

NC Student Health: A Bottom-Up & Top-Down Approach

Dr. Ellen Essick, Section Chief for NC Healthy Schools



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child



Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)

**School
Social
Workers**

**School
Counselors**

**School
Psychologists**

**School
Nurses**



Everette

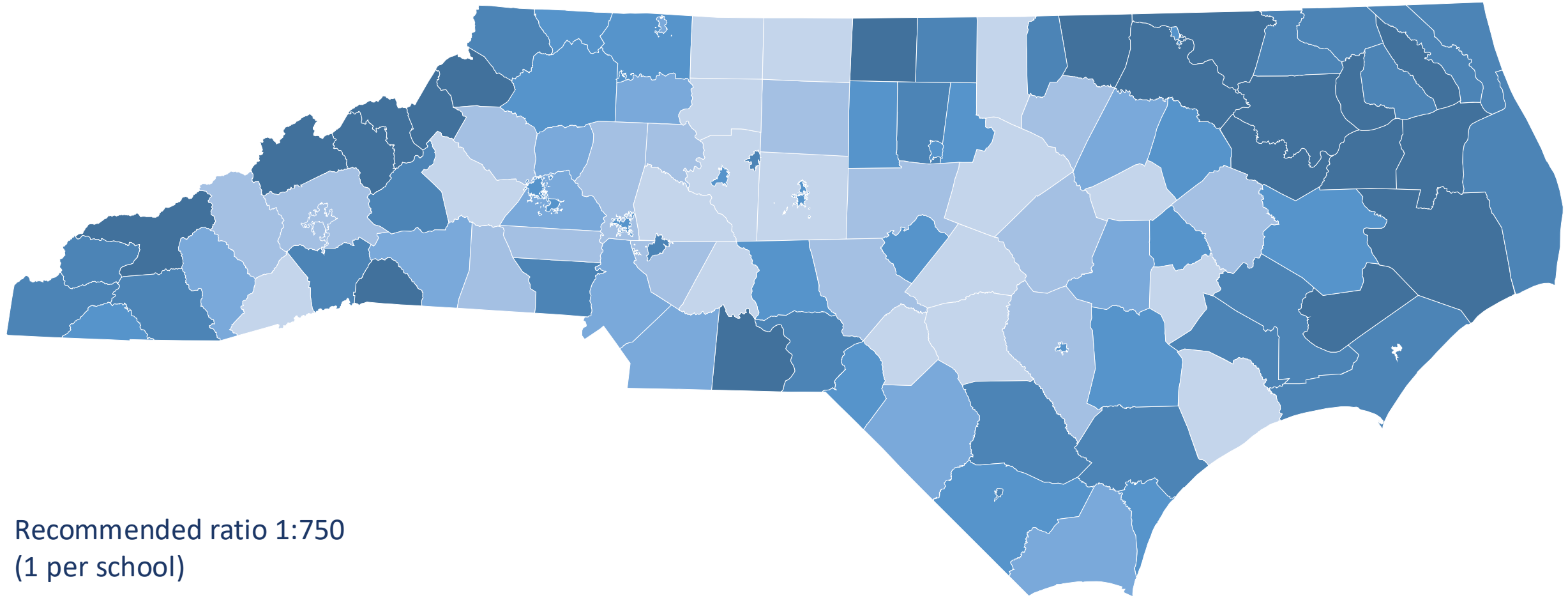


School Nurses in NC

- Minimum degree required: A minimum of a BSN and national school nurse certification within three years of date of hire.
- Licensure: Registered Nurse (RN)—Licensed by NC Board of Nursing
- Unique SISP roles:
 - Assess health-related needs, provide for health care plans, and collaborate with school personnel and healthcare providers.
 - Tailor individual health management plans for students with chronic health conditions.
 - Assist in preventing and responding to communicable disease concerns.
 - Screen students for potential emotional/mental health concerns and refer students to receive further specialized support.



School Nurse Ratio Ranges



Recommended ratio 1:750
(1 per school)

Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom

■ 288-449 ■ 450-599 ■ 600-750 ■ 751-849 ■ 850-999 ■ 1000-2697



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Ev

Ev has multiple visits with school nurse for stomach pain.

After ruling out physical ailment, the nurse refers Ev to the school counselor for possible anxiety.

