

Appendix A. State/Grantee Notification Letter

Appendix A.1 State/Grantee Notification Letter

[NITT Letterhead with logo]

[Date]

[Title First Name Last Name]

[State Department of Education Official's Title]

[State Department of Education]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

First, congratulations on being a recipient of a **Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative-AWARE-SEA** grant! I am also writing to inform your state education agency about the **Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) NITT**. As you know, the initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. Programs included in the comprehensive evaluation are AWARE-SEA, Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). The study we are contacting you about focuses on the AWARE-SEA program.

As an AWARE-SEA grant recipient, we invite you to participate in this evaluation designed to understand whether and how grantees reach their program goals to (1) increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth (grades K–12; hereafter referred to as “youth”); (2) provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with youth to detect and respond to mental illness in youth; (3) connect youth and families/ caregivers who may have behavioral health issues with appropriate services; and (4) improve conditions for learning and behavioral health outcomes for all youth.

The study will include all AWARE-SEA grantees, their local education agency (LEA) partners, and AWARE-SEA schools. Each partner LEA will also be asked to aid in identifying a matched comparison school for each AWARE-SEA school. At the grantee, district, and school levels, the evaluation will collect data from key staff in all partner organizations. At each AWARE-SEA and comparison school, annual surveys will be used to collect data from the school principal (or designee), youth, and teachers beginning in spring 2016. Both project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year. The AWARE-SEA data collection will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of SAMHSA.

The specific areas in which AWARE-SEA grantees and their partners are being asked to support this study are:

- Participation in all grantee-, LEA- and school-level surveys, including respondent identification
- Aid in identification and recruitment of comparison schools
- Local evaluation partner support to oversee program entry/exit checklist data collection
- Access to relevant management information system (MIS) data to measure school safety indicators (e.g., number of suspensions, expulsions, and incidents of school violence)
- Partnership with local evaluators to provide data that will inform the national process evaluation component

In <month>, RTI will begin contacting AWARE-SEA school districts to invite them to participate in this evaluation. Your cooperation and support of this study is extremely important to the success of the evaluation. We urge you to support the study efforts by encouraging each of your LEA partners to cooperate with RTI when contacted. RTI will also be in touch soon with your state education agency regarding the grantee-level survey and other evaluation activities.

Enclosed you will find a NITT evaluation brochure that further explains the study. Should you have any questions, please call Duren Banks, Evaluation Leader, at 919-541-8026, or send an e-mail to durenbanks@rti.org. You may also contact Nainan Thomas at SAMHSA at 240-276-1744 for more information.

We look forward to working with you and with districts and schools in your state to make the AWARE-SEA evaluation a success.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[First Name Last Name]

Title, SAMHSA

Enclosures: NITT Evaluation Brochure, FAQs

Appendix B. District Notification and Recruitment Letters

Appendix B.1 District Notification Letter – AWARE-SEA district

[NITT Letterhead with logo]

[Date]

[Superintendent's Name]

Superintendent

[District]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

First, congratulations on being named a local education agency partner on your state's **Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative–AWARE-SEA** grant! I am also writing to inform you about an important new study: the **Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) NITT**. The initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. Programs included in the comprehensive evaluation are NITT AWARE-SEA, Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). The study we are contacting you about focuses on the AWARE-SEA program.

As an **AWARE-SEA local education agency (LEA) partner**, we invite you to participate in this evaluation designed to understand whether and how grantees reach their program goals to (1) increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth (grades K–12; hereafter referred to as “youth”); (2) provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with youth to detect and respond to mental illness in youth; (3) connect youth and families/ caregivers who may have behavioral health issues with appropriate services; and (4) improve conditions for learning and behavioral health outcomes for all youth. The AWARE-SEA data collection will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of SAMHSA.

The study will include all AWARE-SEA grantees, their local education agency (LEA) partners, and AWARE-SEA schools in the 20 grantee states. Within your school district, the evaluation will involve up to three AWARE-SEA (project site) schools, each paired with a matched comparison school not supported by AWARE-SEA. With your assistance, RTI will contact these schools to discuss study details and invite their participation.

At the district and school levels, web-based surveys with key stakeholders (superintendents, school principals, or their designees) will be administered annually for three years beginning in spring 2016 to collect measures on planning and implementation activities around mental health services and school safety. Annual student and teacher surveys will be administered at each AWARE-SEA and comparison school to a sample of students and teachers beginning in spring 2016. Both surveys will include measures of school climate, such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety. The student survey will also include items on coping and resiliency. Both project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year.

