

Nevada Student Mental Healthcare: A Q&A With Katherine Dockweiler, Ed.D

The **ARTERY (Active Recruitment Training and Educator Retention to serve our Youth)** career ladder offers stacked degree programs with a variety of entry and exit points to best serve the diverse needs of students in the state of Nevada. ARTERY begins to address the workforce needs of Nevada as it focuses on the shortage of school-based mental health professionals. Whether you are a high school student, two- or four-year college student, working graduate, or graduate student there is an entry point for you.

What motivated you to apply for an MHSP grant?

My motivation to increase mental health services began almost ten years ago. From 2016 to 2018, I was president of our state association, the Nevada Association of School Psychologists. As a collective, we advocated with our state school counseling association and school social work association. This joint effort led to a significant outcome during the 2019 legislative session when the state required the establishment of recommended ratios for our school-based mental health professionals. This achievement, once passed, was then taken up by the State Board of Education. In 2020, the state set recommended ratios for those three school-based mental health professionals—1 to 250 for school counselors, 1 to 250 for school social workers, and 1 to 500 for our school psychologists.

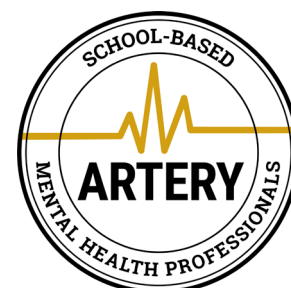
Once our state association had all the necessary policies in place, we faced the reality that there was a substantial need for 750 more school psychologists in order to meet those newly established recommended ratios. This need was not just a number but a crucial gap in our education training and workforce development systems that needed immediate attention.

Our state association also worked with the Nevada Department of Education to help draft an application for the federal School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) grant, awarded in 2020. This state grant provided the seed money for our ARTERY pipeline programming at Nevada State University as the institution received funds as a subgrantee. In 2021, we took a significant step forward, and I applied directly for the MHSP grant. This grant was crucial in supporting implementation of the ARTERY pipeline framework, and we've been working to develop the program and recruit students into our programming ever since.



**Katherine
A. Dockweiler,
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Dockweiler is an Assistant Professor of School Psychology at Nevada State University. Her research interests include workforce development programs, social-emotional-behavioral MTSS implementation, and policy frameworks for equitable service delivery. **She is the creator of the Active Recruitment, Training, and Educator Retention to serve our Youth (ARTERY) Pipeline Framework** for school psychologists and is the principal investigator of the ARTERY Pipeline Project awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. She is also the principal investigator for the Psychoeducational Mental Health Clinic awarded by SAMHSA through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dockweiler is co-author of the Universal School Safety Screening Scales (US4) available through Riverside Insights. She is Vice President of the Nevada State Board of Education, Chair of the National Association of School Psychologists Communications Committee, and Director of Policy and Advocacy for the Nevada Association of School Psychologists.



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And as you look back on that time, what challenges have you faced in delivering school mental health services in Nevada even before you received the grant?

Before the Nevada Department of Education and Nevada State University received the grants, we faced significant challenges relative to funding. Without the funding, we did not have the seed money to start a second graduate program in our state. At that time, Nevada had only had one graduate training program for school psychology. Meeting the need for 750 more school psychologists with just one program would have been beyond daunting. More than two programs are still needed, but two are better than just one in our state.

Another challenge was creating awareness in the state and within our local community about the need for more school-based mental health providers. Creating public awareness and support helped generate the political will that we needed.



When you considered increasing the school's mental health workforce, how did you envision accomplishing this? What approach did you take?

In 2019, after obtaining significant political and social support for the need for more school psychologists, I drafted the ARTERY school psychologists workforce pipeline program to serve as a framework to help the state achieve this goal.

The philosophy behind the ARTERY pipeline framework is essential because school-based mental health professionals are our campuses' heart and life support. The ARTERY pipeline recruitment activities and outreach begin in middle school and culminate in graduate-level training for counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

The strategies for gaining support were multifaceted. Our state school psychology association created partnerships at multiple levels, including state, local, and higher education, as well as within the districts and parent groups. Another strategy that emerged from this work was my research surrounding pipeline programs in general and higher education training programs specific to school psychology. Nevada State University adopted a "grow-your-own" approach, combining it with our high-quality Ed.S. programming.

Please explain the components of ARTERY. How are you introducing individuals to school mental health professions?

