



Partnering with Institutes of Higher Education with Dr. Hennessey Lustica and Karen Horn

Claire Viscione:

Hello, and welcome to In Session, a podcast where we speak with change makers working towards safe, supportive learning environments within their communities. Our guests include state and local education agencies and their partners. All grant recipients from the Department of Education, using their funding to advance school-based mental health services, support mental health service professionals, and establish trauma recovery and prevention programs.

On this episode of In Session, we talk about effective partnerships with institutes of higher Education. Our guests include Hennessey Lustica, PhD, a mental health school professionals grant recipient, and Karen Horn MSW, a school-based mental health grant recipient. The conversation is guided by Frank Ryder, a technical assistant specialist at Nestle, who gets us started by detailing the current landscape of school mental health, and will introduce our panelists. Let's get into the conversation.

Frank Ryder:

I want to thank you for your interest in today's panel podcast. We are grateful today to be able to talk with leaders of two initiatives and to explore some of their early learning about how to create effective partnerships between eight to 12 and higher education systems. I would first like to introduce Dr. Hennessey Lustica, having served as a licensed professional school counselor for 17 years. Hennessey is the community school's Mental Health Director at the Sodus Central School District in Western New York. She's also an assistant professor in the Clinical Mental Health Program at Medaille College in Buffalo, New York. Dr. Lustica is the Project Director for the Mental Health Demonstration Program, and she has spent the last year as a school ambassador fellow to the US Department of Education. Hennessey, we're really glad to have you with us today. I wonder if you could explain to us a little bit about the scope and the nature of your partnership effort with higher education institutions in Western New York.

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Sure, Frank, thank you. Thank you for having me today. My job at the Sodus Central School District is to project direct the Mental Health Demonstration Project. The purpose of that project is to increase the pipeline of mental health providers into rural school districts. I work across six school districts, and I partner with eight colleges and universities in Western New York to play social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, and licensed mental health counselors who are interested in working with kids and families in school districts in those rural areas. When the grant was written, when the demonstration grant was written, it was written for one Institute of Higher Education and three interns. I went in there and said, "Nope, we're going to change this up," so I worked with the project director at the federal level, Earl Myers, and said, "Can we expand this partnership to all of these other colleges?" He said, "Yes, definitely," so being a professor myself, I understood how it works on the college end of

finding placements for mental health students and how difficult that can be, and finding good training sites and finding good supervisors. I really saw this as an opportunity to bring both of those worlds together. I reached out to colleagues in seven additional colleges and universities, and now we have this beautiful program. We're welcoming 21 interns actually tomorrow, from eight of these different programs. We are the program to beat in the area. We had a waiting list this year. We have to conduct interviews and we also, we write interns into all of our upcoming projects as well, so to sustain it somehow as well.

Frank Ryder:

That is really impressive and I'm so fascinated to hear about your own being able to identify as a university professor and to be able to bring that perspective to the challenge of partnering with colleges and universities in this workforce development effort. Thank you for that and I'm going to come back and learn a little bit more from you pretty soon. At this moment, I would like to introduce my other colleague, Karen Horn.

Karen had 15 years experience as a school social worker and as a district-level Project Manager before becoming the school-based mental health professionals consultant, managing the Wisconsin School-Based Mental Health Professionals Project for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Karen has been in that state-level role for about two years now. Karen leads DPI's Federal grant on recruiting and retaining school-based mental health professionals, but she came to the state agency from Milwaukee Public Schools. Karen has a Director of Special Education and Pupil Services License in Wisconsin. She of course, has a Wisconsin School Social Worker License, having earned her Masters in social work. I've had the great pleasure to work very closely with you, Karen, over the last many months, and I'm very much in awe of the work that you and your Wisconsin team are doing. I would like to ask you to, as Hennessey did, to share a little bit about the scope and the nature of your partnerships with colleges and universities in Wisconsin.

Karen Horn:

Thank you so much, Frank. It's been a pleasure working with you as well, and it's so exciting to be a part of this project here in Wisconsin. As Frank mentioned, I am the project lead for the Wisconsin School-Based Mental Health Professionals Project, and that really has taken a two phase approach. As Frank mentioned, I'm on year two coordinating this work. I work with a work group as well. Prior to my starting with the Department of Public Instruction, there was a team that filled out the application and they were awarded this grant. Through this grant, I now have the ability to lead this work. It's a true joy because school social work is near and dear to my heart. Being able to support and increase pupil services staff across the state is a wonderful opportunity.

