



**MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION PLAN  
2020-2021**

**Submitted by Judy Tatem  
Director of Safe Schools  
Columbia County School District  
Florida**

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## **SECTION I - Evidence-Based Mental Health Services**

The Columbia County School District is committed to continuing the delivery of support to our students via a multi-tiered system that will provide evidence-based mental health services. Those services include assessment, diagnoses, intervention, linkage, treatment, monitoring, and recovery to students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and to students at high risk of such diagnoses. All services are categorized into three different tiers ranging from awareness and prevention to intervention and recovery. All services aim to improve early identification and intervention and to reduce the likelihood of at-risk students developing social, emotional, or behavioral health problems and to reduce the likelihood of at-risk students developing mental health diagnoses including anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies and/or co-occurring substance use/abuse disorders. Service types vary and include, but are not limited to individual, family and/or group counseling, psychiatric and/or psychological services, trauma-informed care, behavioral modification, Community Action Team (CAT), and Mobile Response Team (MRT). These behavioral health services may be provided on or off the school campus and may be supplemented by telehealth. Service providers aim to coordinate with the student's primary mental health provider and any other provider involved in the student's care.

An efficient mental health resource referral process is available to any family in need of services and/or who may struggle with barriers to being successful in the school, home, or community. Five directly employed School-Based Mental Health Service Providers (Intervention Specialists) will provide direct and indirect services to students. These direct services help expand and enhance school-based student services while reducing the student to staff ratios and concurrently attempting to meet the mental health needs of students. The ratio of School Counselors to students is approximately 474. With the 4 additional Columbia County School Intervention Specialists the ration changes to approximately 407 students to counselors. These services will assist and better align with nationally recommended ratio models. The direct services will include teaching evidence-based curriculum to motivate students and increase resiliency so students have the ability to recover from challenges they are faced with helping to create more time for the in-house personnel. The Intervention Specialists are Licensed masters-level mental health professionals and/or certified school counselors. The Intervention Specialists are strategically placed at schools exhibiting the highest need/demand for mental health services. The Intervention Specialists work directly with our students in classroom settings, group settings, and individual settings. The placement of the staff is assessed on an on-going basis for the purpose of continuing to meet the needs of the district's students. There are two full-time case managers who work with identified students and their parents, schools, and community partners/providers to provide services including assessing, planning, monitoring, linking, and advocating. Though the case managers do not work directly with the student the services that are provided by the Coordinator help to support the student in becoming healthier.

The Intervention Specialists and case managers track services for accountability and outcomes which are used to continuously assess the effectiveness of the programs and services, review and revise district staffing resource allocations based on school and/or student mental health assistance needs.

**Tier 1** programs seek to address mental health issues at the awareness and prevention level. These programs are designed to be implemented with faculty, staff, and/or students of the entire school. Tier 1 programs are not intended to isolate individual mental health cases but rather to provide training and programs to create an awareness of mental health issues and to provide a forum for individuals who may need further assessment and referral services.

- ❑ **I AM LISTENING** is a district-wide awareness campaign that seeks to empower all district employees (administration, faculty, staff, and support staff, both full and part-time) and all students to LISTEN to and seek the interests of others. This campaign fosters open communication among the district's employees and students.
- ❑ **Youth Mental health First-Aid** is a 6-hour mental health awareness program designed to train all administration, faculty, and staff personnel in helping those who are experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse/use challenges as well as those who are in crisis. The course introduces common mental health or addiction challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help those in both crisis and non-crisis situations.
- ❑ Schools will continue to implement **campus-based character education** through various methodologies (classroom management, school announcement, reward/incentive/recognition programs) to assist students with learning basic social skills and manners that will contribute to the individual success of the student as well as the overall morale and success of the class and school.
- ❑ **Monique-Burr Foundation (MBF) Child Safety Matters** is an elementary and secondary school curriculum that seeks to educate and empower students, school personnel, and parents with information and strategies to prevent bullying, cyber-bullying, digital abuse as well as child abuse. The curriculum includes lessons and activities on topics such as safety and responsibility, safe adults, social and emotional learning, character development, bullying, cyber-bullying, and technology/digital dangers (gaming, virtual reality, social media).