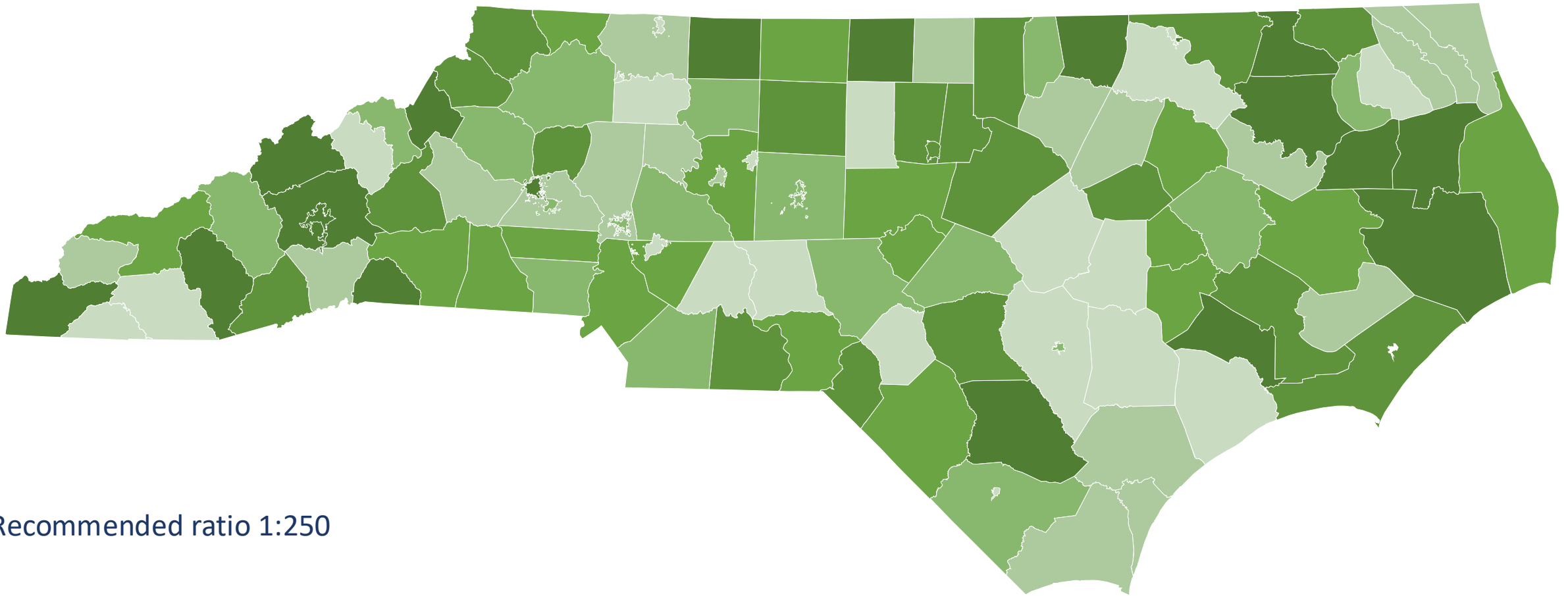


School Counselors

- Degree: Master's in School Counseling (60 credit hours, plus practicum & internship)
- Licensure: NC DPI Professional Educator's License as a School Counselor
- Unique SISP roles:
 - Design and deliver a comprehensive, data-driven program aligned with the NC Student Success Standards.
 - Guide academic planning, career exploration, and postsecondary transitions.
 - Provide school-wide, classroom, small group, and individual counseling supports.
 - Establishing peer to peer support programs and crisis intervention.



School Counselor Ratio Ranges



Recommended ratio 1:250

■ 146-270 ■ 271-299 ■ 300-320 ■ 321-344 ■ 345-399 ■ 400-572

Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Ev

Counselor recognizes that Ev's anxiety is related to his grades.

After talking with Ev, the counselor consults with the school psychologist, who is part of the school's multidisciplinary problem-solving team.