Our particular project is focused on two phases. The first year and a half that I've been with the Department of Public Instruction, we've been focusing on establishing relationships with universities. For us, that is through our University of Wisconsin Public University system. We have 10 contracted partnerships with University of Wisconsin programs. That includes four school social work programs, three school psychologists programs, and three school counseling programs. Each of them have a slightly different approach, which I'll be highlighting later in the conversation, but we have a wide variety of different programming models available to professionals across the state. The goal truly was to increase access not only for our rural areas of the state, which they may not live near one of our university programs, so we've worked really hard to develop virtual programming so that you can be anywhere in the state and still be able to go back to school.

Also, we have other programs that are highlighting professional development for retention for professionals to be successful in school districts. That's really our first phase. In the last six months, we've been focused on a selection process with school districts where we highlighted specific needs and invited school districts to participate with us. We have nine sub-grants currently with school districts across the state, and they're representative of our urban school districts, so our larger school districts, our suburban school districts, as well as our rural.

We really have, we've touched on all areas of districts across the state, so we're really excited about that. Moving forward, our next step will be focusing on retention and how do we do that? Not only increasing the pipeline, providing more opportunities for individuals that want to pursue a school-based mental health profession, and that truly could be someone that lives and works in the community as, let's say, a school social worker focusing on community mental health or grow your own candidate, someone that's already in education that perhaps has been wanting to advance their career or take a different path but haven't been able to go back to school because they have to work.

Beyond that, what do we do once we expand that pipeline to make sure that new professionals are supported and stay in those positions so that we are now focusing on the mentoring and coaching component of this, providing a statewide curriculum in training for mentors and coaches. We're really excited about that.

Frank Ryder:

Fantastic. I mentioned that the current administration has really decided to increase its investment and to award many more grants of both types, the local grant that Hennessey is directing and the state level grant that Karen, you are managing in Wisconsin. I wonder what you have learned, I'm hoping that people who might apply for those future grant opportunities will take the time to listen to this panel discussion and learn from you. I would like to know from each of your perspectives what you have learned in your process of trying to expand your partnerships to incorporate a larger number of programs. Hennessey, you talked about initially starting with one higher ed partner, but now you have eight, and I'm guessing you have a motley assortment of private, public colleges and universities, whereas Karen, you're working with the state University of Wisconsin system. Hennessey, could you talk for a minute about what motivated you and what are some things that you learned in your efforts to try to expand from one higher education partner to now eight?

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Yeah, sure. That's a great question. I think the thing that motivated me the most was my experience as a school counselor and as a school counselor intern, and then transitioning to become a licensed mental health counselor and needing an internship there. Then going through my PhD and needing an internship there, and seeing that there's great internships out there and there's not so great internships out there. I know that in the schools that, so I work across six school districts, and I know in those districts, some of them don't even have social workers. We had to place social workers in schools where they didn't even have a social worker, which was new. We needed to expand the scope beyond social workers too. We needed, there's two things. We needed to expand the scope, so it needed to be social workers, psych school counselors, now MHCs.

We also needed to teach them how to work together because that's what happens when you get into a school, this interdisciplinary practice happens. When you're in a college as a college professor, I teach in the clinical mental health program. My lane is clinical mental health, so I teach my students to do that. School counselors teach their students to do that. Psychologists teach their students to be psychologists. The thing that's missing is that collaboration piece. On conversations that we have on the university side

sometimes is what can we do to better prepare our students to be able to work across disciplines with each other to help support students, staff, and families? I think that this was a beautiful blending of those two worlds. To bring everybody together and have that interdisciplinary approach. The other thing is I speak both languages and I know that that sounds like easy peasy and goofy, but I can speak K12 and I can speak higher ed language.

You really need somebody to start these conversations that can speak both languages, because I think that there's hesitation on both sides, especially if you are not used to K12 or you're not used to higher ed, and how do I approach this and how do I even ... Do these people even want to work with me? All of those things that come up. I can guarantee you on the higher ed side, we're always looking for great psychs and great supervisors, and we want to give our students the best that we can. On the K-12 side, we're always looking to expand our mental health programs and give our students and their families the best they can.

Once we were able to kind of blend those two things together, we have the same goal. We will give you placements for your students. We created this amazing internship program. It's not just take an intern and plop them in a school. That was my experience. You're out on your own. They really create a cohort with each other. Then the very cool part is now these eight universities are all talking to each other about their curriculum and how they can teach collaboration and teach folks to really come together for K12, so it's just been a beautiful marriage, I guess.

