

# Healing School Systems

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*Voices from  
the Field*

This practitioner brief is one in a series highlighting concrete ways that leaders can increase educational equity by building supportive learning environments that meet all students' social and emotional needs. MDRC and the Alliance for Excellent Education recently released [a brief](#) that describes state- and district-level initiatives to transform school districts into healing spaces for all by reevaluating system-wide policies and structures and by building educators' capabilities and supporting their well-being.<sup>1</sup> This brief highlights how two educational systems engaged numerous stakeholders to develop “healing-centered,” “trauma-engaged” frameworks.<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

Drawing on the science of learning and human development, educational leaders are seeking ways to integrate approaches that develop the whole child, elevating the child's social and emotional development and well-being so they are considered as important as academic development.<sup>3</sup> They are also increasingly aware that to address disparities in students' social and emotional well-being, they must also address inequitable experiences in schools that arise from school policies and structures and from students' interactions with the adults in the system.<sup>4</sup> They are therefore increasingly aiming to put in place policies and practices that provide students affected by adversity inside and outside of school with the support they need from educators once they walk into the school building.<sup>5</sup> Doing so requires not only understanding how stress and trauma affect behavior and learning (being “trauma-informed”), but changing school policies, procedures, practices, and support services so that they actively acknowledge trauma as a possible root cause and promote collective healing (being “trauma-engaged”).<sup>6</sup> Examples of trauma-engaged practices can include student-created classroom norms, calming areas with soothing materials where students can deescalate big emotions, activities that promote mindfulness such as meditation or art, engaging in restorative circles when conflict arises,<sup>7</sup> or revisions of zero-tolerance disciplinary policies that resort to suspensions and expulsions.

This companion brief provides advice from leaders in the State of Alaska and Chicago Public Schools for other state and district leaders who may want to develop a system-wide vision and its corresponding approach—a framework—that emphasizes collective healing and trauma-engaged practices (see Box 1). Their advice is particularly relevant in light of the mental and

## BOX 1 State and District Systems and Leaders

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and Chicago Public Schools are quite different: Chicago is one large, urban district with 340,658 students at 636 schools, and Alaska has 54 smaller, often rural districts serving 131,489 students at 509 schools.\* Yet they share that their student populations include large percentages of children of color, and communities with high levels of trauma and need. The following state and district leaders informed this brief:

### Alaska

- **SHARON FISHEL**, Education Specialist II, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
- **PATRICK SIDMORE**, Healthy Schools Specialist, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
- **HEATHER COULEHAN**, School and Emotional Learning Coordinator, Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement, Association of Alaska School Boards

### Chicago Public Schools

- **MAURICE SWINNEY**, former Chief Equity Officer
- **HELLEN ANTONOPOULOS**, former Executive Director, Office of Social and Emotional Learning
- **BRIAN THOMPSON**, Lead Title IX Field Specialist, Office of Social and Emotional Learning

NOTE: \*These are enrollment numbers for the 2020-2021 school year.

behavioral health challenges districts are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The featured lessons explain why they created system-wide frameworks to guide this work, how they engaged diverse stakeholders within their systems to develop the frameworks, and how they involved the community to shape them.

## Developing a System-Wide Framework

A framework is the essential supporting structure or basic system upon which structures, policies, and practices can be built. In education, a framework's design is the representation of the educational system's vision, philosophy, values, curricula, and staff and student needs.<sup>8</sup> In this context, the framework articulates what it means to redesign schooling so that it addresses adversity and trauma experienced by staff members and students and emphasizes collective healing and well-being.

