



**The School Board of Brevard County, Florida
Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan
2019-20**

Brevard’s Vision: Mental health wellness promotes increased academic engagement, motivation and achievement, and improves behaviors and school climate.

Brevard’s Mission: Expand school-based mental health care by providing direct access to a continuum of mental health supports for students and families that will foster academic success and positive lifelong outcomes.

The 2019 Florida Legislature passed [Senate Bill 7030](#), Implementation of Legislative Recommendation of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, which comprehensively addresses school safety. Section 15 of SB 7030 goes into effect on July 1, 2019, and amends the Mental Health Assistance Allocation (MHAA), which provides funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care.

SB 7030 amended the MHAA, in part, to ensure that every Florida public school student has access to mental health professionals at school by the 2019-20 school year, this is achieved by training educators and other staff to identify and respond to mental health issues, and by referring children, youth and families who experience behavioral health issues to appropriate services.

Brevard Public Schools (BPS) will receive a mental health assistance allocation of \$1, 854,484 to expand school-based mental health care and access to mental health services for students. One hundred percent (100%) of this allocation must be expended on the following three elements:

Expand school-based mental health care.

Train educators and other school staff in detecting and responding to mental health issues.

Connect children, youth and families with appropriate behavioral health services.

School districts must submit board approved plans to the commissioner of education by August 1, 2019.

The ultimate goal of BPS’s proposed mental health plan is to expand and improve the quality and accessibility of mental health services and social emotional supports for all students in Brevard. The mental health and social-emotional supports/initiatives defined by SB 7030 are addressed by BPS as follows:

Evidenced-based, mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery through a multi-tiered system of supports

- Brevard Public Schools defines the primary protective factors of a multi-tiered system of support for social emotional, behavior and mental services as a positive school culture and climate, problem solving and coping skills, school safety intervention and response, and access to mental health interventions and services with follow-up support. During the 2018-19 SY, Student Support Services developed a multi-tiered School Support Checklist focused upon these four protective factors. All schools were asked to review these four areas with their school based team(s) to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. Each school was scheduled to meet with representatives from the district Student Support Services team to identify their needs and areas for growth and improvement.



Through these school visits, Student Support Services was able to define the top districtwide needs in each of these areas and through the MHAA plan the district will continue to work with schools to provide the SEL and mental health supports needed to strengthen our multi-tiered system of supports.

Direct employment of school-based mental health services providers to expand and enhance school based student services. These providers include, but are not limited to, certified school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.

- BPS will continue to fund through the Mental Health Assistance Allocation sixteen (16) BPS school social workers to assist and support students and families with social, emotional, and mental health needs to enhance and maximize student success.
- BPS will continue to split-fund through the Mental Health Assistance Allocation and IDEA four (4) School Psychologists to provide direct counseling services to students, consultation with schools on suicide risk inquiries, and postvention supports to students and families after a Baker Act.
- BPS will continue to partner with Lifetime Counseling Center to split fund (50/50) through the MHAA contracted social work services at 4 schools.
- If MHAA plan is approved, add two (2) school social workers for a Crisis Response Team to enhance school based services for crisis response and assist with complex mental health cases.
- If MHAA is approved, add two (2) School Social Workers to be placed at high needs schools to enhance school based student support services.
- If MHAA approved, add one (1) Social Emotional Learning Content Specialist to train school staff on evidenced based programs/strategies to promote social emotional learning and reduce behavioral challenges.

Strategies to increase the amount of time student services personnel spend providing direct services to students.

- Although we know this is an area we continue to need to improve upon, we are making progress in providing more time for student services personnel to spend time with students. We have increased the number of school social workers serving Brevard Public Schools from 8 in 2015-2016 to 38 in 2018-19. Some schools have started utilizing Title I funds to add additional school counselors to their staff who can provide direct services to students. Several elementary schools have hired instructional assistants to support elementary certified school counselors with data collection, record keeping, preparation for state assessments, and support for the MTSS process and other non-counseling duties allowing certified school counselors more time to provide counseling services to students.
- Schools are working to restructure the roles and responsibilities of school counselors so they can dedicate more time to student interaction.
- As a district, we are evaluating current job duties of school counselors to redefine their roles to allow more time to provide direct services to students. This will require further evaluation of the job responsibilities of those who support and facilitate Individual Problem Solving Teams, the ESE evaluation process, state and national assessments, and school supervision.