Each partner LEA is being asked to support this study by:

- Participating in LEA- and school-level surveys, and assisting RTI with respondent identification
- Assisting RTI with identification and recruitment of matched comparison schools within the district
- Providing RTI with access to relevant school-level management information system (MIS) data to measure school safety indicators (e.g., number of suspensions, expulsions, and incidents of school violence)

A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to discuss your participation in this important study and answer any questions you may have about the AWARE-SEA evaluation. Once project site and comparison schools are identified, we ask that you encourage each of the candidate schools to cooperate with RTI when contacted.

Enclosed you will find a NITT evaluation brochure that further explains the study and a document with frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions, please call Duren Banks, Evaluation Leader, at 919-541-8026, or send an e-mail to durenbanks@rti.org. You may also contact Nainan Thomas at SAMHSA at 240-276-1744 for more information.

We look forward to working with you and schools in your district to make the AWARE-SEA evaluation a success.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[First Name Last Name]

Title, SAMHSA

Enclosures: NITT Evaluation Brochure, FAQs

Appendix B.2 District Recruitment Letter – non-AWARE-SEA district

[NITT Letterhead with logo]

[Date]

[Superintendent's Name]

Superintendent

[District]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to inform you that one or more schools in your district have been selected to participate in an important new study: the **Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative**. The initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. Included in the comprehensive evaluation are grantees of four NITT grant programs: AWARE-SEA, Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). The study we are contacting you about focuses on the AWARE-SEA program and will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of SAMHSA.

Within each grantee district, the evaluation will involve up to five AWARE-SEA (project site) schools, each paired with a matched comparison school not supported by AWARE-SEA. Ideally, the comparison schools will be located within the same school district as the project site schools. If no suitable matches are identified for one or more project site schools within the AWARE-SEA district, a search will be made in another district for a comparable school.

The schools on the attached list have been selected from your district to participate in the evaluation as comparison schools and are excellent matches for project site schools in a neighboring district. With your support and approval, RTI will contact these schools to discuss study details and invite their participation. The list includes a first match and two alternates for each project site school for which a comparison school is needed. RTI will begin by contacting the first match in each group and only contact the alternate schools if necessary.

The school principal (or designee) at each school will be asked to complete web-based surveys annually for three years beginning in spring 2016 to collect measures on planning and implementation activities around mental health services and school safety. Annual student and teacher surveys will be administered at each project site and comparison school to a sample of students and teachers beginning in spring 2016. Both surveys will include measures of school climate, such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety. The student survey will also include items on coping and resilience. Both project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year.

We ask that you support this study by:

- Approving and encouraging the comparison schools' participation in the principal, teacher, and student surveys
- Providing RTI with access to relevant school-level management information system (MIS) data to measure school safety indicators (e.g., number of suspensions, expulsions, and incidents of school violence)

A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to invite your district's participation in this important study and answer any questions you may have. Enclosed you will find a NITT evaluation brochure that further explains the study and a document with frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions, please call Duren Banks, Evaluation Leader, at 919-541-8026, or send an e-mail to durenbanks@rti.org. You may also contact Nainan Thomas at SAMHSA at 240-276-1744 for more information.

We look forward to working with you and schools in your district to make the AWARE-SEA evaluation a success.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[First Name Last Name]

Title, SAMHSA

Enclosures: NITT Evaluation Brochure, List of Selected Schools in the District, FAQs

Appendix C. School Recruitment Letters

Appendix C.1 School Recruitment Letter – AWARE-SEA school

[NITT Letterhead with logo]

[Date]

[Principal's Name]

[Title]

[School]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to invite your school's participation in an important new study: the **Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative**. The initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. Programs included in the comprehensive evaluation are NITT AWARE-SEA, Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). The study we are contacting you about focuses on the AWARE-SEA program.

As an **AWARE-SEA school**, your participation in this evaluation is critical to gaining an understanding of whether and how grantees reach their program goals to (1) increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth (grades K–12; hereafter referred to as "youth"); (2) provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with youth to detect and respond to mental illness in youth; (3) connect youth and families/ caregivers who may have behavioral health issues with appropriate services; and (4) improve conditions for learning and behavioral health outcomes for all youth. The AWARE-SEA data collection will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of SAMHSA.

The study has been given the support of Superintendent [INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT]. The study will include all AWARE-SEA districts and schools in the 20 grantee states. Within your school district, the evaluation will involve up to five AWARE-SEA (project site) schools, each paired with a matched comparison school not supported by AWARE-SEA. **You are asked to participate in this study as a project site school.**

The school principal (or designee) at each project site and comparison school will be asked to complete web-based surveys annually for three years beginning in spring 2016 to collect measures on planning and implementation activities around mental health services and school safety. Annual student and teacher surveys will be administered at each project site and comparison school to a sample of students and teachers beginning in spring 2016. Both surveys will include measures of school climate, such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety. The student survey will also include items on coping and resilience. Both project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year.