***“We learned that all of our schools were wanting to be trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive. And they either kept recreating the wheel themselves or were throwing a lot of money at something that was copyrighted to do it for them. Most of those initiatives have died because they can’t sustain it or can’t modify those programs to meet the needs of their district.”***

***– Sharon Fishel, Alaska DEED***

## **A State Perspective**

The motivation for Alaska’s framework is rooted in two decades worth of trauma-engaged work from many Alaskan stakeholders, such as the Alaska Child Trauma Center in Anchorage and therapeutic judicial courts in Alaska. The idea for trauma-engaged *school* systems arose from Patrick Sidmore at the Alaska Mental Health Board and colleagues at the Alaska Division of Public Health. They began using data on the adverse childhood experiences of adult Alaskans to highlight to many people how prevalent they were and how important it was to begin addressing adverse childhood experiences in children.<sup>9</sup> In March 2017, this effort brought together the Association of Alaska School Boards and the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). Together, they began to devise a process to bring social and emotional learning and trauma-engaged practices to school districts.<sup>10</sup> Many actors across the state had already begun to show an appetite for recognizing trauma and changing school practices (for example, the statewide teachers’ union had begun to actively promote trauma-engaged practices in schools), but state leaders recognized that a collective initiative was needed. They also realized that it would not be enough to raise awareness about the impact of trauma in Alaska; the framework would need to result in a shift in adults’ mindsets if it was to change school practices. They were therefore careful to refer to “trauma-engaged” practices rather than “trauma-informed” or “trauma-sensitive” ones.

***“Staff need to be engaged in what they are doing. You can know everything, you can be informed, you can be sensitive to trauma, but unless you are actually changing your practice, it’s not going to make a difference.”***

***– Sharon Fishel, Alaska DEED***

In 2019, *Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska* was released as a collaborative project of Alaska DEED, the Association of Alaska School Boards, First Alaskans Institute, the Alaska Afterschool Network, the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and the Alaska Child Trauma Center (see Box 2).<sup>11</sup> The framework brings together perspectives from Alaskan educators and community members on how to use trauma-engaged approaches to improve social and emotional well-being and academic outcomes for all students. The project not only focuses on adverse childhood and community experiences, but also on the collective strengths and resilience that have shaped the lives of multiple generations of Alaskans.<sup>12</sup> An accompanying toolkit was released in 2020 to help Alaska schools and communities integrate trauma-engaged practices and policies into their everyday activities.<sup>13</sup>

## **BOX 2** Alaska's *Transforming Schools Framework*

*Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska* and its accompanying toolkit provide insight into policies, practices, and shared understandings. It is organized into 11 chapters, titled:

1. Deconstructing Trauma
2. Relationship Building
3. Policy Considerations
4. Planning and Coordination of Schoolwide Efforts
5. Professional Learning
6. Schoolwide Practices and Climate
7. Skill Instruction
8. Support Services
9. Cultural Integration and Community Co-creation
10. Family Partnership
11. Self-Care

***“We often see trauma-informed practices being developed behind copyright. They are frequently incomplete in their scope. We wanted our work in the public domain because this is a new field. I know from my experience in mental health that assessments and tools that are in the public domain get better, while those that are locked down do not. So we’ve put out the framework and made the toolkit dynamic by placing it on the web. We are building the plane as we fly it.”***

***— Patrick Sidmore, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services***

### **A District Perspective**

In 2016, Chicago Public Schools received a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide specialized care for students affected by trauma and violence in 10 schools. This “Healing Trauma Together” grant provided professional development training for educators to help them adopt trauma-engaged practices, improve school climate, engage families, and intervene with students who were experiencing chronic stress or complex trauma.