Frank Ryder:

Wow. That's really impressive. They're coming together sounds like willingly because ...

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Oh yeah.

Frank Ryder:

... They feel like ... Yeah.

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

For sure.

Frank Ryder:

Karen, your context is a little different because you are working with one big statewide college and university system. Can you talk about some of the advantages and maybe if there's some limitations to that model as well?

Karen Horn:

Our approach to this from the beginning was really to open it to all pupil services programs that are affiliated with the University of Wisconsin. We did many informational sessions, just basically introducing the goal of this project and inviting them to explore this opportunity with us. From that, we had nine universities express interest, and then we had one that came in a little bit later. Once they saw the success of the different programs around them, they were interested in being a part of it.

As we move through this and shared this information with each of the universities, I think we didn't know going in how many universities would want to be a part of this, but I think it worked our favor in many ways that our universities were already thinking about creative programming during the pandemic

and thinking of different ways to reach their students if they couldn't be face-to-face. It was timely in that regard but also, I think what fostered this relationship across the 10 universities was the amount of time that I spent with each of them individually to talk through this process and really work with them on, okay, these are the goals of the project, but within that, you have a lot of flexibility in terms of how you want to approach this. We would talk through that, and sometimes it would be four meetings. I think near the end there, I had 30-plus individual meetings with our university.

Frank Ryder:

I remember that, you used to tell me from month to month how many colleges that you had met with. I couldn't believe it. Yeah.

Karen Horn:

It really was brainstorming coming together, and they would say, "Karen, we're thinking about this. Would this fulfill the requirements?" I would say to them, "Well, are you increasing the pipeline? Are you thinking about diversifying the students that you're recruiting to your program? Are you increasing your enrollment and making this accessible?" Within that, there's a lot of room for creativity. What happened through that process is that our universities each had a slightly different take on how they would implement this, which I think is added value for anyone thinking about going back and becoming certified as a pupil services professional, because we all have different needs and different situations. That happened organically but truly, I think the key to this is communication. That process of walking through it, thinking about possibilities. It did take time. It did take time, but it was valuable because I think out of that, each of the universities were able to think about the culture of their own organization.

What have they struggled with historically? How could this particular grant address some of that and expand their enrollment? It became a win-win really for the Department of Public Instruction and our University of Wisconsin programs. The other thing that's really unique too with this, is that we had several of our universities, if they had multiple pupil services programs, they all decided to participate. I'm thinking of University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, for instance. All three school counseling, school social work, and school psychology contracted with us. They all have an individual contract, but they saw the value as an organization and they do communicate with each other, so we see that as well. University of Wisconsin, all three programs. Then we had a couple that already started their post MSW online programming. This simply allowed them to increase their enrollment and expand on that and think about what other barriers can we remove to make this more accessible?

The other part of this that I think is unique to Wisconsin is that we reached out to our universities first, formed those partnerships, and then we reached out to LEAs and invited them to participate, but it was based on selection, not by competitive application, because we really wanted to make sure that the districts we selected aligned with the criteria of the federal project. Through that, I'm what we call a triple matchmaker, so if a university has recent graduates in a part of the state, they're from a particular part of the state, or they want to live in a part of the state, I can reach out then and say, "Okay, do you have anyone that's interested in working in this community?"

Because what we know is that if it's a rural community, perhaps the salary isn't as competitive, but if you're from that area and that's where you want to settle, you're much more likely to stay in the school district. Making those connections, but then too, thinking about, I mentioned earlier we selected nine, we have nine sub-granted school districts across the state. Well, there's well over 400 school districts in Wisconsin. How do we reach them? Because this is not unique to just a small portion. We know that pupil services positions are understaffed. This allows us to expand that pathway and reach districts beyond the scope of our sub-grants with LEAs.

Frank Ryder:

Annie, what would you like to hear?

Annie Knowles:

Thank you, Frank. Yeah, I'm curious if either of you can speak to any strategies or lessons learned when working with graduate students and how you keep them engaged and excited about going into this work. Obviously, these professions such as school social workers, school psychologists, et cetera, are extremely valuable and needed right now, but with retention rates suffering and burnout at a high, have you run into any issues maintaining these students' interests in entering this field?

