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Overview of the District Youth Liaison Role

The **district youth liaison** is a member of the district leadership team who supports youth leaders in developing and implementing SMARTIE (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound, includes everyone) goals to support the emotional well-being of students in their districts. The district liaison is responsible for:

1. Identifying 1-2 youth leaders from their district to participate in the Youth Leadership Action Academy (Intensive Training in Fall, Youth Action Calls in Winter/Spring)
2. Attending the Youth Leadership Academy Intensive Training
3. Attending the bi-monthly Youth Leadership Academy Action Calls
4. Meeting with youth leaders in between action call to facilitate youth leaders developing and implementing a SMARTIE Goal
5. Working with the District Leadership Team to integrate youth leaders' perspective into district planning and goals

Process for Districts to engage Youth Leaders in their community to advise & lead

We will be working with you to help amplify youth voices by engaging existing youth leaders from each district as collaborative partners in supporting the health and well-being of students in their community. The youth selected for the role will participate in a **Youth Leadership Academy** where they will help drive the design and implementation of emotional and social skills, student mental health (SMH) and skill development in their school communities. It is imperative that youth be compensated for their contribution to the work.

1) Who are the existing youth leaders in your state and district? Consider the existing advisory boards, councils, organization and clubs within the state, district, and schools as these are excellent places to start when considering recruiting youth.

2) Identify 1-2 youth per district.

- Determine a process for selecting youths to officially participate in the WSCC Youth Leadership Academy. Districts may consider a formal or informal nomination process, application, screening interview, etc. for selecting youth leaders.

3) Consult with the Youth Engagement Liaison (Dr. Tiffany Beason) throughout the process. Dr. Beason can help your district:

- Identify groups/councils to reach out to.
- Develop a Consent process.
- Provide templates for forms and help you adapt them to your district/state policies and procedures.

Inclusion Criteria for selected Youth Leaders:

- **Young people from communities most impacted by increased chronic disease risk.**
- **Age 13-18 years old**
- Current Youth Leader or Representative on a State, District or School Council, Organization Committee
- Can commit to two 2-hour intensive trainings & four 1-hour action calls over the school year.

Groups/Organizations to recruit Youth Leaders from:

- District Youth Advisory Committee Representatives
- Youth Representative on the School Board
- Student Government Association Leaders
- State Youth Leadership Council Representatives/ Tribal Youth Leadership Council Representatives
- Youth Leaders/Representatives on Parent, Teacher, Student Organizations (PTSO)
- Youth Leaders on School Emotional and Social Skills Team/Mental Health Organizations or Clubs
- Youth Leaders from School Organizations/Clubs

Youth Leadership Academy

The **Youth Leadership Academy** consists of Intensive **Training and 4 Youth Leadership Action Calls** throughout the 2026-2027 school year. The purpose of the Youth Leadership Academy is to engage youth leaders and elevate their voices to be contributing members of teams supporting emotional well-being in their states and districts.

Youth Leadership Academy Intensive Training

November 16 & 18, 2026

12-2 PM ET/11-1 PM CST

The Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Intensive Training is a 2-day training (2-hours each day) to engage youth leaders from the WSCC LC districts and prepare them for participation in the YLA throughout the year. Youth will be introduced to major concepts used throughout the year and have a chance to share-out their thoughts and perspectives. The Youth Leadership Academy Intensive Training will include:

- Education on Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems, Evidence-Based Emotional and Social Skills, the WSCC framework, and Health for All Students.
- Opportunities for youth to meet with other youth from their states/entity and share their experiences with emotional well-being and health for all students in their districts/schools.
- Engagement with State/Entity and District/School leaders for youth leaders to share their vision for improving emotional well-being in their state, districts, and schools.