- ❑ Other awareness programs include **9th Grade Success Class, Red Ribbon Week, and Strength/Difficulties Questionnaires** may be used as needed to promote the well-being of students.
- ❑ **The Sandy Hook Promise Club** challenges students and teachers to take action to help build school unity and encourage kindness and positivity as well as ending social isolation, bullying, and violence in schools with a simple HELLO. Other Sandy Hook Promise events include the Say Something week with activities such as a positivity banner, wearing green to remember lives lost at Sandy Hook, doughnuts in the morning to get the word out, etc.

**Tier 2** programs, in addition to general mental health awareness, seek to provide evidence-based mental health care treatment to children, and include interventions and services to specific groups of students. The Tier 2 programs are implemented by Intervention Specialists as well as by partnering with local mental health agencies. The programs are not intended to isolate individual cases of mental health, but to provide training and programs in order to create an awareness of mental health issues and provide services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk for such diagnoses. It will also provide a forum for individuals who may need further assessment. Coordination of such services may be completed with a student's primary care and/or mental health provider.

- ❑ **Corner Drug Store offers SNAP** (Stop Now and Plan) in at least four schools in the district. The SNAP program is an intervention program for children ages 6-11. The program identifies classes (students) that would most benefit and aims to prevent antisocial behavior and reduce the chance of future conflicts with authority through timely and effective early intervention.
- ❑ The **WhyTry Program** is a resilience education curriculum that provides simple, hands-on solutions for dropout prevention, violence prevention, truancy reduction, and increased academic success. It teaches social and emotional principles to youth in a way they can understand and remember.
- ❑ **SBIRT**-Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment is an evidence-based practice to identify, reduce, and prevent problematic use, abuse, and dependence on alcohol and illicit drugs. It is an approach to screening and early intervention for substance use disorders and people at risk for developing those disorders.
- ❑ **All STAR via Meridian** is a program to provide At-Risk Students in grades 4-12 (with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis and students at high risk of such diagnosis) a continuum for treatment and recovery.

This program is designed to delay the onset of risky behaviors with those at-risk adolescents. All-Star aligns with the National Health Education Standards allowing for easy integration into any health or wellness curriculum.

- ❑ **Girls Circle via Meridian** is a program to provide a structured group for girls from 9-18 years of age. The program includes integrating relational theory, resilience practices, and skills training in a specific format designed to increase positive connection, personal and collective strengths, and competence in girls. This program provides intervention and recovery services to girls with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at a high risk of such diagnoses.
  
- ❑ The **Intervention Specialist Team** is located at school sites and provides services to at-risk students by organizing, implementing, and providing treatment. Each Intervention Specialist provides therapeutic services to target areas of need including social skills, anger management, grief/loss issues, and other mental health areas or co-occurring substance abuse disorders as identified by students, parents, school personnel, and the student's primary care providers. The Master's Level Intervention Specialist Team also provides consultation services to/for school teachers and staff as well as with parents regarding evidence-based classroom supports and strategies for at-risk students aiming to provide treatment and recovery.

**Tier 3** programs offer mental health services that are provided to individual students based on recommendations or referrals from school personnel, family members, self-referrals, and/or the student's primary care provider.

- ❑ **SBIRT**-Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment is an evidence-based practice to identify, reduce, and prevent problematic use, abuse, and dependence on alcohol and illicit drugs. It is an approach to screening and early intervention for substance use disorders and people at risk for developing those disorders.
  
- ❑ The **Intervention Specialist Team** (mental health counselors) may assess, implement, coordinate, counsel, and/or provide other services for students in need of individual counseling. Areas of need include social skills, coping strategies, trauma response, anger management, grief/loss issues, and other mental health issues or co-occurring substance abuse disorders as identified by students, parents, school personnel, and the student's primary care providers.
  