The Healing Trauma Together project resulted in preliminary evidence that trauma-engaged practices could reduce suspensions and improve elements of school climate and culture,<sup>14</sup> and district leaders decided that what Chicago Public Schools needed was a district-wide response to trauma in its communities. The initiative needed to be a collaborative project, aligned with existing district values, investments, and priorities. In March 2021, in partnership with Chicago Beyond and the Children First Fund, the district released its *Healing-Centered Framework*, the result of two years of engagement with multiple stakeholders (see Box 3). There was a common understanding that the district needed to work toward collective healing and wellness, emphasizing how all stakeholders—students, teachers, staff members, administrators and district leaders, families and caregivers, and community partners—have roles to play in their own healing and the healing of others.<sup>15</sup> The \$24 million initiative goes beyond individual programs operated out of individual departments. It builds on Chicago Public Schools’ five-year strategic vision that makes a priority of equity and student wellness, which led to the creation of an Office of Equity and an equity framework.<sup>16</sup> The separate *Healing-Centered Framework* represents a continued, interdepartmental effort to develop a comprehensive and holistic vision that engages the full district community.

### **BOX 3 Chicago Public Schools’ *Healing-Centered Framework***

The Chicago Public Schools’ *Healing-Centered Framework* identifies four major groups of stakeholders in the district community—“students,” “all staff,” “schools and school staff,” and “families, caregivers, and communities”—as being essential healers and agents in their own healing. The framework describes five core dimensions of healing that apply to each stakeholder group:

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Education and awareness | 4. Resources      |
| 2. Skills and strategies   | 5. Crisis support |
| 3. Culture and climate     |                   |

To implement the framework, Chicago Public Schools created dedicated working groups to build out 10 healing-centered initiatives, called:

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Comprehensive healing training sequence | 6. Staff wellness               |
| 2. Healing environments                    | 7. Healing-centered measurement |
| 3. The community-partner network           | 8. Policies and protocols       |
| 4. Trauma-engaged teacher leaders          | 9. Targeted interventions       |
| 5. Parent and caregiver support            | 10. Mental health framework     |

***“We [realized that] we needed a district-wide response. Our Healing Trauma Together federal grant was sort of a pilot for us about how we can truly [integrate] across all of our multitiered systems of support work to both prevent and mitigate the impact of trauma. We realized it couldn’t just be the trauma framework; it really had to be truly about transformational experiences in classrooms and buildings. So building out the Healing Trauma Together grant to a trauma framework really became more about building out healing.”***

***“Our office does social emotional learning and does support trauma-engaged schools and interventions; those pieces go together. But we also see and believe that it requires a partnership. We know there are other departments and partners within the district and in the [community] that also can support this work, so it was really important for us that this was not seen or experienced as just the [Office of Social and Emotional Learning] project—for it to be successful, it really, truly needed to have district-wide collaborative support and engagement from other ... departments.”***

***— Hellen Antonopoulos, Chicago Public Schools***

## Engaging Diverse Stakeholders

Leaders in Alaska and Chicago Public Schools described lessons for organizing staff members around their initiatives and developing their frameworks. Specifically, they highlighted ways to engage diverse stakeholders throughout their educational systems. Strategies included creating a working group to lead the effort, integrating the framework into the existing vision of the educational system, making the framework relevant to the adults in the system, and providing multiple ways for staff members to engage with the framework.

### Creating a Working Group

In both Alaska and Chicago Public Schools, leaders thought it was necessary to create a working group with a variety of perspectives and forms of expertise. In Alaska, the framework was created in partnership with various organizations across the state, as mentioned above. They began with weekly discussions about which topics should be included in the framework and why, thinking through whom they should consult, and developing strategies for getting stakeholders across the state invested in the framework’s success.

***“Each of the chapters in the framework was written by somebody different. For example, it was really important to us that the cultural integration and co-creation chapter was written by the First Alaskan Institute, another non-profit that does a lot of policy and equity work in the state.”***

***— Heather Coulehan, Association of Alaska School Boards***

*“Each group then reviewed different versions of the chapters and provided input. We would debate among the internal team about what to include and how to include it, which was sometimes hard.... It was the dedication of the group that really shined through to come up with a product that our schools could actually use.”*

*— Sharon Fishel, Alaska DEED*

In Chicago Public Schools, the effort began with an interdepartmental, district-wide audit of existing services, with the aim of bringing all services across district departments into alignment with each other. With the help of Chicago Beyond, which served as a project manager and partner throughout, the working group spent six to eight months auditing Chicago Public Schools’ existing services and discussing what the district does to support students affected by trauma. They identified where departments were offering redundant services, where they were offering services that could complement each other well, and where services were needed that did not exist. Together, they were able to interrogate how their existing policies and practices—for example the student code of conduct—either supported or were at odds with the healing-centered framework.

