



Student Pathways Unit
201 E. Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

February 14, 2024

Greetings Colorado School District Superintendents (or *Charter School Chief Administrator*),

As a requirement of [House Bill 23-1009: Secondary School Student Substance Use](#), the Colorado Department of Education is distributing [a report](#) with a practice that secondary schools may implement to identify students who need substance use treatment, as well as interventions, resources and referrals.

In fall 2023, the Commissioner of Education appointed members to serve on the Secondary School Student Substance Use Committee. These members represented education and health leaders and experts, including youth and parent/caregiver voices, to develop the practice outlined in the report. The Committee membership and meeting information can be found [here](#).

The committee encourages local education providers and schools to review this practice for addressing secondary school student substance use and apply the aspects of the practice that fit the needs and capacity in their district, schools, and for their students.

The practice is based on MTSS (Multi-tiered Systems of Support) and utilizes the SBIRT model of Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to identify and address student needs for behavioral health supports. The practice will help to address the problem of Colorado schools' substance use intervention programs lacking uniformity, resulting in inequitable interventions and treatment referrals for youth. Recommendation of this practice follows months of committee member research, analysis and discussion.

School staff members can play a powerful role in the prevention and intervention of underage substance use with students. To succeed in school, student behaviors such as substance use and other risk behaviors should be addressed as they can have a negative impact on future academic and career outcomes.

Thank you for the time and consideration of the practice outlined in the report. Please share the report with all schools and staff. The committee encourages staff to make a plan to address substance use prevention and intervention for students.

If you have questions, contact:

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