

# BAKER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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2020-21 Baker County School District -- Mental Health Allocation Plan

**The Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan (s.1011.62(16)(a) and (b), F.S.)** continues to allow funding for two Mental Health Counselors, one Case Manager, and contracted Board Certified Behavior Analyst support. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year this was an addition to the two current Mental Health Counselor positions that have been in place for a number of years in the Baker County School District. BCSD has also funded one Behavior Analyst for several years. BCSD has been proactive for many years in understanding the complex mental health needs of the students that we serve. BCSD has also employed two full-time certified school psychologists (1:2411 ratio) and currently has three certified school counselors in our schools (1:1607) with six additional counselors working towards certification. This allocation continues to provide the opportunity to enhance the support provided to schools in previous years. BCSD will continue to employ one certified licensed mental health counselor (LMHC). The ratio for this position is 1:4822). The allocation funds three licensed mental health interns (LMHI) providing assistance in our schools (1:1607 ratio). The allocation also allows the continued employment of one case manager that assists with connecting services and supports (both in-house and community) for students/families (1:4822 ratio).

According to best practices provided by the Florida Department of Education's Office of Safe Schools (<http://fldoe.org/safe-schools/best-practices.stml>), this plan addresses the following supports to provide long-term mental health access to the stakeholders of BCSD.

1. Improving staffing ratios to allow for the delivery of a full range of services and effective school-community partnerships. Each school site will have an assigned licensed mental health counselor or intern. This individual will provide regular support to their assigned school and ensure the following:
  - a. Students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within 15 days of referral;
  - b. School-based mental health services are initiated within 15 days of identification and assessment;
2. Employing effective, positive school discipline that: (a) functions in concert with efforts to address school safety and climate; (b) is not simply punitive (e.g., zero tolerance); (c) is clear, consistent, and equitable; and (d) reinforces positive behaviors.
3. Integrating learning supports (e.g., behavioral, mental health, and social services), instruction, and school management within a comprehensive, cohesive approach that facilitates multidisciplinary collaboration.
4. Implementing multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) that encompass prevention, wellness promotion, and interventions that increase with intensity based on student need, and that promote close school-community collaboration.
5. Improving access to school-based mental health supports by ensuring adequate staffing levels in terms of school-employed mental health professionals who are trained to infuse prevention and intervention services into the learning process and to help integrate services provided through school-community partnerships into existing school initiatives.

- a. In addition, when working with our students, community support partners will ensure that mental health services for students are initiated within 30 days of referral.

In light of these practices, the following is offered for your consideration:

### **Supports provided by mental health personnel:**

#### **Mental Health Counselors**

- Assist in the design, implementation, and follow-up of behavioral management programs for students to remediate behavioral and social problems.
- Provide individual and group counseling to students on a regular basis to include socialization activities.
- Assist other professionals with student crisis intervention.
- Plan and confer with classroom teachers concerning any behavioral, social or personal problems affecting the students.
- Assist in the development and delivery of in-service activities regarding techniques for remediating behavioral, social or personal problems of students.
- Participation in School and District Threat Assessment Team.

#### **Case Manager**

- Participate in other Child Study Teams where high-risk students are typically reviewed and staffed (e.g., Truancy teams, MTSS teams focusing on behavior, DJJ articulation meetings, etc.).
- Participate with SEDNET on governing boards coordinating services for children who have or are at risk for emotional or behavioral disabilities.
- For students who are referred to the Case Manager, in collaboration with the student, his or her family, his or her primary care provider, and any other agency working with the family (DCF worker, Community Based Care Agency, Parole Officer, etc.) identify gaps in services, identify barriers to receiving needed services, remove barriers, and facilitate the efficient and timely provision of all needed services.
- Facilitate the maximization of the Mental Health Assistance Allocation by ensuring all students have health insurance coverage, including assisting parents with enrolling their children in Florida Medicaid or subsidized health insurance policy.
- For all students and families who received support through the Case Manager, regularly and closely monitor those services to ensure there are no interruptions or changes in care and, if so, to minimize the time that the student or family is without care.
- Develop and maintain records of contact and services provided for all referred students and families. Provide regular reports to the School Safety Specialist and Threat Assessment Team. Facilitate the development of an annual report to the Florida Department of Education on the expenditures of the mental health allocation and the services that were provided to students.

- Communicate and collaborate among schools, districts, communities and state agencies, colleges/universities and the Federal Children's Medical Services representatives to provide maximum services related to health and safety programs.
- Maintain a close working relationship with District and community personnel relative to the assigned area to ensure information exchange, coordination and support for the decision-making process and to gather feedback concerning service to foster continuous quality improvement.