Youth Leadership Academy Action Calls

Last Tuesday of the month

1-2 PM EST/12-1 PM CST

The Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Action Calls are 1-hour training and working sessions that are designed to teach youth leaders leadership skills and give them space to connect with other youth leaders to develop and problem-solve their SMARTIE goals. Each session will consist of a learning a leadership skill, including time to practice in small groups, breakout groups to share ideas and network with youth leaders from their own state/entity and other states, and opportunities to connect with faculty to support the development of their goals. Content includes:

- Setting SMARTIE Goals
- Assertive communication skills
- Giving and Receiving Feedback
- Mentorship

SMARTIE Goals

- **Specific:** You know exactly what the goal is and when it is met.
- **Measurable:** You know when or how much of something is done when meeting the goal.
- **Achievable:** Your goal is within reach and easy to put into action.
- **Relevant:** Your goal fits and makes sense for your interests.
- **Time-bound:** You have a deadline for your goal.
- **Includes Everyone:** Your goal helps to ensure emotionally safe environments that promote belonging for everyone.

Example Phrasing for SMARTIE Goals

1. I will start an Emotional Well-Being Tik Tok for my district. I will post a new video sharing Emotional Well-Being tips once a week on Mondays. I will ask for submissions for ideas to get input from a diverse group of students.
2. I will start a wellness committee at my school by the end of the school year. I will start by finding a teacher or administrator to sponsor the club by the end of the month and then create flyers to advertise the club by February.

Best Practices for Engaging Youth throughout the Year

Throughout the year, the District Youth Liaison should continue to engage with the district/school youth leaders to support the implementation of their SMARTIE goal and their integration into the district/school leadership team. The Youth Leadership Academy Intensive Training and Action Calls will provide youth with foundational skills to develop their goals and explore how to engage as leaders in their school and district. In between sessions, district liaisons can support youth in meeting their goals by:

- Meeting with youth leaders regularly
- Assisting them in revising their goals
- Helping them to connect with administrators at their schools.
- Including them (or their ideas/suggestions) in WSCC LC District/School Leadership Planning
- Supporting the implementation of their goals and providing access to resources/supports you may need to meet their goals.

Concrete Ideas for Youth Engagement

- Outreach and Advocacy
 - Youth create a social media hashtag or campaign.
 - Youth write or co-write a blog/school newspaper post.
- Youth Representative on Team Meetings, Councils
 - Youth involved on formal and informal groups or councils, including School Mental Health teams
- Research and Assessment
 - Youth leaders participate in gather information about resources to help support their school community
- Peer Education
 - Youth share with their peers, e.g., via classroom presentations, resource fairs, morning school announcements
- Youth Training & Shadowing Experiences

Using Shared Agreements

Shared agreements can be used to engage youth leaders and provide a space where they feel comfortable and empowered. Some sample shared agreement include:

- Use “I statements” to state opinions or feelings
- Respect everyone’s differences
- Respect everyone’s opinions
- Use inclusive language
- Use you right to say: “pass” or “pass and come back”

Principles of Youth Engagement Best Practices

Principle	Practical To Dos
Safety	Co-create safety norms with youth.
Trustworthiness & Transparency	Communicate goals and expectations.
Peer Support	Facilitate peer relationship building activities.
Collaboration & Mutuality	Actively invite youth to share their opinions.
Empowerment, Voice & Choice	Use shared decision-making processes.
Belonging	Emotionally safe environments that promote belonging for all.

WSCC Emotional Well-Being LC 2026-27 Cohort Schedule <u>for Youth Leaders</u>	
Leadership Training	
November 16 & 18, 2026 12-2 PM EST/11-1 PM CST/ 10-12PM MST	Youth Leadership Academy Intensive Training (2-days, 2-hours each day) District Youth Liaisons and Youth Leaders State/entity and district/BIE School teams invited to attend a portion of the 2 nd day
Training and Technical Assistance Support for States and Districts/BIE Schools	
January – April 2027 Tuesdays 1-2 PM EST/12-1 PM CST/11-12PM MST <i>January 26, February 23, March 30, April 27</i>	4 Youth Leadership Action Calls for SEAs, Districts and <u>Youth Leaders</u> On-going support and training for youth leaders to lift up youth voices and engage them as collaborative partners in support of the emotional well-being

Youth Leader Action Planning Guide

Youth Name:

Month/Year:

Brainstorm: Use this first area to brainstorm potential idea for your goal. Then, you can rate the need for change in this area, the availability of resources for this goal and how many barriers may exist.

