

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

February 2026

Issue 52

@saccountybyhab



February News

On **February 3rd**, the board discussed its policy brief. They reviewed the contents of the presentation the Ad Hoc created for the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) and other potential supporters. They then practiced presenting, in preparation to present to SCOE. The board also received information on the California Behavioral Health Planning Council from a public comment.

On **February 17**, the board reviewed the presentation to the Sacramento County Office of Education. Board member Natanya also reminded board members of the upcoming Sac YMH Conference (more information on the next page). Board members discussed printing flyers and brochures for tabling at the event, as well as who would be interested and able to attend. Frank and Caree also announced to board members that there are currently 4 pending applications (so exciting!!).

BOARD RESOURCES

- Instagram:
[@saccountybyhab](#)
- Contact:
frank@windyouth.org
- [Application](#) (see page 4 for more information)
- [Agendas](#)

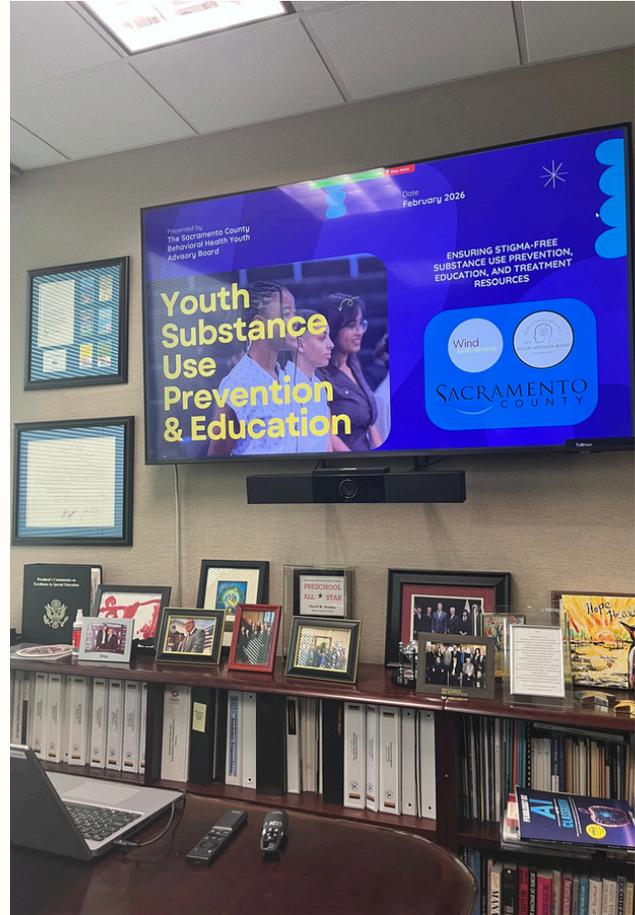
This newsletter is
brought to you by:



Board Events

On February 13th, the board presented the Youth Substance Use and Prevention Policy Brief to the Sacramento County Office of Education.

On February 28th, the board attended the Sac YMH (Youth Mental Health) Conference. Board members had the opportunity to do some tabling, sharing information about the board and collaborating with other mental health organizations.



FOLLOW THE BOARD INSTAGRAM TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH BOARD ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS, GENERAL MEETINGS, AND YOUTH-CURATED CONTENT:

@SACCOUNTYBHYAB

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT TO THE BHYAB, PLEASE CONTACT FRANK@WINDYOUTH.ORG.



Youth Substance Use and Prevention Education Policy Brief

SACRAMENTO COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD POLICY BRIEF



Youth Substance Use Prevention & Education

OUR VISION

We envision a county where youth have proper access to evidence-based, stigma-free substance use prevention, education, and treatment resources. In this vision, schools integrate such education into their curriculums led by educators who are prepared to support students of diverse backgrounds. Peer-focused programs further foster meaningful support among youth. Together, these approaches can inform and empower young people and families to understand the impacts of substance use, know how to reduce harm, and access the appropriate resources.

THE NEED

When schools fail to meet students' social and emotional needs, it ripples across their lifespans, undermining well-being, academic success, and belonging. Without schools serving as true "centers of wellness," harmful behaviors like substance use could arise, eroding the vitality of both our youth and community.

Restorative justice, harm reduction, and culturally responsive practices create a more holistic approach to prevention and education. **Cultural responsiveness** acknowledges how intersecting, diverse identities (e.g. age, race, gender, sexuality, etc.) shape students' experiences. **Restorative approaches** emphasize safety, accountability, and practical support over punishment, while **harm reduction** encourages improving personal and communal well-being. Implementing these strategies can cultivate better understanding, connection, and prevention.

FROM OUR DATA COLLECTION

- 48.2% of youth do not think their schools provide enough information about how misusing substances can affect health
- 47.1% of youth do not think their schools provide enough resources (e.g. counseling, free programs, peer support groups) to help prevent or educate student about substance misuse

The data above was collected from 98 youth via the "Sacramento School Substance Use & Wellness Survey" in Fall '24 conducted by the BHYAB and Sac Youth Mental Health (SacYMH).

2025-2026 Page 1

SACRAMENTO COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD POLICY BRIEF

"Create more youth-led spaces where youth voices are heard."

FROM OUR DATA COLLECTION

- 35.6% of the youth surveyed used substances 1-2x to several times per week in the past 30 days
- 34.7% of youth experienced at least one poor mental health day per week*
- 41.8% of the youth said they know little to nothing about how substances can affect their day-to-day health*
- Young people trust and prefer peer-to-peer support, rather than going to adults and professionals only

Survey source: "Now What?" Stanford Sierra Youth and Families (SSYAF) Suicide Prevention Listening Session Report (2025)

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

#1 Support county collaboration with the state in implementing restorative justice-oriented substance use prevention into school curriculums and educator/staff training.

#2 Support county collaboration with the Office of Education, schools, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to implement peer-focused substance use education and prevention programming on school campuses.

#3 Engage the county to collaborate with CBOs, the Office of Education, and youth-serving centers to promote accessible substance use resources for students and families (e.g. "Street Sheets").

2025-2026 Page 2

Citations	
1.	https://reporting.alchemer.com/r/735816_6706cea5165874.58425556
2.	https://www.ssyaf.org/sites/main/files/now_what_youth_suicide_prevention_listening_session_report.pdf
3.	https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-del-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/cultural-responsiveness-definition-and-explanation/
4.	https://www.innovatingjustice.org/restorative-justice/

SIGN THE PETITION:



To the right is our petition for or Youth Substance Use and Prevention Education. We are looking for signatures of support for the recommendations that we have made and included in this policy brief. Whether you are a member of a Mental or behavioral health organization or board, a youth advocate, a community member, or a youth yourself, your signature would be greatly appreciated!



Interested in joining the board?

Fill out the application!

Each district has two seats.

Currently, Districts 1 and 2 each have one open seat, and Districts 3 and 5 each have two open seats – a total of six vacancies.

We need 10 board members for a full board.

While we currently have a great amount of applications pending, we are continuously accepting applications. Even if your district's seats are full, you can still apply!

Applicants from fully seated districts may serve as associate board members until a seat becomes available.

If you know a youth that has an interest in behavioral health, please refer them to this newsletter and encourage them to apply – we can offer support in the application process too!

Selection Process

1. Apply to the board with the link above
2. Send application to BoardClerk@SacCounty.gov
3. After applications are reviewed, the applicant will be interviewed by their respective district supervisor
4. After interviews, supervisors make their appointment recommendations