### **Board Certified Behavior Analyst**

- Collect information from parents and teachers through interviews and consultations as it relates to student learning and behavior difficulties.
- Conduct behavior assessments that include functional analysis, assessment of functional skills and assessment of potential reinforcers.
- Analyze evaluation data and formulate hypotheses and conclusions relating to learning and behavioral issues.
- Conduct informal and formal observations of students as part of the evaluation process.
- Participate in the development of appropriate interventions and strategies to assist individual students in academic growth and school adjustment.
- Utilize knowledge of behavioral principles to develop and assist in the implementation of specific behavioral management plans for individual students, classrooms, and schools.
- Support School and District Threat Assessment Team.
- Monitor the implementation of behavior plans.
- Provide consultation on an ongoing basis to teachers, parents and other school personnel to resolve students' learning and behavioral problems.
- Act as a liaison with public and private agents who work with students, e.g., doctors and counselors, as needed.
- Provide training and assistance in intervention techniques and strategies designed to improve student success in the school setting.

### **Community Partners**

- Baker County School District will contract with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare for two additional mental health counselors to support both traditional and alternative Education Program. The counselors will spend 3 to 5 days per week at the schools. Priority for services will be for students identified by school and district staff who need support beyond the traditional school day.
  - The contract with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare for psychiatric consultations will provide psychiatric consultations to serve students identified through the MTSS process or District Threat Assessment Teams. This contract will allow for the coordination of mental health treatment services for students identified through the district's MTSS or threat assessment team.
  - Community support partners will ensure that mental health services for students are initiated within 30 days of referral.

- Baker County School District will collaborate with the Community Action Team (CAT) to refer eligible students and support current students in order to decrease the number of out-of-home placements and increase student well-being.
  - District and CAT team staff will collaborate a minimum of once per month to discuss student progress/needs.
  
- Baker County School District will access the Mobile Response Team (MRTs) at the school level.
  - School and district-based staff will collaborate with the MRT program to increase staff and parent awareness of this resource.
  - MRT will be utilized with students that are experiencing mental health crises at school and district sites.
  - District and MRT staff will collaborate a minimum of once per month to discuss student progress/needs
  
- Baker County School District will continue to partner with the Baker County Prevention Coalition (BCPI) to provide prevention training in targeted risk areas such as substance abuse, tobacco/electronic cigarettes/Juul, and alcohol abuse.
  - Direct classroom instruction is offered through middle and high school health classes via Life Skills Curriculum.
  - Tobacco and substance abuse classes will be facilitated through BCPI for students that receive civil citations for these infractions.
  - Indirect support is also provided via sponsorship of the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) program.
  
- Baker County School District's process of coordinating mental health services with a student's primary mental healthcare provider and other mental health providers will be coordinated through the district's case manager.
  - Case manager will receive information from providers if a student has been determined to be a threat to self others in order for schools to effectively meet the needs of students.
  - Case manager will also communicate with healthcare and other providers to assist with families coordinating supports regarding mental health.
  
- Communications between Baker County School District and other providers will be conducted in a secure manner.
  
- Community partners will participate with district personnel in mental health and prevention meetings.

### **Program Implementation and Outcomes (s. 1011.62(16)(d), F.S.)**

We acknowledge that sustainable and effective change takes time and that schools sites will vary in their readiness to implement improvements and should be afforded the time and resources to sustain change over time. We submit the following proposal for screening/assessing students for mental health assistance/support:

#### **→ TIER 1**

- ◆ Teachers and staff will receive training in Mental Health First Aid and Trauma-Informed Practices via Mental Health Counselors and outside agencies. This will enable them to identify students/adults/families in distress and refer for assistance/support.
  - Teachers/Staff will refer to school-based guidance counselors for initial contact.
  - ANY POTENTIAL THREATS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY REFERRED TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND ADDRESSED VIA THE SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM (potential TIER 2 & 3 supports).
    - A guidance counselor or school principal/designee will contact assigned mental health counselor identification and/or access questions.
  - Training will focus on referring students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses.
- ◆ Sanford Harmony Social Emotional Learning Curriculum will be implemented school-wide at the PreKindergarten/KIndergarten Center, Macclenny Elementary, Westside Elementary, and Keller Intermediate Schools.
  - The Sanford Harmony Program uses the 2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs (Preschool and Elementary School Edition) as a framework for evaluating effectiveness and guiding objectives. CASEL has identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Character Under Construction Curriculum will be utilized at Baker County Middle School and at the CATS Academy (alternative school).
  - The Character Under Construction Curriculum provides lessons centered around honesty, citizenship, trustworthiness, forgiveness, responsibility, respectfulness, friendships and patience.

- LifeSkills Curriculum provided at high school via Health class.
  - The Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST) High School program is a highly interactive, skills-based program designed to promote positive health and personal development for youth in grades 9 or 10. A study in the World Journal of Preventative Medicine found that this program cuts drug abuse in half by helping adolescents navigate the challenges of their high school years and preparing them for the independence and responsibilities that they will encounter as young adults. The LST High School program uses developmentally appropriate, collaborative learning strategies to help students achieve competency in the skills that have been shown to prevent substance use, violence, and other health risk behaviors.
  