Goal Ideas	Need for change (1-10) 1=no need 10=great need	Resources to achieve change (1-10) 1=no resources 10=many resources	Barriers to change (1-10) 1=no barriers 10=many barriers

Select one idea from above that you want to improve:

Write your SMARTIE Goal for this idea. Remember, SMARTIE Goals are:

- **Specific:** You know exactly what the goal is and when it is met.
- **Measurable:** You know when or how much of something is done when meeting the goal.
- **Achievable:** Your goal is within reach and easy to put into action.
- **Realistic:** You have access to time and resources to accomplish this goal
- **Time-bound:** You have a deadline for your goal.
- **Includes Everyone:** Your goal helps to ensure emotionally safe environments that promote belonging for everyone.

Example Phrasing for SMARTIE Goals

- I will start an Emotional Well-Being Tik Tok for my district. I will post a new video sharing Emotional Well-Being tips once a week on Mondays. I will ask for submissions for ideas to get input from a group of students from all backgrounds.
- I will start a wellness committee at my school by the end of the school year. I will start by finding a teacher or administrator to sponsor the club by the end of the month and then create flyers to advertise the club by February.

MY SMARTIE GOAL:

ACTION PLANNING

How will you know if you've achieved success within this goal?

- Indicators of Success:

What opportunities exist related to this goal?

What current work is taking place related to this goal?

What resources are available to support this goal (leadership, infrastructure, staffing, partnerships)?

What barriers exist related to this goal?

What would prevent me from moving forward with this goal?

What would I need to overcome this/these barrier(s)?

Action Steps

List the short-term steps necessary to achieve goal	Person(s) Responsible	Target Date	Completed (Y/N)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

NEXT MEETING: _____

WSCC LC Youth Leadership Academy Permission Slip (Optional for Youth Leaders' School Leadership)

I, _____, give permission for _____ to attend the Virtual **WSCC LC Youth Leadership Summit Intensive Training and Monthly Action Calls** on the following dates:

- November 16 & 18, 2026 (12-2 PM ET/11-1 PM CST)
- January 26, 2027 (1-2 PM EST/12-1 PM CST)
- February 23, 2027 (1-2 PM EST/12-1 PM CST)
- March 30, 2027 (1-2 PM EST/12-1 PM CST)
- April 27, 2027 (1-2 PM EST/12-1 PM CST)

I understand that if they are accepted, they will need to attend the entire session.

(Print Name)

(Phone Number)

(Parent/Guardian Signature if under 18)

(Principal/School Leadership)

(WSCC LC District/School Youth Liaison)

2026-2027 [SCHOOL/DISTRICT] WSCC Learning Collaborative

Youth Leadership Academy Parent/Guardian Permission & Youth Agreement Form

Instructions: A separate copy of this form must be completed for each youth attending the **2026-2027 Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Learning Collaborative Youth Leadership Academy**. Each youth must submit a copy of this form signed by the youth, parent/guardian (if under 18 years of age). Read and complete this form carefully.

Youth's Name:
Youth Contact Number (Cell):
Youth's Email:
Parent/Guardian's Name(s):
Parent/Guardian's Contact Number (Home):
Parent/Guardian's Contact Number (Cell):
Parent/Guardian's Contact Number (Work):
Parent/Guardian's Email:

Alternative Emergency Contact if Parent/Guardian are Unavailable:
Emergency Contact's Name:
Emergency Contact's Relationship to Youth:
Emergency Contact Number (Home):
Emergency Contact Number (Cell):
Emergency Contact Number (Work):

What is the WSCC LC Youth Leadership Academy?

