

Using Tech to Support a Comprehensive Counseling Program

Dr. Brenda Ortiz McGrath, MSW · Chelsea Public Schools

Scott Freschet · Co-founder of Alongside

How technology can support a comprehensive school counseling program and expand student access to mental health support.

SECTIONS / 19 SLIDES

- 02 About Alongside
- 03 Teen advocacy opportunity
- 04 Student Mental Health in CPS
- 05 Chelsea Public Schools at a glance
- 06 Defining mental health
- 07 How mental health presents in CPS
- 08 Comprehensive school mental health system
- 09 Multi-Tiered System of Support
- 10 Meeting student needs
- 11 Tier 1: Universal supports
- 12 Universal mental health screening
- 13 Screener results & learnings
- 14 Children's Cabinet
- 15 Children's Cabinet subcommittees
- 16 Alongside in practice
- 17 What students are saying
- 18 Live demo
- 19 Thank you & questions

Title slide

alongside

Using Tech to Support a Comprehensive Counseling Program



Scott Freschet
Cofounder, Alongside

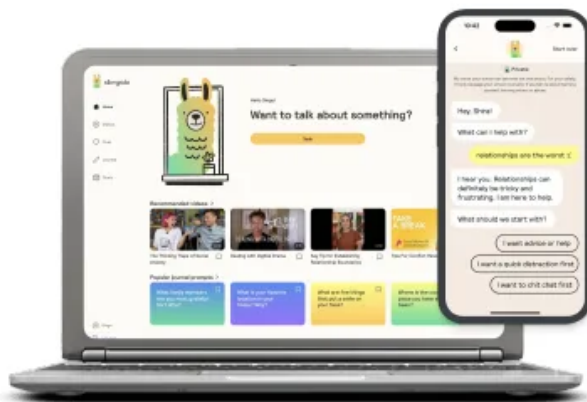


Brenda Pena, MSW
Director of Social Work
Chelsea Public Schools



About Alongside

Alongside helps schools cover all students with research-based mental health support that adolescents like and trust



Clinician-created content

Provides therapy exercises created by doctoral clinicians



24/7

Available when students have time and feel the desire to open up



Non-judgmental

Provides a confidential place to share thoughts and emotions without judgment



Chatbot magic

Students can chat about any problem they are facing and get validation and advice



Escalation

Connects to school and 24/7 resources in cases of suicidal ideation and severe issues



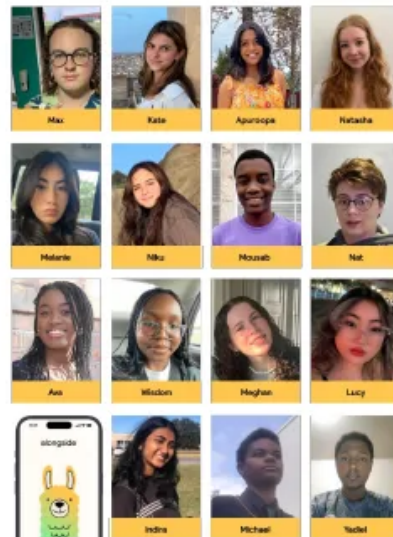
Native language

Converses in the student's preferred language, making it easier to communicate feelings

Teen advocacy opportunity

Do you know teens that are passionate about supporting and de-stigmatizing youth mental health?

Have them apply for our *paid* summer internship!
Deadline to apply is April 15



Our 2023
summer interns

Student Mental Health in CPS



Student Mental Health in CPS

Chelsea Public Schools

Brenda Pena, MSW
Director of Mental Health | SEL | Specialized Student Supports

Chelsea Public Schools at a glance

Chelsea Public Schools "Nuestra Comunidad"



11 Schools	District Enrollment	Student Race and Ethnicity	Populations Served
Pre-K — Grade 12	6,611 Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hispanic - 88%African American - 4.3%White - 6.3%Asian - .7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">First Language not English - 84%First Language Learner - 43.7%High Needs: 90.6%Low Income - 80.5%