*“We [the Office of Social and Emotional Learning] began by asking ourselves, ‘What does our office currently do to support trauma and students’ social and emotional well-being?’ and then put out invitations to other departments to join the discussion. Some of these departments were the usual suspects ([for example, the] Office of Student Health and Wellness, Office of Diverse Learners and Support Services, Office of School Safety and Security, Office of Family and Community Engagement in Education), as well as those who are not typically as present or involved in this type of work ([for example, the] Office of Teaching and Learning). We began collaborating as a core planning group.... The working group was made up of folks in the various departments that do the day-to-day work. We have always seen that there were things that our different offices needed to connect on, and [with the healing-centered framework] we finally found one thing to start that conversation. From this work, we have committed to one another and now we are finding ways to collaborate together in different ways. Our work is blossoming together as we align our resources.”*

*— Hellen Antonopoulos, Chicago Public Schools*

*“Whenever we would come to a meeting, there were people from multiple [departments], and it would be a space for convergence of ideas. It was like a great coming together, breaking down those silos.... I’m very grateful to my colleagues on the working group because we always came together with open hearts, big ideas, and big hopes.”*

*— Brian Thompson, Chicago Public Schools*

## Integrating the Framework into the Existing Vision of the School System

During the planning phase of Chicago Public Schools' *Healing-Centered Framework*, the working group reported to a steering committee composed of leaders and chiefs of different departments, to ensure that the framework was developed in alignment with the district's existing vision. The presence of the committee helped secure the district's commitment to the effort and make sure that the framework was not considered a stand-alone initiative or the latest fad.

***“The initiative can’t be something new. It needs to build on what already exists as the district’s values, investments, priorities. That certainly was the case for us, and the framework brings those things together: the equity framework; the whole-school, -child, and -community model; existing multitiered systems of support; social and emotional learning—the mission and vision of our entire district is in this framework.”***

***— Hellen Antonopoulos, Chicago Public Schools***

## Making the Framework Relevant to the Adults in the System

Alaskan leaders spoke of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how stakeholders are perceiving their work. As Sharon Fishel from Alaska DEED said, “as a result of the pandemic, no one is immune to having an adverse experience in their life; we have all needed to learn how to do life differently.” This fact has enabled the framework to gain more traction throughout the Alaskan educational system, because all the chapters of the framework emphasize the needs of teachers and staff members: their own social and emotional well-being, their self-care, and their reflections on their biases about students.

***“The entryway for staff to [become more trauma-engaged] that I found to be most effective is to start with them. Start with staff needs and build out from there, allowing them to connect more with trauma and the needs of others.”***

***— Patrick Sidmore, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services***

## Recognizing that Staff Members Need Multiple Ways to Engage with the Framework

Even before the *Healing-Centered Framework* was created, the Chicago Public Schools Office of Social and Emotional Learning was training teachers and counselors in trauma-engaged practices. It had long recognized it was important for teachers to understand how these practices could help individual students affected by trauma. However, with the *Healing-Centered Framework*, Chicago Public Schools has now broadened its approach to have healing-centered work be infused throughout the district by involving all teachers and staff members. All educators can have their own entry points into this work, whether they are part of behavioral health teams or are teachers who have previously had very little training in trauma-informed approaches.