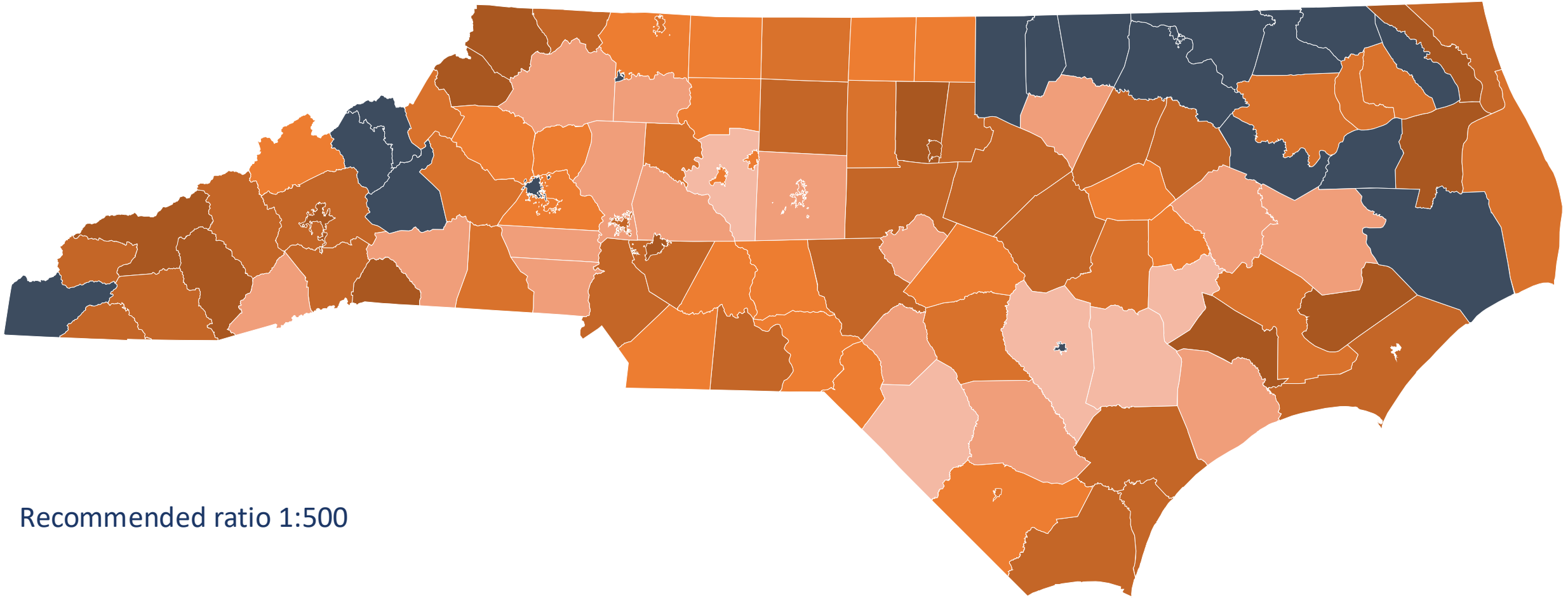


School Psychology in NC

- Minimum degree required:
 - Educational specialist, advanced/sixth-year degree (Ed.S. or MA+SSP), (60 credit hours, plus internship)
- Licensure: NC DPI Professional Educator's License as a School Psychologist
- Unique SISP roles:
 - Psychoeducational evaluation for students with disabilities
 - Collection and analysis of data, academic and behavioral, for individual and groups of students to identify needs and track progress
 - Use data to identify effective, evidence-based interventions for students' academic, behavioral, and/or social-emotional needs
 - Consult and collaborate with families, staff, and students to create practices that promote learning and promote safe and supportive school environments for all students



School Psychologist Ratio Ranges



Recommended ratio 1:500

■ 605-999 ■ 1000-1499 ■ 1500-1999 ■ 2000-2999 ■ 3000-4999 ■ 5000-20340 ■ None

Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Ev

School psychologist receives a referral from the IEP team and performs psychoeducational evaluation with Ev.

During the evaluation, the school psychologist finds out that Ev lives in a home where siblings must take turns eating dinner due to food insecurity.

School psychologist refers Ev to the school social worker.

