



## Classroom WISE Implementation Stories: Provisional Accelerated Learning Academy

### Background

Educators and school personnel play a vital role in promoting mental health and well-being and identifying and responding to emerging mental illness in children and adolescents. However, they often have not received the education, training, and/or ongoing support needed to respond in the classroom.

To address this need, the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network, in partnership with the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, developed a free, self-guided online course, video library, and resource collection focused on educator mental health literacy. The 3-part training package, Classroom WISE (Well-Being Information and Strategies for Educators; [www.classroomwise.org](http://www.classroomwise.org)), was informed by and co-developed with educators from across the nation.

In Spring 2023, the MHTTC Network Coordinating Office, in partnership with the NCSMH, led the 2023 Classroom WISE School TA Opportunity, which involved working with 15 schools and school districts throughout the U.S. to facilitate the implementation of Classroom WISE in their everyday practices. This is the story of how Provisional Accelerated Learning (PAL) Academy worked to bring Classroom WISE to their school.

### The School

PAL Academy is a public school within San Bernardino City Unified School District in California that houses 300 students, 14 educators, and 25 other staff members. School mental health staff include two school counselors and a mental health specialist.

### The Need

As an Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) school, PAL Academy's motto is "education with an individualized approach," which focuses on helping all students holistically, including students who may be considered "at risk." In addition, PAL Academy is an ASAM school implementing a [Community Schools](#) grant and expressed interest in promoting more mental health opportunities. PAL Academy saw Classroom WISE as an opportunity to engage the whole school in developing actionable mental health skills and improving the school climate.

### What Help They Received

A small implementation team from PAL Academy, consisting of a school administrator, a school mental health staff member, a school district representative, and an educator, was invited to attend an orientation webinar for Classroom WISE and participate in sharing sessions to learn what other



schools across the country were doing to implement Classroom WISE. They also received a Classroom WISE implementation guide.

## **What They Did**

PAL Academy's implementation team mandated that educators and school staff complete the Classroom WISE online course and tracked course completion by requiring all staff to send their certificates of completion to their Head of Schools. They also scheduled group discussions to reflect on the Classroom WISE online course modules and their work in implementing strategies that they learned from the course into the classroom.

## **Who Used Classroom WISE?**

Twenty-five educators and school staff were asked to take the Classroom WISE online course. Over three months, 19 educators and school staff members enrolled in the 6-module course, with 18 completing the course.

## **What Changed?**

PAL Academy staff indicated that they wanted to change how they engage with their students. Some staff talked about utilizing positive talk in the classroom, while others pledged to build connections with their students as they enter the classroom. Others noted that they would include resources focused on accessibility to learning in their classroom, so that students of all grade levels could utilize them.

## **Barriers and Facilitators**

PAL Academy staff cited some barriers to using Classroom WISE, including limited time to take the course, lack of staff, and needing to remember to implement course strategies during teacher-student interactions. For facilitators, they cited having support staff in the classroom, one-on-one time with students, and a desire to accommodate the mental health needs of high school students.

## **Lessons Learned**

Those who took the Classroom WISE online course rated it as having a moderate to high impact on their work over the next 3 months. PAL Academy's implementation team also indicated Classroom WISE has had a moderate impact on their school and would continue to have a moderate impact over the next 3 months. PAL Academy plans on obtaining feedback about the online course now that the initial implementation phase has passed, while other plans to move forward with additional implementation efforts may include gathering information on what strategies staff continue to use to help students, following up with staff on a regular basis, and having a school-designated person to oversee continued Classroom WISE implementation efforts.

The MHTTC Network thanks Provisional Accelerated Learning Academy for participating in the 2023 Classroom WISE School TA Opportunity, which was conducted from January to April 2023.