Contracts and interagency agreements with one or more local community behavioral health provider.

- On June 12, 2018 through a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) process the following mental agencies were approved by the Board to provide mental health, substance abuse, behavior analysis, and case management services on school campuses with parental consent: Angels for Kids, Big Bear Behavioral, Children's Home Society, Lifetime Counseling Center, IMPOWER, INVO Healthcare, and Kinder Konsulting. This agreement will be in effect through 2021. These agencies are able to bill Medicaid, bill private insurance, do private pay or sliding scale fee. Some pro bono services are also provided.
- Brevard is in the process of initiating another RFQ to solicit additional providers to meet the demands of our mental health referrals for students.
- In addition, Brevard Public Schools has contracts/interagency agreements with the following agencies: Brevard Family Partnership, Lifetime Counseling Center, Eckerd Youth Alternatives DBS Eckerd, Space Coast Health Foundation, Military & Family Life Counseling Program, Crosswinds Youth Services, and Vitas Healthcare of Brevard. We are in the process of finalizing an agreement with the Brevard CARES Mobile Response Team, Palm Point Behavioral Health, and Bright Star Special Bereavement Services of Health First.

Procedures to ensure school based mental health services are initiated within 15 days of a referral and community based mental health services are initiated within 30 days after a school referral is made.

- This year the Student Mental Health Screening and Assistance form was developed and implemented district wide as a tool to track mental health referrals for students initiated by BPS schools. Forms were primarily completed by school counselors and school social workers. During the 2018-19 school year, 2,590 referral forms were submitted to the district. Through the mental health referral process, a total of 2,978 BPS students were seen by our seven (7) contracted community mental health providers. The discrepancy in numbers can be attributed to a lack of reporting from schools, referrals made to agencies from people other than BPS staff, or referrals made to community mental health providers outside the ones with whom we contract.
- This was the first year we tracked this data so closely and we are working on improving this reporting system for next year. For 2019-20, we will designate a full time district social worker to oversee the reporting of mental health referrals, provide on-going training to schools on the process, and to monitor the 15 day and 30 day timelines for services. This social worker will work closely with schools and agencies to follow up on referrals and communicate with parents/guardians who are resistant or negligent with following through to receive mental health services for their children.
- Monthly SEDNET meetings with our community mental health providers will be held to problem solve issues with the mental health referral process and identify additional counseling resources for services. Communication between BPS and community providers will be on-going to ensure that these timelines are met.
- Quarterly meetings with school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists will be held to assist with monitoring the process and troubleshooting issues with referrals. The District Mental Health Work Group will meet weekly as needed.



Strategies or programs to reduce the likelihood of at-risk students developing social emotional or behavioral problems, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal tendencies or substance abuse disorders.

- Sources of Strength is a youth suicide prevention program designed to promote a healthy school culture for students and staff by promoting positive, supportive connections between student peers and caring adults. Through generous grant funding from the Florida Blue Foundation and the Space Coast Health Foundation that supports preventive evidence based programs designed to identify and or address behavioral/mental health needs of youth, BPS will be able to implement this program at all high schools by the end of the 2021-22 school year. Through this initiative 800 peer leaders (50 per school) will be trained to help other students realize their strengths and resiliency. This program is proven to increase peer leaders' connectedness to adults, increase school engagement, and the likelihood peer leaders will refer a suicidal friend to an adult.
- LINC Care Coordination for Suicide Prevention training was provided in the Fall of 2018 to all certified school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists to introduce screening and assessment tools (PHQ-9, Columbia-SSRS, and Wellness Toolbox/Safety Plan) for students at risk of suicide. In addition, this training focused on follow-up with students back into the school environment after a Baker Act or voluntary hospitalization.
- Psychological Services provided additional Suicide Risk Inquiry (SRI) training to school counselors and social workers throughout the year on using the MFQ Screening tool, PHQ-9, and Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale. School psychologists provided on-going consultation with school counselors and social workers to assist with SRI screenings and assessments.
- For 2019-20, the Office of Psychological Services has developed a Suicide Risk Inquiry (SRI) training that will be presented to all School Counselors, School Social Workers, and School Psychologists on August 6th to ensure all student support services staff are highly competent in the SRI process, screening instruments, and flowchart.
- On August 6th, a district wide mandated Professional Development Day for school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers will be held to provide a comprehensive conference focusing on Solution Focused Brief Therapy presented by Dr. Russell Sabella, a professor at Florida Gulf Coast University.
- ACT on FACTS is an on-line state approved training program for instructional staff that increases awareness of risk and protective factors for students who are dealing with mental health issues. Once 100% of instructional staff complete the course, schools are certified by the state as Certified Suicide Prevention Schools. As a district we are encouraging all BPS employees to become certified.
- Through discretionary grant funding from the Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET) a project manager is shared between Brevard and Seminole Counties to facilitate and coordinate mental health services for youth with or at-risk of emotional behavioral disabilities. The project manager collaborates with schools, child welfare, and juvenile justice professionals, along with mental health agencies and families to ensure children with mental emotional and behavioral problems and their families have access to the mental health supports and services they need.
- Brevard Public School has MOUs with local hospice organizations, (VITAS, St. Francis, and Health First) to provide on-site grief counseling services and training to identified schools and/or students recommended by BPS to receive grief services. This includes opportunities to provide professional development and training in grief counseling for BPS employees.