Defining mental health



Mental Health

DEFINITION

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

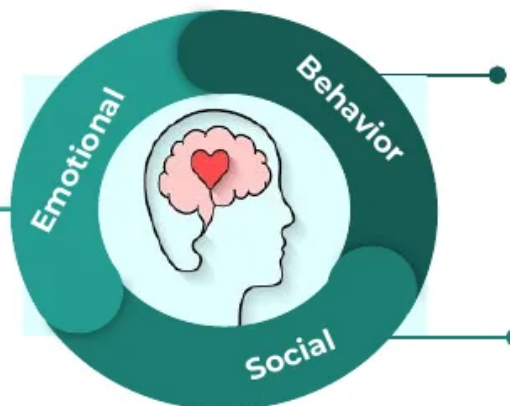
(CDC - Centers for Disease Control)

How mental health presents in CPS

How does mental health present within CPS?

Emotional

- Sadness
- Worry, anxiety, and fear
- Safety concerns: self-harm and or suicidality
- Irritability and/or mood changes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest or motivation



Behavior

- Inconsistent attendance in class and/or school
- Low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty with emotion regulation: shutting down or verbal/physical outbursts
- Physical (somatic) complaints
- Low energy, fatigue

Social

- Difficulty making and/or keeping friends
- Social Isolation
- Peer Conflict
- Verbal/Physical Aggression
- Conflict with adults

Comprehensive school mental health system

Comprehensive school mental health system

Comprehensive school mental health systems provide an array of supports and services that promote positive school climate, social and emotional learning, and mental health and well-being, while reducing the prevalence and severity of mental illness.

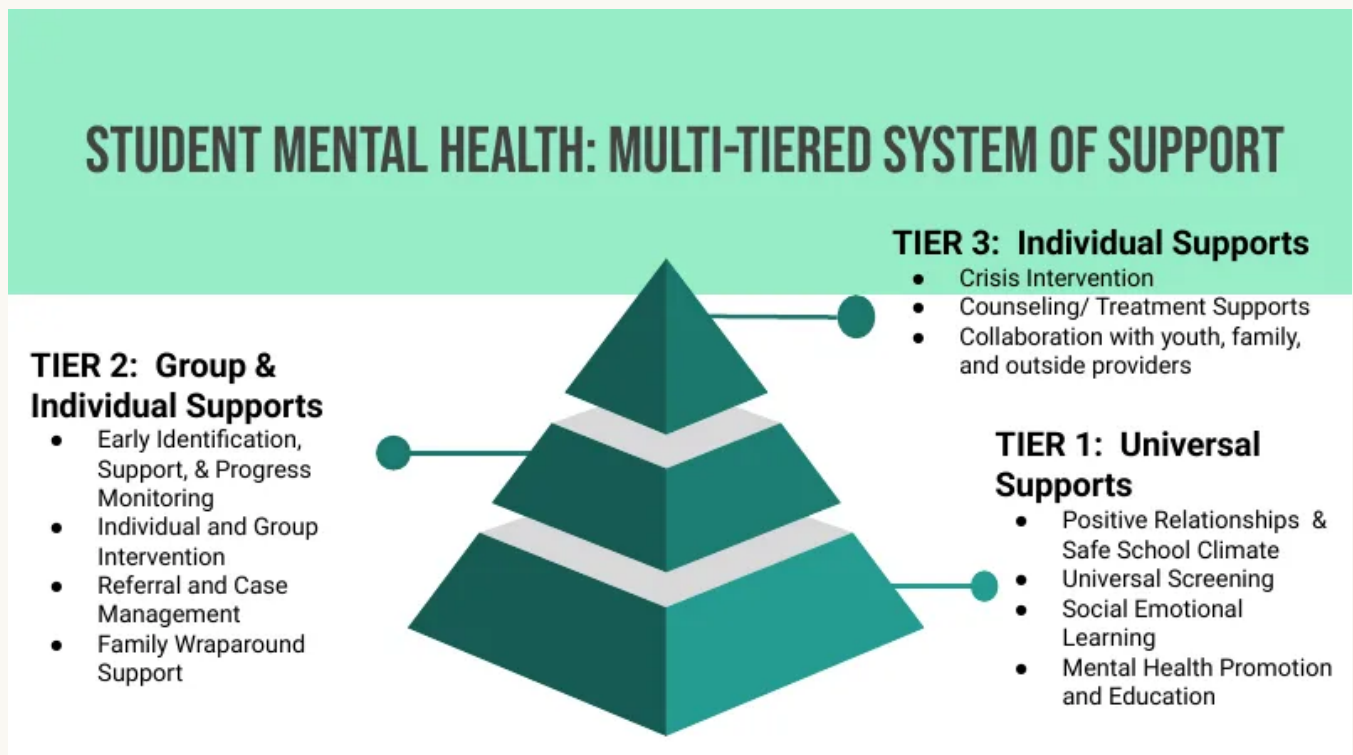
CPS Lead Team Members:

- SEL Leads & SEL School-based Teams
- School Counselors
- School Social Workers
- Special Education Staff
- Mediation/MTSS Staff
- Homelessness Liaison
- Young Parenting Coordinator
- Family Liaisons



- Better academic outcomes
- Access to care
- Early identification and intervention
- Positive school climate and safety
- Youth, family, educator and peer engagement
- A continuum of services
- Better psychosocial outcomes

Multi-Tiered System of Support



Meeting student needs

MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

INTERVENTION & ASSESSMENT

- Individual Meetings & Assessment
- Psychoeducation
- Coping Skills Modeling, Practice, and Connection
- Group Interventions

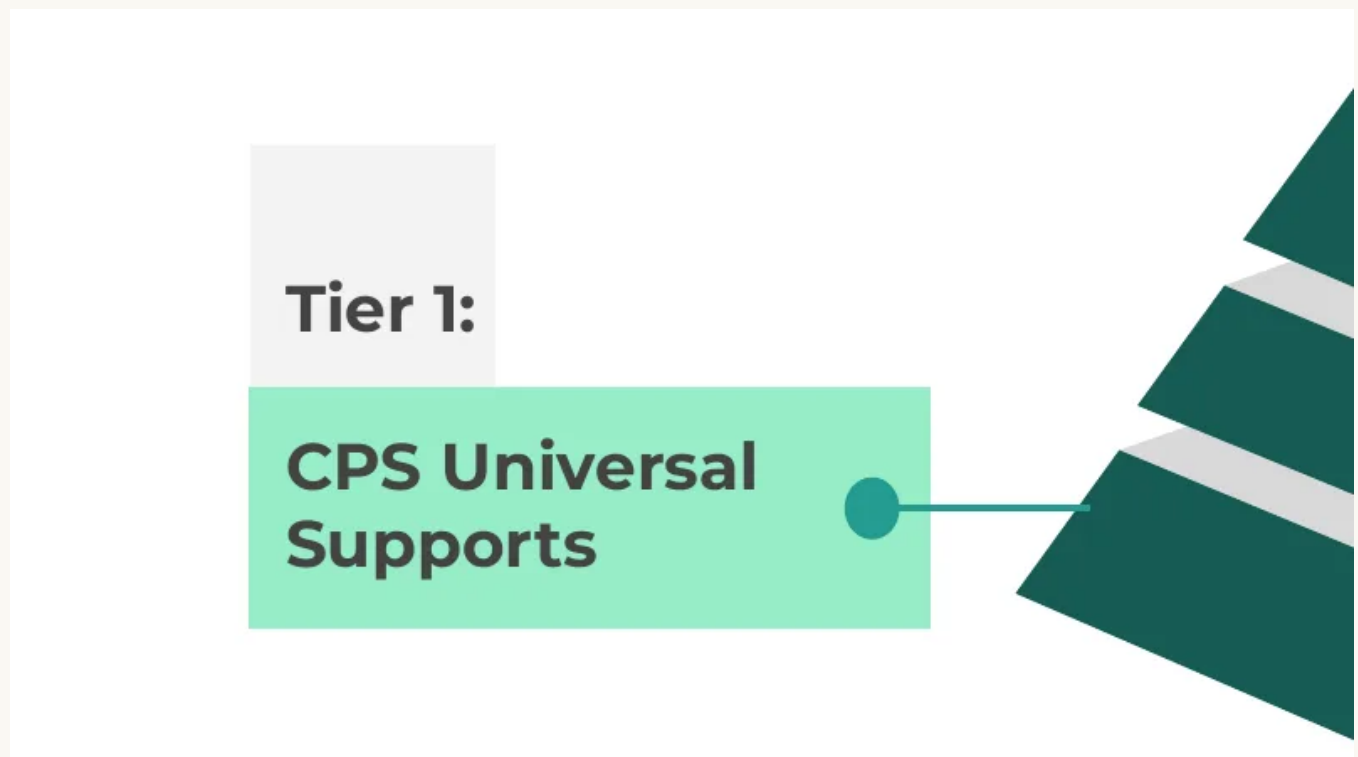
FAMILY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Communication with Families: Guardian Phone Calls & Meetings
- Connection to Community Providers