*“Throughout the district, staff can lean on the healing-centered framework as the new approach at [Chicago Public Schools], with policies to match it, and work to create the necessary ecosystem to see the change that we want. The healing-centered framework can be used to guide an individual’s practice in their classroom, provide ideas for doing this work on a team, or provide an explanation for how to shift away from harmful practices, such as student suspension for disciplinary infractions, toward restorative practices.”*

*—Maurice Swinney, Chicago Public Schools*

Leaders in Alaska said it was important to create multiple ways for staff members throughout the state to learn about and engage with the framework and resources, including in-person events, virtual sessions, and online information.

*“Once we published the framework, the momentum for it began to grow in September 2019 when we [Alaska DEED] hosted two two-day school safety and well-being summits. Between 250 and 350 participants traveled in from districts statewide. The workshops at the summits covered topics featured in the framework, so these summits served as an unveiling of the initiative.”*

*— Sharon Fishel, Alaska DEED*

*“When we launched the toolkit later that fall, we [Alaska DEED and the Association of Alaska School Boards] hosted weekly ‘Toolkit Tuesdays’ which focused on one section of the toolkit at each virtual session, and were well attended by educators, as well as some parents, superintendents, and principals. As of December 2021, the framework had been distributed to over 10,000 staff throughout the state, with the majority being sent out during the pandemic. For reference, there are 22,000 staff across Alaska.”*

*— Heather Coulehan, Association of Alaska School Boards*

## Tracking Stakeholder Engagement

To get people throughout the district invested in the *Healing-Centered Framework*, leaders in Chicago Public Schools said they needed to get people in schools who knew about and understood trauma-engaged practices to help engage their peers. Without broad engagement, they believed that the framework could not succeed. And to determine whether they were getting that engagement, they created a tracking system.

*“To take on a big initiative like this and make it sustainable, a district has to think about who are the audiences, what do they need to know, who needs to be informed versus who needs to be trained versus who needs to be given*

*opportunities to lead. These are the nuances that you need to think through to figure out [stakeholder engagement]. To garner buy-in, we used a ‘participation tracker’ that tracked who we spoke to [(for example, principals, network leaders, teachers)] and when we talked to them about the developing framework, to identify when we thought we had reached a critical mass with key stakeholders on a particular topic. With the participation tracker, we also determined the level of knowledge sharing required with stakeholders: who needs to know about the initiative via a few talking points, versus who needs to know all the details, versus who we thought we needed to influence.”*

*— Maurice Swinney, Chicago Public Schools*

## Giving Voice to the Community

Leaders in both Alaska and Chicago Public Schools said it was critical to them to include the perspectives of students, parents, teachers, and community partners in creating the healing vision.

### Incorporating Community Perspectives

Leaders in Chicago Public Schools said that they did not want the framework to be only the product of the school district. While it was innovative already to work across district departments, they did not feel that they could truly create a healing-centered district unless they were even more inclusive.

*“We’re not just doing this work with other [Chicago Public Schools] departments. We’re making sure to include students, making sure to include parents, we’re looking to get voices from the classroom. We also are engaged in our community partners because they do a lot of this work, so you need to make sure there’s room at the table for everyone.”*

*— Brian Thompson, Chicago Public Schools*

*“For this project to be truly successful, it needed to have district-wide collaborative support, as well as partnership from sister agencies, community partners, philanthropies, and of course, our stakeholders in general. It has been a long journey, but during that time we were building relationships, trust, and understanding, and other things that we didn’t anticipate but strengthened our collaboration.... After Years 2 and 3 of implementing the healing-centered framework, we expect that it will be ingrained in our practices, policies, and mindsets, so it’s not held by one person or department.”*

*— Hellen Antonopoulos, Chicago Public Schools*

In the case of Alaska, the state is very large, with urban communities and very remote, rural ones, and communities with diverse cultures and languages. Those developing the framework needed to understand what the framework's components would actually look like in practice in all these different communities. They recognized that a one-size-fits-all approach would not work.