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Yeah, sure. I think for us, building that cohort that I talked about is key. We have our mental health demonstration, interns come together and we do interdisciplinary supervision with them every other week. There were challenges with that. COVID happened and we had to be virtual and all of those kinds of things, but they formed this community amongst each other where they could go to each other as well as me or their supervisor, whoever. We also, we meet them where they're at. When I was thinking about what Karen was saying too, I have private colleges, I have state colleges, I have whatever, but they have different programs in there, so the different programs need different things too, as well as just the different colleges. We have, all of our school psychologists are at the doctorate level, so they need something very, very different than our Master's level social workers, and our Master's level school counselors,

Our LMHCs need to do therapy in the schools, so we have co-located therapists in all of our districts. Those LMHCs are actually partnered with agencies that are co-located in our schools. We had to be really creative around that. Then we give them a lot of support. When I talked earlier about just being an intern plunked in the school building, we can't do that anymore, especially with retention and especially with the things that are coming at them, the amount of trauma that they're seeing, the amount of poverty that they're seeing, the amount of loss that they're seeing. We haven't had a school year yet start with our interns without the loss of a student. Just supporting them and checking in, I'm probably very annoying, like checking in constantly, "Are you okay? Let's talk about this. How is this impacting you?"

Really being in really close contact with the college supervisors as well. I meet with all the professors all the time. I was thinking, Karen, what you said about those meetings, it really takes a long time to form those relationships, and to put egos aside. There's egos in K12 and there's egos in higher ed. I think when they see me coming, they're like, "Oh, okay, okay. It's safe. We can do this," but Annie, to your question, just really offering as much supervision as possible, as much support as possible, being available as much as possible, and really helping our students to form a network that they can lean on and reach out to each other once they're done with our program, if that makes sense.

Frank Ryder:

I'll bet it gets a little easier as there are subsequent years or generations of students. Then there will be some word-of-mouth as well as a little bit of refinement and perfecting some of your supports. One thing that strikes me too, Hennessey, is that the amount of support that you insist the interns receive is also in a way sort of modeling how conscientious you expect them as practicing professionals to be on behalf of the K to 12 students and families that they will be supporting?

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

A hundred percent. We also offer office hours twice a week for our supervisors because what we found is taking out an intern is extra work. We want to be able to support our supervisors as well as our graduate students, so we offer supervision for everybody.

Frank Ryder:

Nice. Now, Karen, I know that you have had some really focused kind of efforts to try to diversify your workforce to more closely resemble the students who need services. To take Annie's question a little step further, what are some of the approaches you are using to really try to focus on bringing some maybe less traditional students into the grad programs and continuing learning opportunities, internships and ultimately employment as mental health professionals?

Karen Horn:

In terms of our IHEs, the majority of the contracts that we have with the pupil services programs has a goal around diversifying their student enrollment. Many times it's by a certain percentage, and they have exceeded that goal in the last year with increased enrollment. That's one area of focus that our traditional university pupil services programs tend to attract professionals that reflect what we see in education across the nation, which is white female. Really looking at ways to support students from historically marginalized communities seek pupil services, higher ed training. Whereas, it's been difficult for many working professionals to be able to access that. Whether that's through their process of reviewing transcripts and coming up with individualized plans, stipends to lessen the burden with tuition. That's just one way that we see diversity being built into the work and their goals at the university level. We also-

Frank Ryder:

It sounds to me like you're like individualizing. You have a package of tools that you could apply, but you're sort of individualizing what will help this aspiring person to be successful in completing their education and training, so that's pretty flexible.

Karen Horn:

Honestly, in working with our universities, many of them have started the work of removing barriers for historically marginalized students. They're thinking about that already. That's where that collaborative process and planning to help them bring that to fruition is a big part of the contracting process and planning. Also, in working with our LEAs, I mentioned early on that we have our larger districts that, and my background is with Milwaukee Public Schools, our largest district in the state. In these larger school districts, there's a high percentage of African American, Hispanic bipoc students. That is not reflected in the pupil services staff in these districts. What we did from the SCA perspective was develop specific smart goals that they could select from if they chose to participate and receive a sub-grant from us. Diversity is first and foremost for those larger districts.

Then for our rural and suburban districts, the focus for them was to increase at least by one pupil services staff. Many of them selected a diversity goal as well. There was a recruitment goal, a retention goal, and a diversification goal. Many of our small districts are already showing, we're in the early phases of this, but they've sought out grow your own candidates within their own district. There was a special education teacher that was interested in becoming a school counselor and is a part of one of our tribal nations here in Wisconsin. Then from that, I was able to partner that candidate, special education teacher, that wanted to become a school counselor with our University of Wisconsin Milwaukee program that is really focused on working with indigenous higher ed students seeking school counseling.

