma, ACEs, and resilience research), sharing the message widely in the county.
5. Collect and analyze attendance data to evaluate success of presentation attendance and identify sectors of population to focus on a target audience for which to continue to facilitate presentations.

Primary Metric for Success:

- Increase the number of individuals familiar with NEAR Science (neurobiology, epigenetics/historical trauma, ACEs, and resilience research) by Fall 2023.
- Increase the number of presentations provided to teachers, paraprofessionals, and school staff on NEAR Science (neurobiology, epigenetics/historical trauma, ACEs, and resilience research) by Fall 2023.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2024

Objective 2: Phase 2: Train 5 local champions who will then widely share ACEs and NEAR Science information and expand community leadership across diverse sectors and groups in our County.

Means of Achieving Objective:

1. Recruit and select at least 3 - 5 professionals from within partners to become trained Facilitators to present information on ACEs in each community on an on-going basis.
2. Facilitators will attend a regional FamilyWise Services ACE Interface Presenter Training to learn how to present the Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences: Building Self-Healing Communities curriculum.
3. After attending a Regional ACE Interface Presenter Training, Facilitators are expected to complete ACE Interface Presenter certification within 9 months.

4. Facilitators will serve as local champions who can help widely share ACEs and NEAR Science information and expand community leadership across diverse sectors and groups in our County.
5. Enlist these presenters to host 3-5 presentations per year on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) for parents and caregivers, local professionals serving children and families in Le Sueur County, as well as community groups.

Primary Metric for Success:

- Increase in individuals familiar with NEAR Science (neurobiology, epigenetics/historical trauma, ACEs, and resilience research) by Spring 2024, with year-over-year increase each year thereafter.
- Increase in the number of presentations provided to diverse sectors, community groups, parents and caregivers on NEAR Science (neurobiology, epigenetics/historical trauma, ACEs, and resilience research) by Spring 2024, with year-over-year increase each year thereafter.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2024

Objective 3: Phase 3: Conduct Community Resilience Conversations and/or 100 Cups of Coffee Interviews to engage at least 50 diverse community members to gather their input about community strengths, challenges, and possible next steps to promote greater community wellbeing.

Means of Achieving Objective:

1. Convene a Community Resiliency Planning Team of at least 3 members to advise and assist with the planning and implementation of Conversations and/or Interviews
2. Partner with FamilyWise for the initial planning and implementation of the activities and decide on a preferred method of gathering community input
3. Gather input from at least fifty community members through one of the following ways:
 - i. Host two or more Community Resilience Conversations and gather input from at least fifty individuals who represent a diverse cross-section of the community.
 - ii. Conduct at least fifty of the 100 Cups of Coffee Interviews with individuals who represent a diverse cross-section of the community.
 - iii. Gather input from at least 25 individuals through Interviews and at least 25 individuals through Conversations, if taking a hybrid approach
4. Designate a Collaborative partner, skilled volunteer, or contract evaluator to summarize the collected community data and identify key themes that emerged
5. Partner with the Community Resiliency Planning Team to review local data sources and key themes from the Conversations and Interviews, and identify concrete actions that will address identified needs and promote a more welcoming, supportive, and resilient community

Primary Metric for Success:

- Complete Interviews and/or Conversations, as outlined above, by Fall 2024.
- Provide Community Resiliency Planning Team with local data and key themes to support creation of Community Resilience Plan by Spring 2025.
- Continue to complete Interviews and/or Conversations and provide Community Resiliency Planning Team with local data and key themes to support creation of Community Resilience Plan each year thereafter.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2025

Objective 4: Phase 4: Develop Community Resilience Plans that outline next steps for decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors in their communities and apply for micro grants to fund Initiatives developed in that plan.

Means of Achieving Objective:

1. Informed by community wisdom and local data the group will gather, the Community Resiliency Planning Team will develop a Community Resilience Plan that outlines next steps for decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors in our communities.
2. Apply annually for micro grants to support piloting a Community Resilience Initiative listed in our Community Resilience Plan.