*“It has been very important to our process to involve community, involve parents and families, in what we are doing because our teaching population comes and goes. Most of our teachers come from the lower 48 states and are here for a year or two and then leave. So it’s really important to build something for the whole community—which represents the schools, the families, the community members, the elders, in all the villages that we have.”*

*— Sharon Fishel, Alaska DEED*

### Identifying Community Needs and Building Trust

Leaders in Chicago Public Schools emphasized the importance of using data to identify community-level needs. Staff members examined district-level data to gain insight into students' needs and where violence might be happening. For example, they examined data to determine which areas had disproportionate levels of chronic absenteeism and suspensions. They also said it was critical to go to those communities affected by violence to gain a deeper understanding of their needs and of the root causes of that violence.

*“I think it’s important for [district leaders] who are establishing [a framework] to first see what’s out there.... If district-level data tells us something about where violence is occurring in certain communities, what might folks from those communities say about what their youth truly need? This [outreach] will also raise up issues concerning the ways that structural racism has positioned those communities to be in turmoil, so it doesn’t lay blame on the people most impacted [by violence].”*

*— Maurice Swinney, Chicago Public Schools*

To engage in this community outreach, the district had to first repair its relationships with communities and rebuild trust with them. When communities do not trust a school system, one effective approach is to “borrow trust” from organizations they do trust.

*“When there is broken trust, we asked ourselves, who do we know that has good relationships with community members and students? How do we tap into those organizations to communicate that the district wants to do something about this? It created a greater relationship between partners that actually gets us to the people who we really want to connect with and provide better supports for.”*

*— Maurice Swinney, Chicago Public Schools*

### **Community-wide Collaboration to Promote Sustainability**

In Alaska, an important distinction for the leaders working on the *Transforming Schools* framework is that while it was a statewide effort, it was not a top-down effort from the state department of education. To avoid giving that impression, they were careful to create it in partnership with many other groups. Once the internal working group had an early draft of the framework, leaders from that working group began presenting the concept at various in-person events: conferences of the Association of Alaska School Boards and the Alaska School Counselors Association, Alaska DEED School Safety and Well-Being Summits, and an annual School Health and Wellness Institute. The development of the framework lasted two years and involved hundreds of community members, school board members, school staff, counselors, nurses, and administrators throughout the state.

*“The collaboration on this framework has led to hundreds of people feeling ownership for this and that is an incredible strength to keep it alive. We all will eventually retire and there are others who are going to keep this work moving forward because it’s theirs too. That makes a huge difference.”*

*— Patrick Sidmore, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services*

