

K–12 Upstream Prevention Panel Discussion Notes – 5/8/26

1. Addressing Student Social Isolation

What we're seeing:

- Social isolation continues to be a major challenge for students—and often reflects broader community isolation.
- Schools are frequently inheriting (not creating) this issue, rooted in long-term societal changes.

What's working:

- Strong school–community partnerships (especially with parents).
- Creating intentional connection points beyond academics.
- Expanding opportunities for all students (not just those in sports/extracurriculars).
- Cross-generational engagement (e.g., connecting students with seniors or community members).

Examples:

- Community-based life skills classes (Marsing) that invite broader participation.
- Schools ensuring every student has at least one meaningful adult connection or activity.

2. Building Reciprocal School–Community Partnerships

Shift the mindset:

- Move from schools as recipients to co-creators with community partners.

Strategies:

- Align goals and identify shared outcomes.
- Look for ways schools can support community initiatives, not just receive support.
- Open school facilities for community use (especially in rural areas).
- Share resources (funding, space, events).

Examples:

- Community fundraisers hosted at schools.
- Affordable facility access for nonprofits.

3. Making the Case to Funders

What funders value:

- Clear data and data-informed strategies.
- Compelling stories that bring the data to life.
- Evidence of collaboration and momentum (funding attracts funding).

Best practices:

- Treat funders as partners—not just funders.
- Develop a manageable evaluation plan (lean on research partners when needed).
- Combine qualitative (stories) and quantitative (data) insights.

4. Funding Opportunities to Explore

Local & Regional:

- Community partnerships (businesses, nonprofits, healthcare systems).
- Local public health districts.
- Opioid Settlement Funds (available in every community).
- Idaho Community Foundation.

Statewide:

- Blaine County Investment Fund (BCIF) opportunities and newsletter.
- Idaho Youth Well-Being Survey (IYWB) unlocks implementation funding.
- State Department of Education (SDE):
 - Title IV funds (flexible use)
 - Mini-grants and free/low-cost training

Federal & Larger Grants:

- Multi-district or backbone funding opportunities.
- Full-Service Community Schools grants (can include behavioral health support).

Other Supports:

- Up to \$3,000 quick-start funding for prevention work.
- Ongoing support via Communities for Youth (C4Y).

5. Getting Started (or Moving Forward)

Practical next steps:

- Start small and build momentum using existing programs.
- Prioritize internal alignment first (staff, students, families, school board).
- Engage both formal and informal champions.
- Create space for two-way communication (not just information sharing).

Guiding principle:

Go slow to go deep. Sustainable work takes time and broad buy-in.

Final Thought

Upstream prevention is most successful when it is:

- Relationship-driven
- Community-wide
- Data-informed
- Built for long-term sustainability