Primary Metric for Success:

- Create Community Resilience Plan for review by Planning & Steering Committee by Fall 2024.
- Implement Community Resilience Plan by Spring 2025.
- Submit applications for micro grants by Fall 2024.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2025

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

GOAL I: *Position the Collaborative to affect changes to and utilization of services provided in times of crisis, for treatment of mental illness, for early identification and intervention, and in the prevention of mental health symptoms.*

Objective 1: Restructure the Collaborative's partnerships to include stakeholders in the area of mental health in order to bring about partnerships that strengthen the position of the Collaborative and each partner to implement changes to the local system of care that benefit children and families on Le Sueur County.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Recruit and select mental health organizations to join the Collaborative's Board, committees and workgroups by Fall 2023.
2. Draft revision of interagency agreement to transform the collaborative into an Integrated Children's Mental Health and Family Services Collaborative by Fall 2023.
3. Submit revised interagency agreement for review and input by members of the board by Fall 2023.
4. Gain Board approval for new membership and revision of interagency agreement by Spring 2024.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Fully executed revision of interagency agreement to incorporate children's mental health and family services, and bring new mental health organizations to the partnership by Spring 2024.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2024

Objective 2: Participate with United Way's Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Committee, focused on bringing solutions to area communities on youth prevention and mental health awareness.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Collaborative Coordinator will be an active participant in bi-weekly meetings by Fall 2023 and provide updates from United Way to Planning & Steering Committee monthly.
2. Collaborative Coordinator and the Planning and Steering Committee will provide support to partnering organizations on planning and implementing resources available through the United Way's Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Committee and sub-committees (such as Youth Mental Health Navigator, Hope Squad, Suicide Prevention training, Parent Resource Hub, Grant Writing, etc.).
3. Collaborative Coordinator and the Planning and Steering Committee will provide support to the United Way's Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Committee and sub-committees, to strengthen the impact of the Collaborative.
4. Working with Horizon Homes' Mobile Crisis Team, Le Sueur County Dispatch, local law enforcement and ambulance services, Le Sueur County Health Department, Le Sueur County Human Services, Mayo Clinic, Mankato Clinic, Ridgeview, and local school districts,

host presentations and marketing of Horizon Homes' Crisis Services to coordinate emergency assessment, admittance, and treatment between available services.

5. Working with Horizon Homes' Mobile Crisis Team, and local school districts, determine the viability of a Mobile Crisis Worker assigned to work with school districts in times of mental health crisis and for post-hospitalization stabilization services.
6. Coordinate marketing of Horizon Homes' Mobile Crisis Team to parents, community members, local business, non-profits, and other organizations through Le Sueur County.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- List of providers, along with programs and services offered in Le Sueur County, compiled and made available to the residents by Spring 2024.
- Identified gaps in programs and services critical to Le Sueur County as resolved or have a plan in place to be addressed by Spring 2024.
- Increase in utilization of Horizon Homes' Mobile Crisis Team in Le Sueur County by Spring 2025.
- Decrease in mental health emergency visits and hospitalizations of youth in Le Sueur County by Spring 2025.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2025

Objective 3: Create community and school specific plans to address the mental health needs of children, youth and families in each community and throughout the county.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Establish membership of community workgroups for each school district, composed of representatives of each partnering organization, and other key stakeholders.
2. Implement schedule for regularly occurring in-person community workgroups for each school district.
3. Draft mental health plans for each community workgroup, based on needs and priorities of each community.
4. Implement mental health plans for each community workgroup.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Community workgroups for each school district formed and regularly meeting by Spring 2024.
- Mental health plans for each community workgroup drafted by Fall 2024
- Mental health plans for each community workgroup implemented by Spring 2025.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2025

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE INITIATIVE

GOAL I: *Improve school attendance and graduation rates by providing resources and interventions to support students and families in prioritizing school attendance.*

Objective 1: Implement clear policies and procedures regarding school attendance, truancy and educational neglect.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Establish membership of community workgroups for each school district, composed of representatives of each partnering organization, and other key stakeholders.
2. Implement schedule for regularly occurring in-person community workgroups for each school district.
3. Review current attendance, truancy and educational neglect policies and procedures in place at each school district, Le Sueur County Human Services, Attorney's Office, Corrections, and Court Services.
4. Consider developing teams to collect feedback on policies and procedures, make recommendations for revisions, and implement updates.
5. Ensure school attendance, truancy, and educational neglect policies are posted and easily accessible on school and/or county websites.
6. Distribute and communicate school attendance policies to all families with enrolled children in each district.
7. Distribute and communicate truancy and educational neglect policies to all school districts with children attending that reside in Le Sueur County.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Community workgroups for each school district formed and regularly meeting by Spring 2024.
- School Attendance plans for each community workgroup drafted by Spring 2024.
- School Attendance plans for each community workgroup implemented by Fall 2024.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Fall 2024

