

ReNEW Partnership for Best Practice

Briefing Report – June 2019

On behalf of the ReNEW team, we hope that you all have had an excellent start to the summer season. We are delighted to inform you that we now have some preliminary results from the data we have gathered at each of your respective organizations. We thank you for your continued support and interest in this project and in enhancing the newcomer experience within your agencies.

This briefing is intended to let you all know where we are at in our current analysis and to share some early findings. Please note that findings are preliminary at this time and are still undergoing analysis by the team.

Teacher Survey

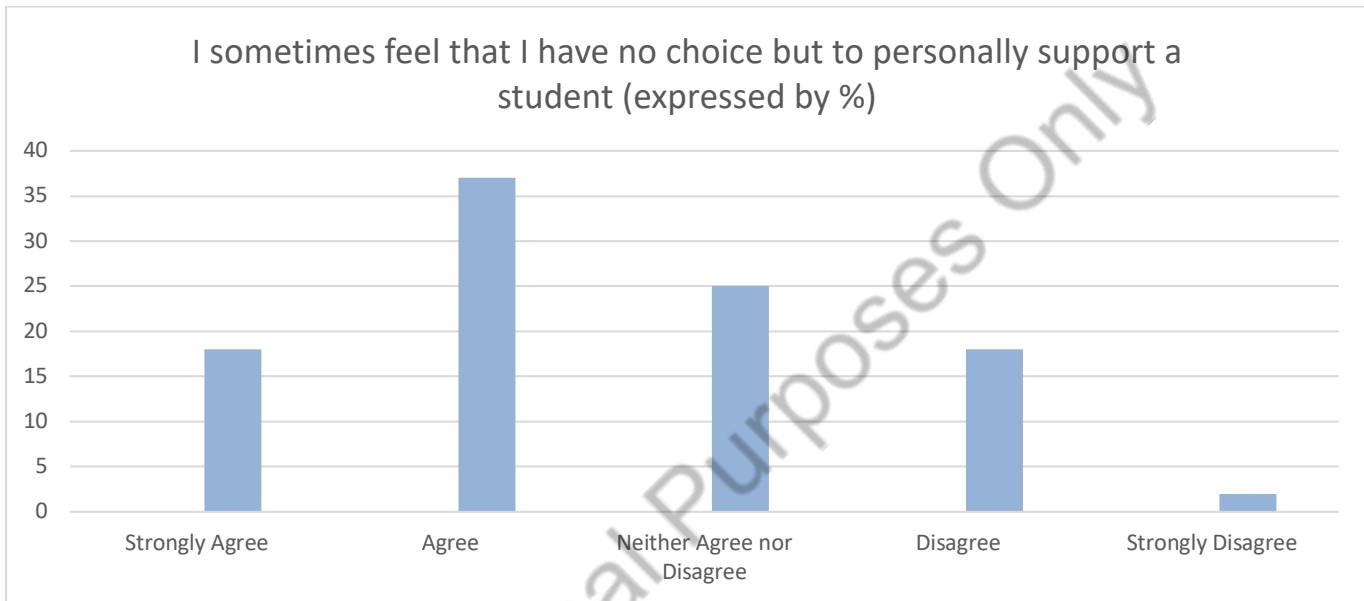
We had an incredible participation rate with the electronic teacher survey – A huge thank you to all of the teachers that took time out of their busy schedule to take the survey. After unfinished surveys were removed, we had 60 surveys completed across all 4 sites (Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg). This survey was used as a tool to assess teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) on a wide variety of emotional wellness modalities.

A few key findings from the teachers' survey were:

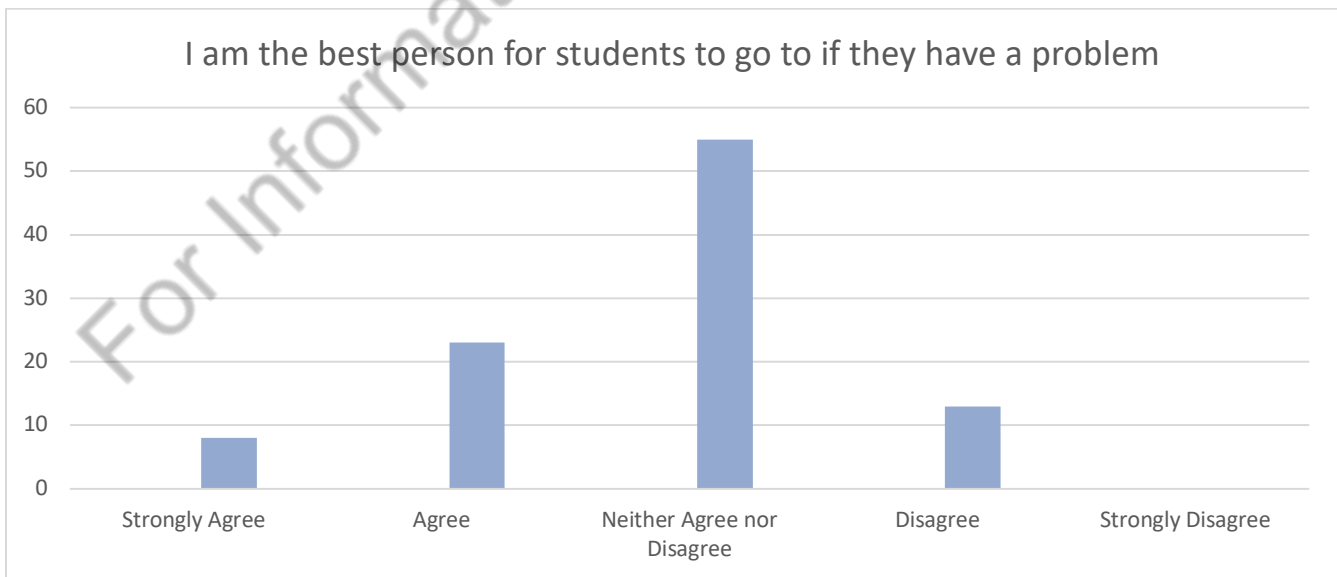
1. Teachers are more knowledgeable/aware of social services such as food, housing, finances, and immigration/translation resources (as well as how to refer) than those specifically pertaining to external mental health services.
2. By and large, teachers are aware of the programs that are run within their organizations and how to refer students to these programs. Most teachers feel confident in their knowledge to refer to other programs within their own organization (92%); however, this dips down to (42%) in their knowledge of referring to external organizations.
3. Teachers identified a decline in scholastic performance and anger as the top reasons for referring a student to professional services (68% of the sample); Withdrawal from activities and sadness were also significantly identified reasons to refer (65% of the sample).
4. 75% of the sample of teachers indicated that they have knowledge of their scope of practice as a LINC teacher. Despite this knowledge, teachers often find themselves working outside of this scope. The findings below illustrate this graphically.
5. The teaching staff at each site are very passionate about what they do. 100% of the sample reported that it is important to them that their students learn English.

The results are the same when asked about students learning about Canadian culture.

Another key finding from the survey is that many teachers (roughly half of the sample) feel that they have had to personally support a student. There could be several reasons for this, which are still being explored by the ReNEW team as we cross-reference our data.



There is also significant unsureness regarding a teacher’s role in being a “go-to” person when confronted with students experiencing and expressing emotional wellness concerns.



Teacher and Manager Focus Groups

A huge thank you to those who participated in a ReNEW focus group and shared your experiences about working with newcomers in the context of emotional wellness. Overall, the team completed 13 focus groups between Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg. Some themes that emerged include:

- Teachers want to help their students in the best way they can – most teachers have stories about how they have gone above and beyond to help a student with an emotional wellness concern. However, teachers are concerned that how they are intervening may not be the best way to intervene. There is concern about “doing the wrong thing” and the potential for detrimental effects from this.
- Many teachers do not feel well supported dealing with the emotional wellness concerns of their students.
- From a policy level, funding for LINC programs is based on student attendance. This is referred to as a “bums in seats” policy. It affects the ways agencies deliver LINC programs and makes it challenging to make exceptions for students who need to take time away to care for children, sick relatives, or care for themselves (ie. Doctor’s appointments, accessing immigration supports). This inflexibility is a concern for many teachers and managers who feel that this can be detrimental to a student’s success.
- While the PBLA Benchmarks provide structured assessments and metrics for students to be evaluated, teachers find these to be extremely time consuming and restrictive on how they want to teach their classes. Having to fit the required number of assessments as well as come up with content related to these assessments themselves, teachers are finding it is leading them to greater negative stress and potential burn out.

Where are we at with the rest of the data?

The manager and teacher focus groups as well as the teacher surveys are currently in the final analysis stages. The student surveys are currently in preliminary data analysis (the research team collected over 700 surveys between all four cities) and student interviews are still in the translation and transcription stages.

What does this mean for your agency?

Recommendations from the ReNEW data will be coming as soon as possible – we intend to hold workshops and training based on the results of this study once data analysis has been completed. We will provide details about this as they become available.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this paper please do not hesitate to contact the research team at renew@ucalgary.ca

The material in this briefing report is informational only. It is not to be used for any purposes beyond this. If you wish to present or use any parts of the findings presented here please contact the ReNEW research team at the University of Calgary and we will be happy to assist you. Our contact details are:

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Or you can email Halley Silversides, Research Associate directly at halley.silversides@ucalgary.ca

The ReNEW Partnership for Best Practice is a partnership between the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society and the University of Calgary. This research has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board: REB 18-300.

ReNEW

Refugees & Newcomers Emotional Wellness



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