Although, this particular student is way on the other side of the state, because the program is virtual, they were able to extend their enrollment period.

They extended it to accept this student, so it's really kind of fostering those connections. Also, working at a state agency, we get requests all the time about, "I would love to work in this part of the state. Do you know of any opportunities? Or I would like to go back and become licensed as a school psychologist, where can I go?" We've developed a guide of all of our participating programs and what they offer and what makes them [inaudible 00:27:30], and then also a direct contact so that if they're interested in enrolling, that they have someone that could explain the process to them, make it a little bit clearer and easier to access.

Frank Ryder:

It seems to me that each of you, one coming from a local level and one coming from a state level, each of you has some things that you have learned that can be really in service to grantees who are awarded at the other level. Hennessey, you have such a command of the local terrain, the colleges and universities in your area, what the needs of the students, what the families are like, that you can inform the state education agency. It would be nice if we had about 10 of you around New York who were able to do that. On the other hand, Karen, it sounds like you have some convening credibility being the state agency, you're able to connect somebody from one part of the state to resources in another part of the state. It seems like each of you has some synergies that you're learning in your job that can be sort of translated to the other context.

I'd like to shift gears and just take a minute to look backwards and then a minute to look forward. To look backward for a moment, I'm almost scared to say this. It feels like as a nation, we're on the verge of a post-pandemic era, or maybe more accurately a new normal for the nation where COVID-19 virus might take its place next to the flu and other widespread illnesses that we all know how to manage as a fact of everyday life. It's been very difficult for each of your initiatives to get started in the context of an unprecedented pandemic. I know you've had lots of limitations. You've talked about some accommodations that you have made. I wonder if each of you, I'll start with you, Hennessey, could talk about something valuable that you learned out of necessity to the pandemic that you think will be able to support your strategies for the longer term.

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Sure. I think the most valuable thing we learned was flexibility, honestly. When I was hired to do this versus three months later, the world was a different place, literally. We had pressure from our colleges, these students, these graduate students need their placements, they need their hours, they need to graduate upon this certain time. We had pressures from K12, right? School is, school buildings are closed, there's nobody here. How are we going to do this but how can we support kids and families at home using this program? I think that that was probably the biggest challenge. Then little things came up along the way with that, like understanding that internship students are people and they're humans, and they each had their own story and they each had their own kind of stuff, for lack of a better word, from the pandemic. Some of them had parents that were ill, some of them had parents that were essential workers, some of them were essential workers themselves and going to school on a part-time basis.

How can we support both of them was something that we weren't ready for. Honestly, we had never done it before. Just learning to be flexible and saying, "Okay, if a mistake is made, a mistake is made, this is a learning environment for you and we will support you and help you." I think because of the constraints of the pandemic, our administrators across all of those districts were so open to having extra

help and extra support, socially, emotionally and mental health that they really integrated the interns into the school culture in a way that might not have happened if the pandemic didn't happen.

Frank Ryder:

That's a really good point. You were able to learn from that best practice. Even when we're not in that context, you've now learned that, and you can put that up front in setting up internships for success.

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Yeah.

Frank Ryder:

That's really great. How about you, Karen? Any kind of adaptation related to the pandemic that you think is going to be able to support your efforts in the long-term?

Karen Horn:

Well, I think the one thing that we learned through the pandemic is that the way that we approach work can look different. Also, the way that we approach virtual programming, that in fact, it can be very flexible and allow us to continue working in schools while going to school in the evening or on the weekend according to our own schedule. That opened so many doors for people that perhaps through the pandemic thought about, reassess their own values and what they want to do in terms of a profession. If you've been in a classroom and you've decided, I really, really enjoy working with students around mental health and I'd like to go back and become a school social worker, this is very feasible now with the 10 programs that we offer across the state. I would echo what Hennessey said in terms of flexibility.

I think that our process in terms of planning really allowed districts, in particular school districts, to think about within their own reality what is feasible, what can they implement? Allowing some flexibility around that in our sub-granting process, I think, was the key for them to take this on. Because many schools right now are understaffed, overburdened, and time is critical. The idea of taking on another initiative, another project, right? It's a realistic concern. Can we actually spend down the funds? One of the things that we worked on with this, which may be unique, I'm not sure, is that our awards, we gave them an amount, but we allowed them to either meet a maximum amount or request less money. If they felt in this district we don't need that much money, or we're not realistically going to be able to spend that down this year, sometimes more money was intimidating.