- If MHAA funding is approved, BPS will begin implementation and training for Restorative Practices by International Institute of Restorative Practices.
- If MHAA funding is approved, BPS will begin implementation and training for School Connect, a high school social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. It consists of 80 multimedia lessons to improve high school students' social, emotional, and academic skills and strengthen relationships among students and between students and teachers.
- Implementation of Sanford Harmony began in the 2018-19 school year and will continue as we build capacity for trainers. Sanford Harmony is a free, CASEL Select Pre-K to 6th grade social-emotional learning program that helps teachers cultivate strong classroom relationships with students and focuses on building healthy relationships.
- Brevard will continue to expand implementation of Zones of Regulation in elementary schools by increasing our capacity for trainers. Zones is a systematic, cognitive behavioral approach to teach self-regulation by addressing underlying deficits in emotional and sensory regulation, executive functioning, and social cognition. Plans are in place to work with the program developer Leah Kuyper to ensure the fidelity of the program.

Strategies to improve identification of social, emotional or behavioral problems or substance abuse disorders to improve the provision of early intervention to assist students in dealing with trauma and violence.

- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training, funded through the Youth Mental Health Awareness Training (YMHAT) grant, was provided to 854 BPS employees during the 2018-19 school year. An additional \$400,000 grant was secured by BPS with Florida Blue Foundation to support continuous training over the next three (3) years for all high schools.
- Brevard's initiatives referenced above to implement evidenced based SEL programs and strategies to increase resilience and peer refusal skills is a critical piece of substance and violence abuse prevention.
- A comprehensive drug screening contract, with Lifetime Counseling Center, was put into place this year for students placed in the Earned Return Program at the Alternative Learning Centers. Consistent screenings were conducted quarterly, and prior to a student's return to zoned school.
- Creating a Trauma Informed Classroom is a 20 hour course created by BPS resource teachers to help classroom teachers understand the effects of trauma on learning and to provide strategies for creating a trauma sensitive approach in the classroom. This on-line course continues to be highly praised by the staff who participate and is offered throughout the school year and is sustainable through current staffing resources.
- Student Support Services will continue to work with Student Government Association (SGA) to influence substance abuse prevention initiatives. This year SGA lead an anti-vaping campaign implemented at all secondary schools.
- This year a full time content specialist for Student Support Services was designated to develop programs and campaigns to educate students, faculty, and staff on substance abuse and violence prevention. Anti-vaping presentations and hidden backpack demonstration were presented throughout the district. Substance abuse prevention initiatives and trainings will be further developed this year and shared with schools and parents.



- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place with Eckerd Connects to provide two full time counselors to support substance abuse and mental health counseling for students enrolled at the North Central Alternative Learning and South Alternative Learning Center. In addition, Eckerd Connects provides “Hi-Five” a substance abuse prevention program to Endeavour and Coquina elementary schools and expanded to this program Palm Bay Elementary and University Park Elementary. This MOU is in effect till June of 2021.

Charter schools will receive a proportionate share of district funding to create individual MHAA plans. The district further supports charter schools by assigning community based mental health agencies to work with their students and families during the school day. In addition, all charter schools have access to School Psychologists to support them with the Suicide Risk Inquiry process, and are invited to participate and access professional development opportunities throughout the school year as they relate to mental services and supports.