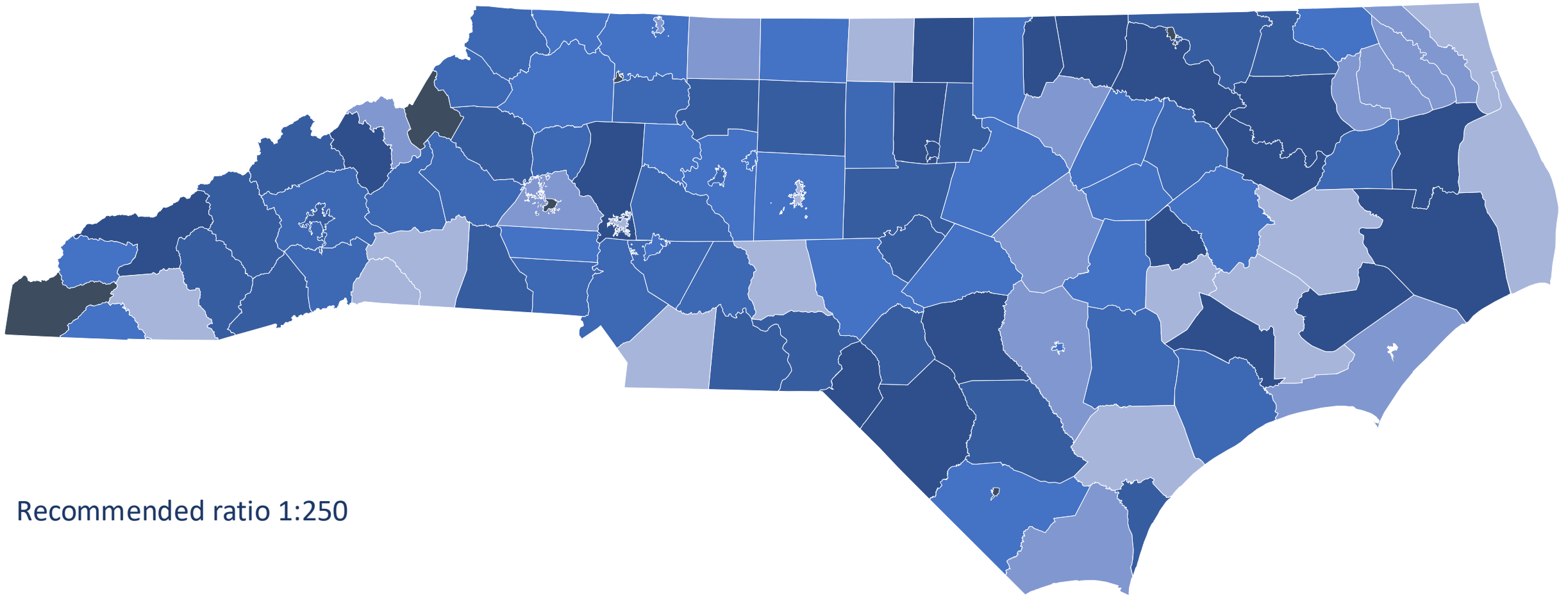


School Social Workers

- Degree: Bachelor's or Master's of Social Work with an additional specialty license in education to practice in schools (35-66 credit hours, plus internship)
- Licensure: NC DPI Professional Educator's License as a School Social Worker
- Unique SISP roles
 - Address home and community factors such as family dynamics, housing instability, and access to community resources
 - Provide direct intervention during crises (e.g., abuse, neglect, loss), offering trauma-informed care and coordinating with child protection agencies when needed
 - Addressing barriers to school attendance
 - Provide case management & consultation



School Social Worker Ratio Ranges



Recommended ratio 1:250

■ 308-549 ■ 550-749 ■ 750-999 ■ 1000-1499 ■ 1500-1999 ■ 2000-4087 ■ None

Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Ev

School social worker meets with Ev's family and connects them to school and community resources to address food insecurity.



**School
Social
Workers**

**School
Counselors**

**School
Psychologists**

**School
Nurses**



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Return On Investment

- Improved educational outcomes
- Decrease absenteeism
- Increased behavioral services
- Improved mental health of students