We allowed them to have smaller sub-grants in that first year. Working with them, what are your needs? How are you struggling with recruiting and retaining pupil services staff? Where have you seen a shortage? The other thing that I've noticed, and I don't know if Hennessey is experiencing this, but I'm also seeing turnover with project coordinators across our schools that we're sub-granting with. How do you work with them to sustain this, right, so there's continuity. Because the reality is that staffing right now is challenging and schools are struggling. Trying to meet them where they are and working within the parameters of this project so that they can have success.

Frank Ryder:

Well, they say that necessity is the mother of invention. You guys, with extraordinary circumstances, each allowed flexibility to enable you to come up with some creative adaptations and innovations. That sounds like that is serving you well in the long run. I'd like to just ask you to each dream alongside of me

for a couple of seconds here. I know it probably feels like you guys have been hard at your respective projects forever now, but actually you still have miles to go before you rest. What kind of aspiration or hope or dream do you have on your horizon that you are hoping your evolving initiative will be able to help you to approach or achieve? Hennessey, what are you aspiring for?

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

My dream is to replicate the program that we've created across New York State. I've had districts reach out. I've had New York City reach out and say, "How do we become a part of this?" My dream would be able to do this job forever and to support mental health-based interns across the state and this really supportive, interdisciplinary, beautiful internship. It's like the Grey's Anatomy of medical professionals. I kind of want to be Karen, so I'm going to have to reach out to you, Karen, to see what your job is too.

Frank Ryder:

Well, do we all want to be you, Karen? What is your vision for the future? That's very ambitious and I wouldn't be surprised at all if you really get their Hennessey. Karen, how about for you in Wisconsin? What are you envisioning or hoping for?

Karen Horn:

The key word for me here is systems. My concern is sustainability. What happens after this project? Because to me, if we are simply placing pupil services staff in schools for one to three years, that's not my goal. The end game is developing a system that continues to expand that pipeline so that we increase pupil services staff and also, increase the candidates for school districts to select from. My dream is that in working with our University of Wisconsin programs, that any of the programming they've developed through this project, that they're able to sustain it. It's exciting because the truth of the matter is if they are exceeding, they're exceeding their enrollment. I've had one of our universities increase their enrollment well over 100%. They doubled within one year and it didn't necessarily increase their costs, so they're enrolling more students, so that for them, that's an increase in tuition and they're increasing their graduates.

Just with that one university, 19 out of 20 were placed this year, so they're needed, right? Pupil services staff are needed. Our universities are key to this. If they aren't adapting and changing with the student population and continuing this programming, I'll feel deflated. I'm very optimistic with this, that we're developing systems that are realistic and feasible for universities to continue this. My goal is to work out of this job. I mean, truly, I would like to see our state systems supporting this. Then for our LEAs, one of the things that we really wanted to focus on was not using the funds to pay someone's salary, but how do you build this into your budget so they could use salary as match? That's key because once they build it into their budget, it's much more likely to stay.

My ongoing concern is once these funds are done, what does that mean for these professionals that were brought on? The idea here is we want to recruit and retain, right? We have a long way to go before we're at the recommended ratios. I can say that here in the state of Wisconsin, just one example, we have one to 1,900 students, one social worker to 1,900 students. When in reality it's meant to be one to 250. That's why if we want to have a lasting impact, our systems need to continue. The University of Wisconsin continuing this work, and then with that increase of candidates, that there are more applicants that our districts can select from candidates and be competitive in their hiring processes. For me, it's about sustaining. How can we have a lasting impact, because this is so much more than a five-year project.

Frank Ryder:

Those are two great answers. I would say as a taxpayer, I'm really thrilled to hear both of those answers. Hennessey, I can't wait until you are the Karen of New York and you're able to help bring what you have developed in Western New York to statewide scale. Karen, I love the idea that your ultimate aim is to create something that is so permanent that you can put yourself out of a job and maybe that's what Hennessey will eventually aspire to as well. You guys are both great. I know you're both very, very busy and we really appreciate your donating this time to share your expertise with other states, other communities. Thanks very much to both of you.

Dr. Hennessey Lustica:

Thank you.

Karen Horn:

Thank you.

Annie Knowles:

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