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Integration of mental health into SEL Curriculum & Advisory
- Integration of emotion regulation skills into the classroom

Tier 1: Universal supports



Universal mental health screening

TIER 1: UNIVERSAL MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING

RCADS-25:

Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale

(Measures levels of anxiety and low mood)

- Administered to Students Grades 3-12
- Voluntary Self-Report Measure
- Provided in Multiple Languages
- Families Able to "Opt-Out"

Screeners results & learnings

MENTAL HEALTH SCREENER RESULTS & LEARNING



STRENGTHS

- Students take it seriously.
- De-stigmatized mental health.
- Identified students who may not have previously been referred (~50%)
- Allowed for early intervention and connection to resources.

CHALLENGES

- Some students opt out of participation.
- Percentage of students identified through screener can be larger than national norms.
- Limited capacity of available community resources.

Children's Cabinet

CHILDREN'S CABINET



"Bodies typically composed of the heads of government, business, and nonprofit agencies/organizations with child- and youth-serving programs"

Children's cabinets meet regularly to...

- Coordinate services
- Develop a common set of outcomes
- Collaboratively decide upon and implement plans

...all to foster the well-being of young people



Children's Cabinet subcommittees

CHILDREN'S CABINET SUBCOMMITTEES GOALS



Mental Health

Improve child wellbeing
(alt: increase access & use of mental health resources)



Out-of-School Time

Increase participation of children and youth in out-of-school activities

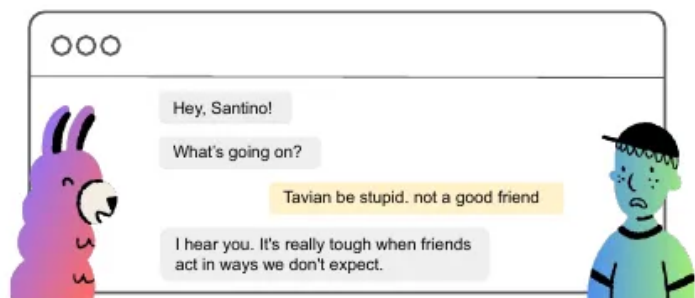


College & Career Readiness

Increase and broaden post-secondary pathways for students

Alongside in practice

ALONGSIDE



NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Need effective Tier 1 support and prevention for all middle and high school students