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Ximena A. Portilla, “Healing School Systems” (New York: MDRC, 2022).
- 2 For additional discussions of these terms and others used throughout this companion brief, see Portilla (2022).
- 3 The Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, *From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development* (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2019).
- 4 Nicole Gardner-Neblett, Iheoma U. Iruka, and Marisha Humphries, “Dismantling the Black–White Achievement Gap Paradigm: Why and How We Need to Focus Instead on Systemic Change,” *Journal of Education* (2021); Jean B. Grossman, Susan Sepanik, Ximena A. Portilla, and Kevin Thaddeus Brown, Jr., *Educational Equity: Solutions Through Social and Emotional Well-Being* (New York: MDRC, 2021).
- 5 Sandra M. Chafouleas, Austin H. Johnson, Stacy Overstreet, and Natascha M. Santos, “Toward a Blueprint for Trauma-Informed Service Delivery in Schools,” *School Mental Health* 8, 1 (2016): 144–162.
- 6 Sharon Fishel, Andrea “Akalleq” Sanders, Heather Coulehan, Konrad Frank, Patrick Sidmore, Thomas Azzarella, Ann Rausch, Josh Arvidson, and Lori Grassgreen, *Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska* (Juneau, AK: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, 2019). Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of ‘trauma-informed,’ the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration says that a trauma-informed system: “(1) *realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; (2) *recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; (3) *responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and (4) seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.” See: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884 (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014).
- 7 Restorative circles are a form of mediation used when conflict arises between a student and adult or between students. They are led by a facilitator who brings affected parties together to explore what happened, reflect on their roles, work toward a solution, and ultimately restore harmony to individual relationships and the larger community. Melissa Diliberti, Michael Jackson, Samuel Correa, and Zoe Padgett, *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings from the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2017-18*, NCES 2019-061 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).
- 8 Christina Shala, “What Is an Educational Framework?” *The Education Blog* (<https://shala-books.com/education-blog/what-is-an-educational-framework>, 2018).
- 9 Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) include individually experienced sources of stress such as witnessing domestic violence, physical or emotional abuse and neglect, or caregiver mental illness. See Vincent J. Felitti, Robert F. Anda, Dale Nordenberg, David F. Williamson, Alison M. Spitz, Valerie Edwards, and James S. Marks, “Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 14, 4 (1998): 245–258. More recently, some practitioners have expanded the definition of ACEs to recognize that ACEs can arise from lived social conditions such as witnessing community violence or experiencing overt racism, bullying, or microaggressions. See Peter F. Cronholm, Christine M. Forke, Roy Wade, Megan H. Bair-Merritt, Martha Davis, Mary Harkins-Schwarz, Lee M. Pachter, and Joel A. Fein, “Adverse Childhood Experiences: Expanding the Concept of Adversity,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 49, 3 (2015): 354–361; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, “Adverse Childhood Experiences” (website: [https://nhhtac.acf.hhs.gov/soar/eguide/stop/adverse\\_childhood\\_experiences](https://nhhtac.acf.hhs.gov/soar/eguide/stop/adverse_childhood_experiences), n.d.); RYSE Center, “Disorder Versus Distress” (website: [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58ece61644024383be911a95/t/593e579b37c58172ed51340c/1497257886219/ACEs\\_social-location\\_2015.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58ece61644024383be911a95/t/593e579b37c58172ed51340c/1497257886219/ACEs_social-location_2015.pdf), 2015).
- 10 The Association of Alaska School Boards is a small, nonprofit organization that supports school boards and districts. The Association of Alaska School Boards emphasizes collaboration with communities, families, and schools to create optimal conditions for student learning. For more

- information, visit <https://aasb.org>.
- 11 To read the framework, visit <https://education.alaska.gov/tls/safeschools/pdf/transforming-schools.pdf>.
  - 12 Association of Alaska School Boards, “A New Framework Focuses on Transforming School Practices to Address the Impacts of Trauma” (website: <https://aasb.org/a-new-framework-focuses-on-transforming-school-practices-to-address-the-impacts-of-trauma>, n.d.).
  - 13 To read the toolkit, visit <https://education.alaska.gov/apps/traumawebtoolkit/landing.html>.
  - 14 For the Healing Trauma Together evaluation findings, see Chicago Public Schools, “Chicago Public Schools’ Healing Trauma Together Program: A Multi-Tiered Approach to Creating Trauma-Sensitive Schools” (website: [www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/Archives/ASMH-2019/Presentations-2019/CS-5.05.-Chicago-Public-Schools-Healing-Trauma-Together-Program.pdf](http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/Archives/ASMH-2019/Presentations-2019/CS-5.05.-Chicago-Public-Schools-Healing-Trauma-Together-Program.pdf), 2019).
  - 15 To read the framework, visit [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HOloVTIfmK8O7Julm\\_D7jSNEdaelbkxJ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HOloVTIfmK8O7Julm_D7jSNEdaelbkxJ/view).
  - 16 Chicago Public Schools, “CPS Equity Framework: Creating and Sustaining Equity and the Individual, School and District Level” (website: [https://assets.website-files.com/5e724f7b19f97014d5cb21c4/5f6cefddde4bd525d0c0a5fb\\_cps-equity-framework.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/5e724f7b19f97014d5cb21c4/5f6cefddde4bd525d0c0a5fb_cps-equity-framework.pdf), 2018).

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