A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to discuss your participation in this important study and answer any questions you may have about the AWARE-SEA evaluation. Enclosed you will find a NITT evaluation brochure that further explains the study and a document with frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions, please call Duren Banks, Evaluation Leader, at 919-541-8026, or send an e-mail to durenbanks@rti.org. You may also contact Nainan Thomas at SAMHSA at 240-276-1744 for more information.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to make the AWARE-SEA evaluation a success.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[First Name Last Name]

Title, SAMHSA

Enclosures: NITT Evaluation Brochure, FAQs

Appendix C.2 School Recruitment Letter – Comparison school in AWARE-SEA school district

[NITT Letterhead with logo]

[Date]

[Principal's Name]

[Title]

[School]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to invite your school's participation in an important new study: the **Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative**. The initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. Programs included in the comprehensive evaluation are NITT AWARE-SEA, Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). The study we are contacting you about focuses on the AWARE-SEA program and will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of SAMHSA.

The study is designed to gain an understanding of whether and how grantees reach their program goals and will include all AWARE-SEA districts and schools in the 20 grantee states. As an AWARE-SEA grantee partner, your school Superintendent [INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT] has given support for this study. Within each school district, the evaluation will involve up to five AWARE-SEA (project site) schools, each paired with a matched comparison school not currently supported by AWARE-SEA. **You are invited to participate in this study as a comparison school.**

The school principal (or designee) at each project site and comparison school will be asked to complete web-based surveys annually for three years beginning in spring 2016 to collect measures on planning and implementation activities around mental health services and school safety. Annual student and teacher surveys will be administered at each project site and comparison school to a sample of students and teachers beginning in spring 2016. Both surveys will include measures of school climate, such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety. The student survey will also include items on coping and resilience. Both project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year.

A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to discuss your participation in this important study and answer any questions you may have about the AWARE-SEA evaluation. Enclosed you will find a NITT evaluation brochure that further explains the study and a document with frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions, please call Duren Banks, Evaluation Leader, at 919-541-8026, or send an e-mail to durenbanks@rti.org. You may also contact Nainan Thomas at SAMHSA at 240-276-1744 for more information.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to make the AWARE-SEA evaluation a success.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[First Name Last Name]

Title, SAMHSA

Enclosures: NITT Evaluation Brochure, FAQs

Appendix C.3 School Recruitment Letter – Comparison school in non-AWARE-SEA school district

[NITT Letterhead with logo]

[Date]

[Principal's Name]

[Title]

[School]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to invite your school's participation in an important new study: the **Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative**. The initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. Programs included in the comprehensive evaluation are NITT AWARE-SEA, Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). The study we are contacting you about focuses on the AWARE-SEA program and will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of SAMHSA.

The study is designed to gain an understanding of whether and how grantees reach their program goals and will include all AWARE-SEA districts and schools in the 20 grantee states. Within each school district, the evaluation will involve up to five AWARE-SEA (project site) schools, each paired with a matched comparison school not currently supported by AWARE-SEA. Ideally, the comparison schools will be located within the same school district as the project site schools. If no suitable matches are identified for one or more project site schools within the AWARE-SEA district, a search will be made in another district for a comparable school. **Your school is an excellent match for a project site school in a neighboring district and has been selected to participate in the evaluation as a comparison school.** Your school Superintendent [INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT] has given support for this study.

The school principal (or designee) at each project site and comparison school will be asked to complete web-based surveys annually for three years beginning in spring 2016 to collect measures on planning and implementation activities around mental health services and school safety. Annual student and teacher surveys will be administered at each project site and comparison school to a sample of students and teachers beginning in spring 2016. Both surveys will include measures of school climate, such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety. The student survey will also include items on coping and resilience. Both project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year.

A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to discuss your participation in this important study and answer any questions you may have about the AWARE-SEA evaluation. Enclosed you will find a NITT evaluation brochure that further explains the study and a document with frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions, please call Duren Banks, Evaluation Leader, at 919-541-8026, or send an e-mail to durenbanks@rti.org. You may also contact Nainan Thomas at SAMHSA at 240-276-1744 for more information.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to make the AWARE-SEA evaluation a success.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[First Name Last Name]

Title, SAMHSA

Enclosures: NITT Evaluation Brochure, FAQs

Appendix D. NITT Brochure Text

Appendix D.1 NITT Brochure Text

COVER

<NITT logo>

Evaluation of the Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative

Study sponsored by: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Study conducted by: RTI International

Research partners: Cloudburst (Evaluation Training and Technical Assistance); University of Massachusetts Medical School and Portland State University (Healthy Transitions); The Annapolis Coalition (Minority Fellowship Programs)