- ❑ The **Community Case Managers** assess, monitor, link, advocate, and plan for identified individual students deemed to be in need of case management

services. Case managers also communicate on an ongoing basis with schools, parents, community agencies, community-based providers, and others deemed beneficial to ensure quality continuity of care. Case Managers track services from initial referral.

- ❑ Students identified as in need of Tier 3 services are referred to **Individual Therapeutic Services** provided by local counselors/therapists or Psychologists. The district's agency partners include Meridian Behavioral Health, Corner Drug Store, University of Florida (Psychology Dept.), Haile Market Therapy, Resolutions Health Alliance, Henry and Rilla White Foundation, and Brooks Behavioral.
  
- ❑ **Meridian Behavioral Healthcare and Resolutions Health Alliance** has provided **on-site/school-based therapy** to students based on Medicaid eligibility.

The district coordinates with several local agencies to provide support for addressing mental health and behavioral health needs within the district. Designated district staff aims to provide efficient and thorough coordination of needs/services with those agencies, including primary provider agencies, for the purpose of meeting the needs of all students within the district. The district's Project Catch/Safe Schools Referral Liaison screens students identified as in need (referred by the school/parent/agency) and links to beneficial and /or necessary services via referral procedures established to ensure students are referred to the best provider for their situation based on variables including cost/insurance, location, transportation, participation/motivation level. The two full-time Community Case Managers recommend services for assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery based on the history, need, and preference of the student/family/guardian. The case managers also work to ensure that students who are referred for mental health screenings for the identification of mental health concerns are assessed within 15 days of the referral. The case managers also monitor the timeline of the school and community based mental health services to ensure services are in place within 15 days and identified assessments are completed within 30 days. The case managers also facilitate ongoing communication with parents, schools, participating agencies, and providers to track progress and ensure services delivery continues as needed. The district tracks referrals coming in and going out to all providers/agencies. The district and individual schools continue to assess, review, modify, and problem solve based upon information received from outcome data, climate surveys, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and Focus tracking. Support services provided by the district's agency partners/providers include the following:

- ❑ **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**-This service provides counseling/therapy for mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, substance use/abuse, and anger management.
- ❑ **Parent Behavior Management Training**-This service provides parents with the tools to help their students cope with various behavioral disorders.
- ❑ **Parent Mental Health Diagnosis Training**-This service equips parents in understanding mental health diagnoses and implementing interventions.
- ❑ **Functional Family Therapy**-This service provides counseling that assists families in dealing with disruptive and delinquent behaviors.
- ❑ **Counseling/Therapy services**- These are also provided to help students develop prosocial skills aimed at assisting them as they work to be more successful in the classroom. Solution-focused therapy helps improve academic underachievement.

## **SECTION II-Personnel and Agencies Providing Mental Health Services**

Columbia County continues to work with a number of outside agencies to provide Mental Health counseling/therapy as well as contract with community behavioral health providers to include Resolution Health Alliance (see attached). The local Community Action Team is utilized within the District to address student and family needs. Because of the Mental Health Allocation funds, our district will be able to continue to provide services and work to expand and enhance direct and indirect services to the district's students. Identified at-risk students are referred to Project Catch/Safe Schools through various paths and all are logged/tracked into a database once a referral is received. The receiving staff (case manager, intervention specialist, liaison) will process the referral via proper procedures and ensure tracking is kept concurrent.

Allocation of state funding for mental health assistance will be utilized for the following:

- 5 Intervention Specialist
- 2 Case Managers
- 1 Referral Liaison
- 1 School Safety Specialist (25% of Salary/Benefits):

### **SECTION III-Resource Allocation for Mental Health**

Approved by CCSD School Board 7/28/20

**Budget:**

**Total Allocation: \$ 431,170**

Charter School Fund:	\$ 25,391
Intervention Specialist:	\$ 230,414
2 Community Case Managers:	\$ 100,000
Director of Safe Schools:	\$ 27,653
Referral Liaison	\$ 36,753
Contracted Services	\$ 6,000
Travel (Intervention Specialist & Case Manager travel between Schools For teaching and meetings)	\$ 1,500
Supplies	\$ 3,459