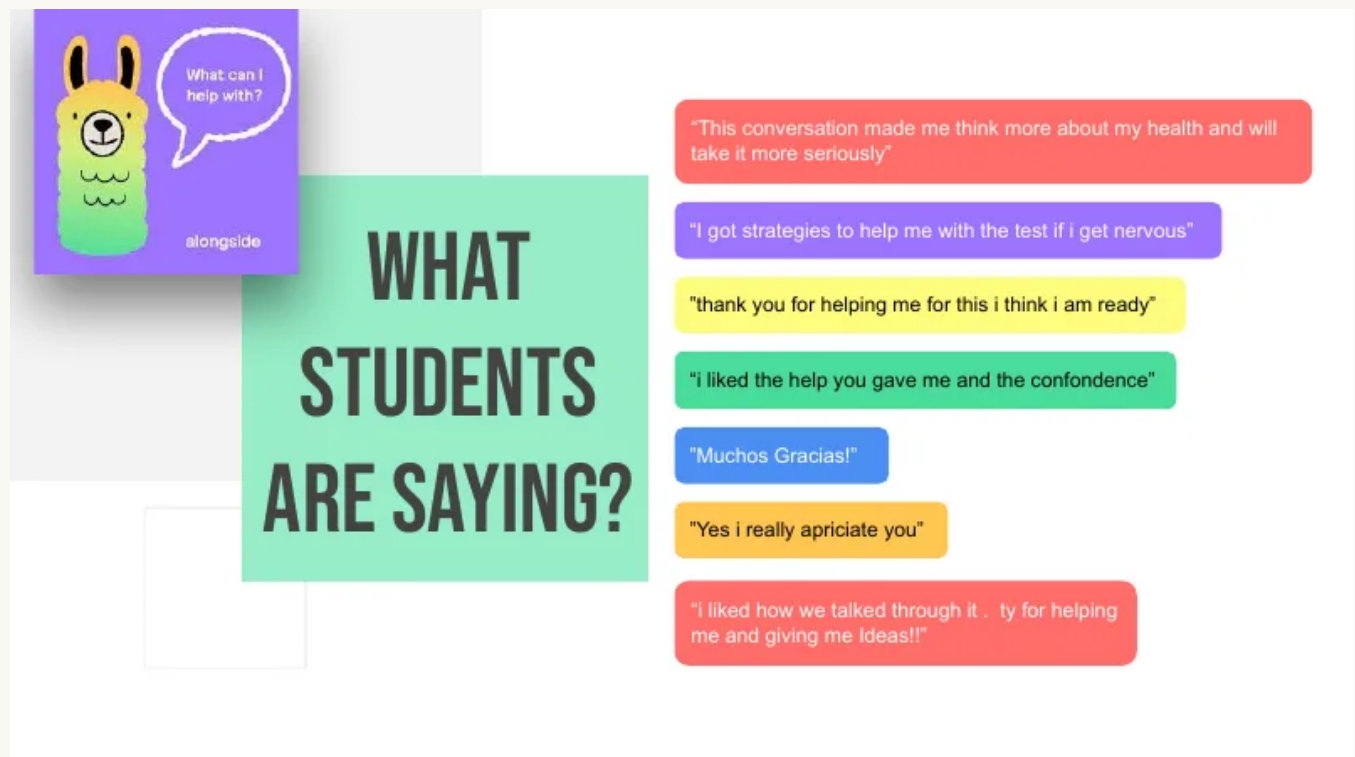
Mental health support must also meet the needs of our Latinx and EL students

HOW ALONGSIDE ADDRESSES

Alongside is a mental health app that provides personalized prevention and early intervention to every secondary student

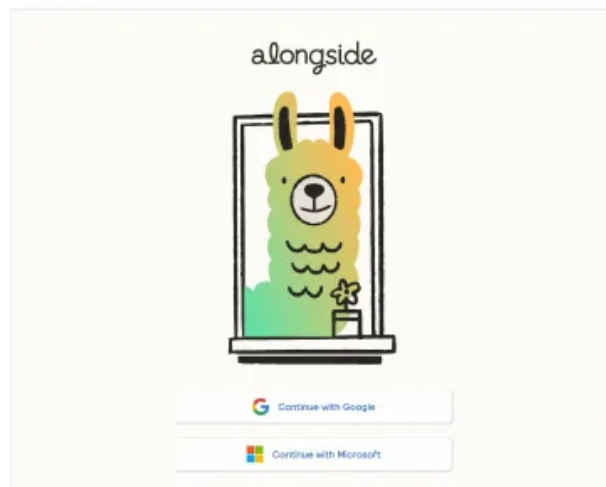
Students can converse in 30+ languages, making it easier to communicate feelings and get help

What students are saying



Live demo

LIVE DEMO



app.alongside.care

Thank you & questions

**THANK YOU
& QUESTIONS**

Brenda Pena

Follow me on LinkedIn



Alongside

Explore the app yourself