INTERIOR

The NITT Initiative

- A new initiative to protect children and communities by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services
- SAMHSA Now Is the Time (NITT) programs include
 - AWARE-SEA (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) State Grants
 - Healthy Transitions (HT)
 - Minority Fellowship Program – Youth (MFP-Y)
 - Minority Fellowship Program – Addictions Counselors (MFP-AC)

The National Evaluation of NITT

The evaluation will

- Be conducted over 5 years, beginning in March 2015
- Include process and outcome evaluation components
- Answer questions specific to each grant program as well as overarching questions across the programs
- Make use of available information and data (e.g., grant applications, administrative data)
- Collect primary data in ways that are efficient and that minimize burden to grantees and respondents through web-based surveys, telephone interviews, and site visits
- Support grantees and their partners in providing data for the national evaluation, including evaluation training and TA and user-friendly data systems (e.g., TRAC/NOMS data, performance measures)
- Support local evaluations through training and TA
- Provide grantees with useful data and information, to encourage and reward their full participation in evaluation activities

BACK

For More Information

If you have questions about the NITT evaluation or would like more information, please contact us at:

Phone number: 800-xxx-xxxx

E-mail address: < email address >

Appendix E. AWARE-SEA FAQs Text

Appendix E.1 AWARE-SEA FAQs

[NITT logo]

Now is the Time (NITT) AWARE-SEA Evaluation Study – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is NITT?

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) Now is the Time (NITT) Initiative aims to better protect U.S. children from violence by making schools safer and increasing access to mental health services. NITT programs include AWARE-SEA (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education), Healthy Transitions, and two Minority Fellowship Programs (Youth and Addictions Counselors). More information can be found at <http://www.samhsa.gov/nitt-ta> and http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/wh_now_is_the_time_full.pdf.

What is the focus of the AWARE-SEA Evaluation?

The AWARE-SEA evaluation is designed to understand whether and how grantees reach their program goals to (1) increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth; (2) provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with youth to detect and respond to mental illness in children and adults; (3) connect children, youth, and families/ caregivers who may have behavioral health issues with appropriate services; and (4) improve conditions for learning and behavioral health outcomes for all school-aged youth (grades K–12).

How can AWARE-SEA grantees and their partners support this evaluation?

The specific areas of support include:

- Participation in all grantee-, LEA-, and school-level surveys, including respondent identification
- Aid in identification and recruitment of comparison schools
- Local evaluation partner support to oversee program entry/exit checklist data collection
- Access to relevant management information system (MIS) data to measure school safety indicators (e.g., number of suspensions, expulsions, and incidents of school violence)
- Partnership with local evaluators to provide data that will inform the national process evaluation component

When is the study being conducted?

The first (baseline) data collection with districts and schools will take place in spring 2016. Follow-up data collection will be conducted in spring 2017 and spring 2018.

How many districts, schools, staff, and students will be involved each year of the study?

The study will include up to five local education agency (LEA) partners in each of the 20 grantee states. Within each LEA, approximately 4-5 AWARE-SEA schools and 4-5 comparison schools not currently supported by AWARE-SEA will be included. If a matched comparison school cannot be identified in the same grantee partner district, a school in a neighboring district will be identified and invited to participate as a comparison school. Annual surveys will be completed at each project site and comparison school with the school principal and new samples of teachers and students.

What is involved for students?

Students will complete a self-administered survey that will take about 45 minutes. The survey will include measures of school climate, such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety. The student survey will also include items on coping and resilience.

What is involved for school staff?

The school principal (or designee) at each school will be asked to complete a 30-minute web-based survey annually to collect measures on planning and implementation activities around mental health services and school safety. Teachers will complete a 30-minute survey that parallels the student survey and includes measures of school climate such as academic norms, learning support and barriers, availability of health and counseling services, mental health literacy, and perceptions of school safety.

Who will be responsible for data collection?

Schools will be asked to designate a school coordinator to assist RTI with student data collection activities such as (1) scheduling and making arrangements for student surveys; (2) distributing and collecting parent consent forms; and (3) facilitating the student surveys during a scheduled block of time each spring. RTI will provide all required materials and will train the school coordinator. Each school coordinator will be assigned to an RTI site liaison who will work closely with the school coordinator to ensure a successful data collection. Other evaluation activities, including surveys with the principal and teachers, and collection of MIS data will be handled by RTI staff.

Do teachers need to help administer the student surveys?

No, the trained school coordinator will facilitate the student surveys. Exceptions will be made for students with Individualized Education Plan (IEP) accommodations that may require the assistance of school personnel (e.g., if a student works one on one with an aide).

Will participating schools receive any data collected during the evaluation?

Yes, all project site and comparison schools will receive aggregated student survey data for their own schools each year.

Who do I contact for further information about AWARE-SEA?

For additional information, call the AWARE-SEA information number, 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an e-mail to <insert email address>.