- Mental Health First Awareness Training for students grades 6-12
  - In accordance with the requirement that every Florida public school is to provide students in grades 6-12 at least five hours of mental health instruction, Baker County School District will utilize both district mental health staff and community partners to provide this training to students.
    - Focus will be on reducing the likelihood of at-risk students developing social, emotional, or behavioral health problems, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal tendencies, and substance use disorders.

**→ TIER 2**

- ◆ Mental Health Counselors will assist with identification and access to appropriate mental health supports.
  - Evidence-based group social, emotional, and behavioral interventions based on need.
  - Monitoring of intervention fidelity and student progress.
- ◆ Behavior Analyst will Conduct behavior assessments that include functional analysis, assessment of functional skills and assessment of potential reinforcers.
  - Evidence-based group social, emotional, and behavioral interventions based on need.
- ◆ Case Managers will facilitate communication with parents/guardians, Mental Health Counselors, Behavior Analysts, and community agencies.
  - Parents/guardians will receive assistance with accessing appropriate health care and community-based supports as needed.

**→ TIER 3**

- ◆ Mental Health Counselors will provide individualized counseling and interventions as needed.
  - Supports will be provided to school and district staff when intensive services warranted

- ◆ Behavior Analysts will provide individualized behavior support plans as needed.
  - Supports will be provided to school and district staff when intensive services warranted
  
- ◆ Case Manager will coordinate intensified family partnerships and communications.
  - Parent/school communications
  - Parent/outside agency communications
  - Develop and maintain records of contact and services provided for all referred students and families. Provide regular reports to the School Safety Specialist and Threat Assessment Team.
  
- **Crisis Events**
  - All mental health staff at the Baker County School District are involved in the district's crisis response plan. In the event of a crisis event, staff will report to the reunification area to provide appropriate counseling, support, and referrals to students, families, and staff affected by the crisis.
  
- **Tracking Students**
  - Baker County School District currently employs an in-house system for tracking the number of students at high risk for mental health or co-occurring substance abuse disorders who received mental health screenings or assessments; number of students referred to school-based mental health services providers; number of students referred to community-based mental health services providers; number of students who received school-based interventions, services or assistance; and number of students who received community-based interventions, services or assistance.
    - District mental health staff meets monthly to review numbers and employ the four-step problem solving process to address any patterns at schools/district.
      - Community supports are also a part of these meetings and report student data to school personnel.
    - This data is collected by mental health providers and turned in to the student services director for reporting purposes.
  - Additional methods of collecting and securing this data are being explored in order to more efficiently communicate with school and community-based supports.



**Expenditures (s.1011.62(16)(d), F.S.)**

**2020-21 Mental Health Allocation Numbers**

State Licensed Mental Health Counselors/Interns (est. \$55,000 each for salary, benefits, & milage) (2)	\$110,000
Case Manager - Master's Degree from accredited educational institution (est. \$55,000 for salary, benefits & mileage) (1)	55,000
Third Party Contracted Services from Board Certified Behavior Analyst and/or Registered Behavior Tech (1)	48,162
Fees Incurred Through Community Partnership with Meridian Behavioral Health for mental health counseling services, mental health crisis support, and mental health prevention supports (cost to support students who do not have access to supports via Medicaid or private insurance)	40,000
Supplies, Professional Development Materials, etc. incurred through mental health first aid and awareness training	5,000
<b>Total Allocation</b>	<hr/> <b>\$258,162</b>

- ★ Amount of allocation that provides direct mental health coordination/services -- \$253,162 (98%)
- ★ Mental Health Assistance Allocation does not supplant other funding sources (general fund, IDEA) OR increase salaries or provide staff bonuses.
- ★ The district will utilize Medicaid reimbursement, seek grants, and partner with community-based partners (e.g. Baker County Prevention Coalition, Meridian Behavioral Health) to maximize resources to provide school-based mental health supports to students of Baker County School District.

**Plan Approval and Submission (s.1011.62(16)(c), F.S.)**

Thank you for your consideration of this allocation plan. I believe that the interventions and supports outlined above affords an excellent opportunity to systematically address a greater number of student needs. The Florida State Educational Agency (SEA) Profile (2017) tells us that we had 2,816,824 students in PK to 12th grade. One-fifth of that student population (563,364) could have some type of mental illness. The positions recommended above will allow us to not only improve student well-being and safety. It will also pay dividends in overall improved school climate, student behavior, academic achievement, and community collaboration. Please contact me via email at Michael.Green@bakerk12.org or by phone at (904) 259-0444 if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael D. Green, Jr.  
ESE/Student Services Director  
Baker County School District