The ARTERY pipeline framework has five pillars, beginning with awareness-building opportunities at the middle and high school levels. We also developed a course for high school seniors that is available as either a dual-credit or dual-enrollment course. We called this course EDU 221—Introduction to School-based Mental Health. We also created EDU 345—School-based Mental Health Field Experience.

At Nevada State University, students take classes that can lead to the School-Based Mental Health Minor. This is the second pillar of the ARTERY. Most students enrolling in our minor courses are psychology, counseling, or teacher education undergraduate students. The minor can be paired well with any of those majors, and students learn about and are exposed to all three school-based mental health professions as they work through their higher education training. They gain understanding, awareness, and appreciation for all three school mental health professions.



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The third pillar is a work-based position as a school psychology assistant. In this role, individuals work directly with a school psychologist(s) in the local school district, getting hands-on work experience. In the ARTERY model, this creates an additional pathway for foundational psychoeducational training and background skills that are beneficial to entering graduate-level training as a school psychologist.

The fourth pillar is post-baccalaureate training or a certificate relative to school-based mental health. Current educators can elect to take these classes, and some become so interested they apply for the Ed.S. school psychology program.

The Ed.S. school psychology program is the fifth and culminating pillar of the ARTERY Pipeline framework. The various pillars create many opportunities for awareness, recruitment, and training.

HS Student	SBMH Minor	SP Assistant	Bachelor's	Ed.S. in SP
<i>High School Student</i>	<i>Undergraduate Student</i>	<i>Undergraduate Student</i>	<i>Undergraduate Student</i>	<i>Licensed School Psychologist</i>
Opportunity for dual enrollment courses and/or CTE courses, first entry point to the ARTERY and SBMH professions	Opportunity to work toward a Minor in School-Based Mental Health within the ARTERY career pathway (24 credits)	Ability for district employment and NDE licensure as a SPA to assist school psychologists with specific tasks	Continued employment as SPA, culmination of Bachelors, and tracked into the Ed.S. in school psychology (124 credits)	Ability to work as a state licensed school psychologist with support for NCSP (63 graduate credits)



NEVADA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
PATHWAY PROGRAM

You're building a new school psychology Ed.S. program. Have you had any students enter the Ed.S. program yet?

We are thrilled to be taking on our first cohort in the fall of 2024. After all these years of planning and building, we are finally living the implemented version of what we had planned. Our first cohort has 18 students from very diverse backgrounds.



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That's excellent. Did some of those students come through your ARTERY pipeline into your Ed.S. program?

Many of our entering first-year cohort completed EDU 221 and the SBMH field experience course. Some have even completed the entire SBMH Minor.

Was your minor developed to be a direct pipeline into your Ed.S. program? Is that correct?

Yes, absolutely. We will track the number of students who enroll in our dual credit and dual enrollment programming locally in our high schools, then proceed to enroll in Nevada State full-time, take our minor classes, and eventually end up in our Ed.S. program. We are in the early stages of data collection for that and look forward to monitoring student progression in years to come.

Have you developed ARTERY resources that might interest and inspire other grantees implementing pipeline programs?

We have developed various ARTERY resources for our Ed.S. school psychology program and undergraduate school-based mental health. We also have many paper and digital resources we can share, as well as some videos and recordings we have made. There are also media reports from the local newspaper who come out and interview us about the ARTERY work that we're doing.

What strategies or recommendations do you have for communities or grantees interested in building or expanding their pipeline programs?

I have two primary recommendations. One is to build as many partnerships and coalitions as possible. This will help at every step. The second recommendation is to be patient and persistent because, as I said, this work has been going on for nearly ten years—from ARTERY's inception and advocacy phase to where we are today with enrolling our first cohort of Ed.S. students who will begin courses this fall. Things take time, and we can get there with multiple voices sharing the same goal.

I'm interested in hearing about your achievements and plans for the future.

Our first group of Ed.S. students is coming this fall, which is a considerable achievement. We also have a robust group of students in the pipeline leading up to the school psychology graduate program. Having an established ARTERY pipeline in place is a dream come true and I'm thrilled we are able to help address the workforce needs of our community.

It would be wonderful if, in the future, we could extend our graduate programming options to also include school counseling and school social work, in addition to our existing school psychology program. Having all three graduate programs, paired with our minor in school-based mental health, would provide comprehensive degree pathways for students. In doing so, our undergraduate students can stay at Nevada State University to pursue their graduate training in their school-based mental health profession of choice.