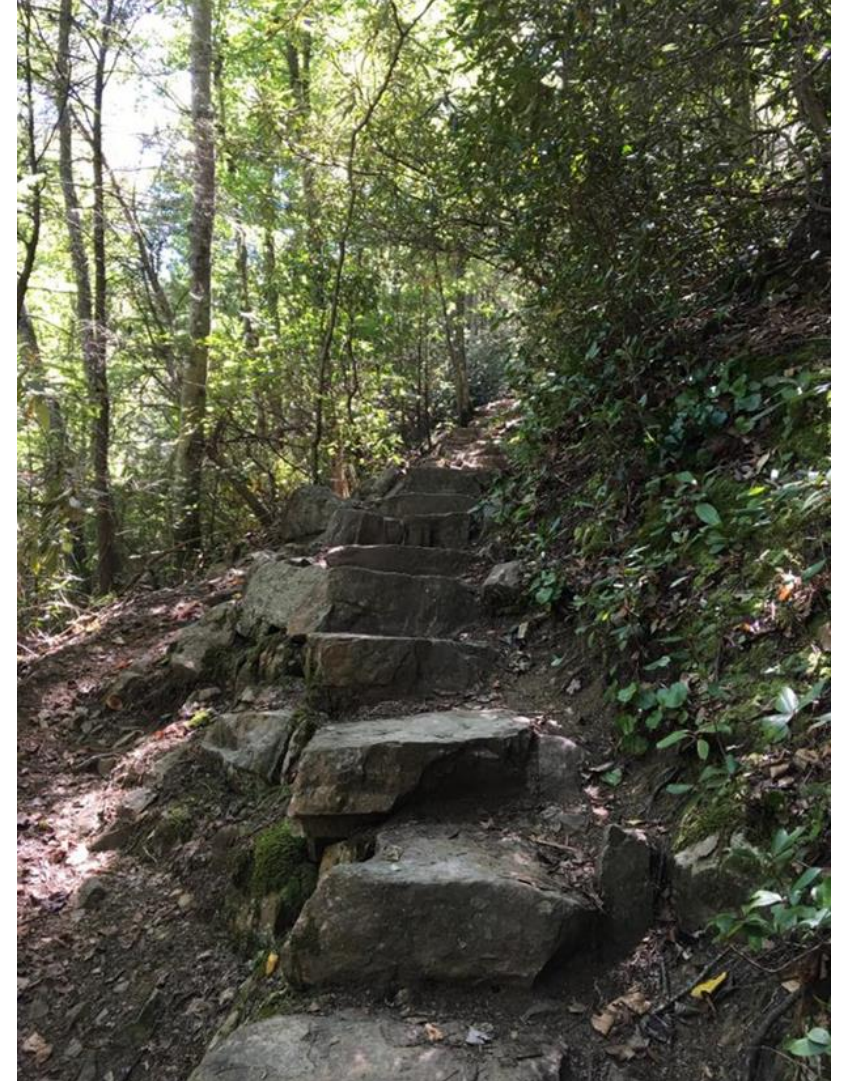
Supporting Student Mental Health



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Priorities

- Increase the capacity of mental health professionals currently in schools
- Increase the supply of mental health professionals who can work with students
- Increase funding through the Medicaid program to support and sustain school health services, including mental health services



Value of School-Based Services

- Children are 6 times more likely to access mental health services when provided in a school-based setting.
- Schools can provide a continuum of care: health screenings, preventive care, behavioral health services, therapies, and more.
- Access to these services can reduce health disparities and improve school outcomes.



Expanding School-Based Medicaid

- Most states use Medicaid funds for services provided to Medicaid-enrolled children with IEPs
- States can also use Medicaid funds for services to any Medicaid-enrolled child
- Only 16 states are doing this!

States that have Expanded Access to Medicaid for School-Based Services

Arizona	Louisiana
California	Massachusetts
Colorado	Michigan
Connecticut*	Nevada
Georgia*	New Mexico
Illinois	North Carolina
Indiana*	Oregon
Kentucky	Virginia

*partially expanded access



Expansion of School-Based Medicaid



NCDHHS

NC Medicaid
Division of Health Benefits

North Carolina expands school-based Medicaid



Healthy Students,
Promising Futures

Joined HSPF Collaborative



NATIONAL
GOVERNORS
ASSOCIATION

**NGA award provides support for
school-based Medicaid survey**



NC receives grant for technical assistance and training



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

DHHS provides support for DPI Medicaid specialist



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Return On Investment

- Nationally, over half of all school-aged children and youth are covered by Medicaid.
- Medicaid pays \$6 billion to school districts for providing school-based services each year and is a large source of funding for many LEAs.



Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child



Begin With The End in Mind



- Focus on prevention
- Making the healthy choice is learned
- Skills are tested for a lifetime
- Skills-based health education translates across health content
- Teaching students teaches the community
- [“An Apple a Day is Not Enough”](#)



How can the board help?

- Emphasize prevention
- Support teaching of the Healthful Living and Student Success standards
- Advocate for adequate time to teach Healthful Living standards
- Encourage policy implementation





Breakout Activity

Policy in Action: Connecting Legislation to Impact

Purpose



To explore how **statutes and policies connect to instructional impact drivers** and **shape the teaching and learning** experience across North Carolina.

Protocol

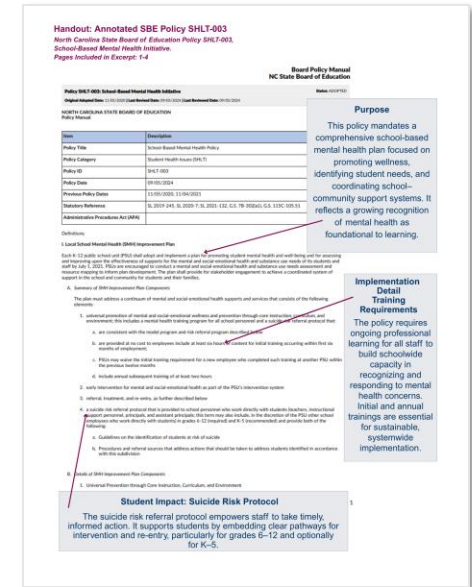


- You will be **divided into four small groups**.
- Two groups will review **SBE Policy SHLT-000** (Healthy Active Children).
- Two groups will review **SBE Policy SHLT-003** (School-Based Mental Health Initiative).
- A **facilitator** will guide your group through the activity.
- We will come back together to **share key insights** as a full group at the end of the breakout.

Discussion



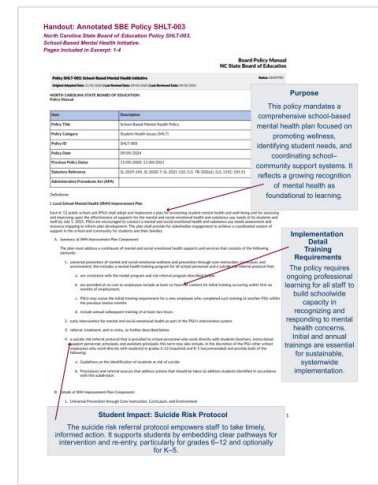
- How does the current statute or policy **impact teaching and learning** in North Carolina?
- Does it address the **present-day needs of students and educators** across our PSUs?
- What barriers or challenges may limit **successful implementation** as it is currently written?
- Does **current funding and infrastructure** support full implementation—and if not, what additional supports are needed?