Objective 2: Develop a team dedicated to creating new solutions for school attendance concerns and improve school engagement for students and families.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Establish membership of community workgroups for each school district, composed of representatives of each partnering organization, and other key stakeholders.
2. Implement schedule for regularly occurring in-person community workgroups for each school district.
3. Encourage School Engagement team(s) to attend and research resources, strategies, tools, and resources to promote school engagement and attendance.
4. Develop and execute School Engagement plan(s) to implement early interventions and positive experiences in school for children, youth, and families to decrease school absences and referrals to truancy and educational neglect.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Community workgroups for each school district formed and regularly meeting by Spring 2024.
- School Engagement plans for each community workgroup drafted by Spring 2024.
- School Engagement plans for each community workgroup implemented by Fall 2024.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Fall 2024

COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATION INITIATIVE

GOAL I: *Clearly establish Collaborative structure, committees, roles, goals, and processes.*

Objective 1: Establish the Collaborative bylaws and operating procedures, revise the Interagency Agreement, and further develop the Strategic Plan.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Draft documents, such as Collaborative bylaws and operating procedures and Strategic Plan; outlining organizational structures, processes, priorities, goals, committees, and roles.
2. Submit drafted documents for review by chairpersons of the Joint Powers Board and Planning & Steering Committee.
3. Present reviewed documents to Joint Powers Board and/or Planning & Steering Committee for additional input and approval.
4. Communicate and post approved documents to partnering organizations, and other local key stakeholders.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Initial Strategic Plan implemented by Fall 2023, then updated by the Collaborative Coordinator and reviewed and by the Planning and Steering Committee quarterly for changes.
- Collaborative bylaws and operating procedures drafted and submitted for review by members of the Joint Powers Board by Fall 2023.
- Collaborative bylaws and operating procedures approved by Joint Powers Board by Spring 2024.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2024

GOAL II: *Improve connections between agencies and share resources and information that may benefit the children and families of Le Sueur County.*

Objective 1: Increase communication and collaboration between Le Sueur Henderson Schools, Tri-City United Schools, Cleveland Schools, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Schools, Le Sueur County Human Services, Le Sueur County Public Health, Le Sueur County Court Services, Horizon Homes, Counseling Services of Southern Minnesota, Fernbrook Family Services, and other local organizations that serve children, youth, and families dealing with mental health concerns.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Establish annual meeting between the leadership of partnering organizations and other local organizations to address current barriers and improve access to services for residents.

2. Create and market e-mailing list for resources to be shared by the Collaborative widely throughout the county to those who serve our children and families.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Annual meeting hosted by the Collaborative by Spring 2024.
- Monthly newsletters and resources distributed by Collaborative Coordinator.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2024

Objective 2: Implement wraparound care planning teams to support families and increase communication and collaboration between Le Sueur County Human Services, Le Sueur County Public Health, Minnesota Department of Corrections, Minnesota Valley Action Council, local schools, mental health organizations, local law enforcement, private practitioners, nonprofits, and other community stakeholders.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Identify eligibility criteria for wraparound referrals, consider providing priority and focus on youth experiencing concerns for mental health and school attendance.
2. Identify multi-disciplinary membership for wraparound care planning teams, and develop agreement between partnering organizations for scheduling staff to attend.
3. Create and adopt procedures for wraparound referrals, scheduling team meetings, discussion topics, and data privacy practices.
4. Implement and monitor utilization of wraparound care planning teams.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Wraparound care planning team procedures drafted by Fall 2024.
- Wraparound care planning team procedures implemented by Spring 2025.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Spring 2025

Objective 3: Address issues of funding for programs listed within the Strategic Plan and develop sustainable funding sources and service contracts.

Means for Achieving Objective:

1. Development of funding plans for each Objective that will cover the cost of implementation and maintenance for a five-year cycle.
2. Identify, apply, and administer grants relevant to Objectives.
3. Coordinate allocations of funds to the Integrated Fund for Objectives that fall within the operational budgets of multiple agencies/organizations within the County.
4. Establish a donor cultivation list of private and corporate entities for active support.

Primary Metrics for Success:

- Each Objective in this Strategic Plan will have a corresponding funding recommendation and plan completed by Fall 2024.

Objective Completed/Evaluated: Fall 2024

An in-depth spreadsheet is utilized by the committees to track and measure goal progression. The spreadsheet includes workflow charts indicating benchmarks and the assigned community committee on each objective. These spreadsheets also include specific timelines for each means with measurable outcomes. These outcomes have been quantified to establish the Primary Metrics for Success reported in the above sections. For ease of the reader, these details have not been included in this Strategic Plan report, but are available from the Le Sueur County Collaborative.