[DISTRICT/SCHOOL NAME] is participating in a learning collaborative where the adult leaders are learning how to support positive mental health and well-being for all students, staff, and families. The district leadership wants students to be involved and provide their opinions on how we can better support all students and staff. Your student has been nominated to be a youth leader participant in this learning collaborative, given their skills, passion, and potential as a future leader. Involvement in the learning collaborative is described below. **The academy activities will provide opportunities for youth to share their opinions on how the school district leaders can promote emotional well-being in schools.** Youth will also engage in activities to increase their understanding of school mental health and emotional and social skills and to help them build their leadership skills. **Youth will complete brief anonymous surveys during the program to tell us about their leadership skills and to give us feedback on the program.**

The Youth Leadership Summit and Youth Leadership Action Calls include:

- Two (2) two-hour virtual sessions (**Monday, November 16th & Wednesday, November 18th from 12-2 EST/11-1 CST**) on Zoom during the school day
- 4 Virtual action calls (**January 26, February 23, March 30, April 27 from 1-2 EST/12-1 CST**) on Zoom during the school day
- Youth will be compensated with a **\$160 gift card** at the end of the year for their participation
- [DISTRICT/SCHOOL ENTER ANY ADDITIONAL (NON-MONETARY) INCENTIVES (I.E., COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS, EXTRA CREDIT, ETC.)]

The Youth Leadership Academy will be sponsored by the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH; www.schoolmentalhealth.org/) and the CASEL (www.casel.org). Jill Bohnenkamp, Ph.D., Tiffany Beason, Ph.D., and Zahra Ladhani, Ed.D., from NCSMH have multiple years of experience and expertise working with youth in schools across the country.

Parent/Guardian Permission & Youth Leader Agreement Form

We value a safe and welcoming place for all youth and adults to share their opinions. As such, the summit staff will take all steps to ensure a safe and welcoming virtual summit environment for all youth and adults participating. Please indicate your agreement to abide by the following space rules:

- Use “I statements” to state opinions or feelings
- Respect others’ differences
- Respect everyone’s opinions
- Use respectful language
- Use you right to “pass” on activities/questions

Initials of Parent/Legal Guardian_____

Initials of Youth_____

Parent/Guardian (if under 18 years of age): I agree to let my child participate in and be compensated for their participation in the WSCC LC Youth Leadership Academy activities and feedback surveys.

Initials of Parent/Legal Guardian_____

Youth: I agree to participate in and be compensated for my participation in the WSCC LC Youth Leadership Academy activities and feedback surveys.

Initials of Youth_____

I give permission for my student to participate in the above activities.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian_____

Date_____

Youth Signature_____

Date_____



Invitation to join the WSCC Emotional Well-Being Youth Leadership Academy

Hello!

Our school district is participating in a learning collaborative with the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) and CASEL. As part of this collaborative, we are nominating 1-2 middle/high school youth leaders in our district to provide input on the work districts are doing to increase emotional well-being in schools.

Expectations for Youth Leaders:

- **Attend the Youth Leadership Academy Intensive Training on November 16 & 18, 2026**
from 12-2 PM ET/11-1 PM CST
 - We will work with your teachers to get permission to miss class and make-up assignments
 - The training will focus on leadership skills and connecting with youth from **across the country** to share your voice about emotional well-being for youth today
- **Join 4, 1-hour youth action calls every month (January, February, March, April)**
 - These one-hour calls will be focused on helping you to advance emotional well-being in your school/district through skill development, collaboration, practice and reflection
- **Apply what you've learned to your school/district!**

All students who participate will receive a **gift card** for their time! We also can help connect you to mentors and provide opportunities for professional development.

We think you would be a fantastic candidate for this opportunity. Please let us know by **XX** date if you would be interested in participating!