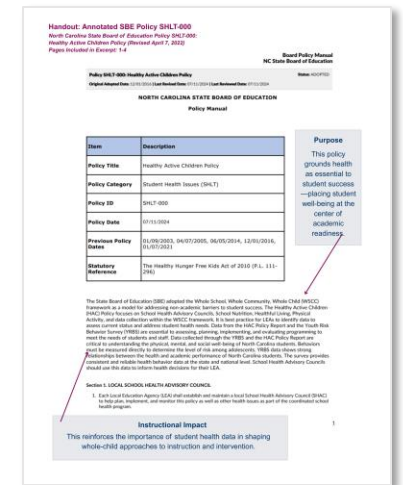
Breakout Groups

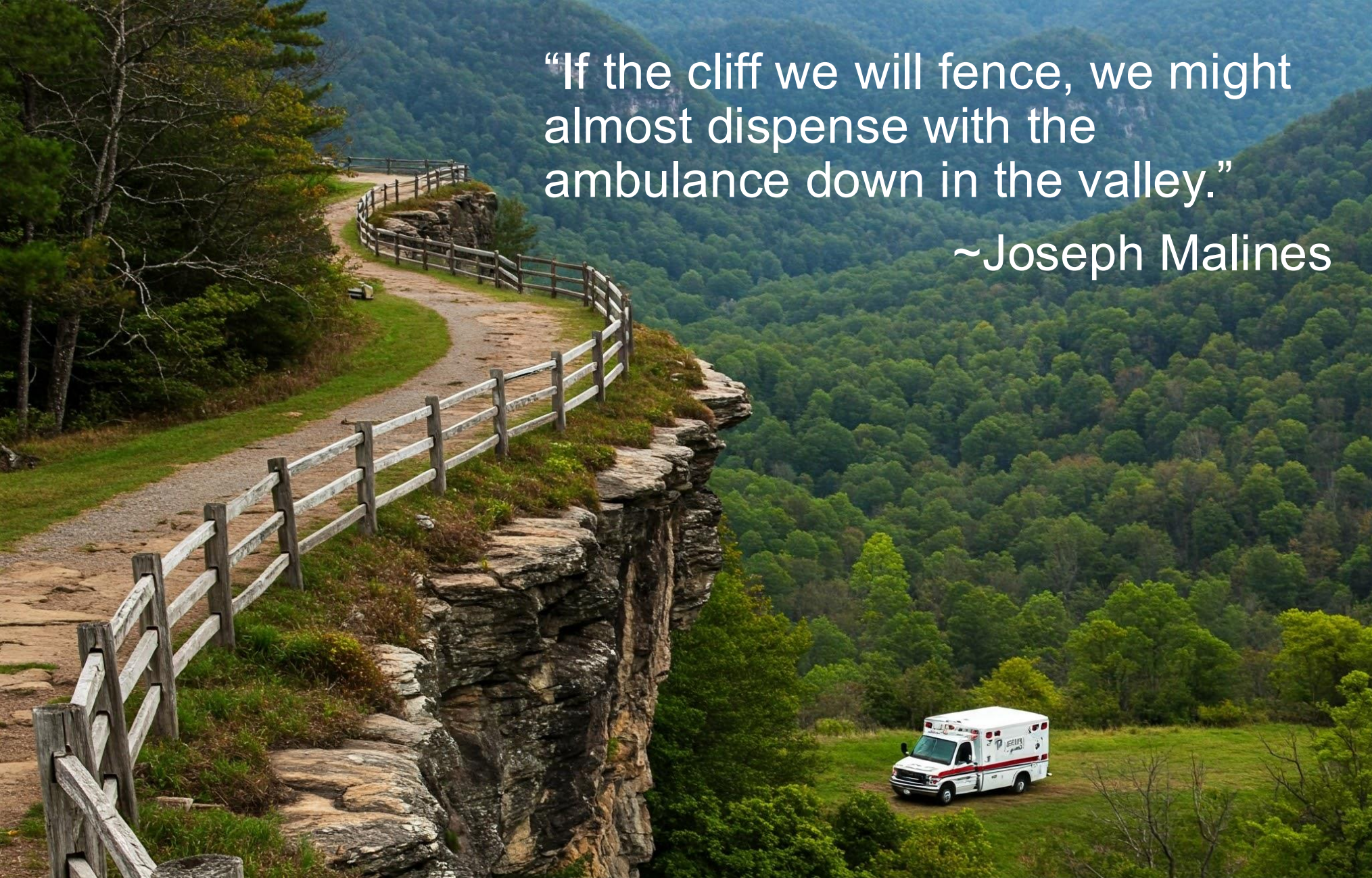
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Facilitator: Megan Cardin	Facilitator: Dr. Kristi Day	Facilitator: Susanne Schmal	Facilitator: Dr. Ellen Essick
Dr. Oxendine Ms. Moore Ms. Jones Mr. Kenan	Ms. Camnitz Vice Chair Duncan Dr. Connelly Mr. House	Dr. Mason Superintendent Green Ms. Bledsoe Ms. Smith	Chair Davis Mr. Blackburn Dr. Pennell Ms. Spears Mr. Hall (via Zoom/phone)

Discuss
SBE Policy SHLT-003
School-Based Mental
Health Initiative



Discuss
SBE Policy SHLT-000
Healthy Active Children



A scenic photograph of a mountain trail. A dirt path winds along a rocky cliff edge, bordered by a rustic wooden fence. The path curves into the distance, leading the eye towards a vast, lush green valley filled with dense forest. In the lower right of the frame, a white ambulance with red and blue markings is parked on a grassy clearing. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic, capturing the beauty of a high-altitude landscape.

“If the cliff we will fence, we might
almost dispense with the
ambulance down in the valley.”

~Joseph Malines

