

**Escambia County School District  
Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan**

**Section 1 – Allocation Plan for Evidence-based Mental Health Services**

**A. Delivery of evidence-based mental health services**

The Escambia County School District (ECSD) will utilize a team-based multi-tiered framework for coordination of mental health services and interventions through awareness and facilitation of evidence-based mental health services. All required school staff, including charter school staff, will be trained using the evidence-based Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) program to help identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness, and substance use. This comprehensive training program will be completed by all school-based employees with frequent student contact in the following ways:

1. Our multi-year plan involves attending a six (6)-hour, face-to-face training with one of our seven (7) District trainers of Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA). Employees will have multiple training opportunities from which to choose when they register; pre-school, post-school, staff training days, and monthly standing trainings. Additionally, for convenience, consolidated North End trainings and entire school trainings can and have been arranged at the discretion of the school principals. Upon completion of this six (6) hour training the employee becomes certified for three (3) years in Youth Mental Health First Aid by the National Council for Behavioral Health. Re-certification will be via a ninety (90) minute online refresher course.
  
2. All school staff will have the option of obtaining supplemental training in addition to the YMHFA course through the Kognito Mental Health Awareness program secured by FLDOE. Florida.Kognito.com is for all grade levels K-12 and staff can choose their level.

The training program will provide such personnel with the skills to assist students who are developing or experiencing an emotional disturbance, mental illness, or substance use. Additionally, the District will continue Trauma-Informed Care approaches and strategies, trainings, and workshops. School-wide social-emotional programs and curricula will be promoted to develop and enhance resiliency and protective factors among students. Ongoing efforts to increase the number of schools trained in Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) to build capacity for implementing tiered approach for social, emotional and behavior support will be continued.

ECSD will contract with outside agencies to introduce select multi-disciplinary personnel (school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse and school mental health counselors) to evidence-based trauma treatments which may include, but not limited to, Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) and Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). This second tier of training allows for school-based staff to provide a higher level of mental health services for those identified students.

ECSD will use a combination of contracted and direct-hire mental health counselors to provide targeted counseling based on students individualized treatment plans. All mental health staff will be required to identify their evidence-based mental health interventions.

**B. Description of supports that addresses mental health needs (assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery)**

Students will be identified using existing student information Early Warning System (EWS) data or by referral. Students whose data indicates a potential concern will be referred for additional evaluation by mental health professionals. Once it is determined mental health services are necessary for a student and parent consent is obtained, a mental health counselor will provide an evidence-based therapeutic treatment plan. Mental health counseling services at the elementary and middle school levels will be provided by contracted agencies. ECSD mental health employees will provide mental health services for high school students. All students referred for mental health screening will be assessed within fifteen (15) days. School-based mental health services will be initiated within fifteen (15) days of identification and assessment. The electronic referral system will help to ensure the fifteen (15) day timeline is met. Students referred to community –based mental health providers will initiate services within thirty (30) days of the referral as stated and agreed upon in board approved contractual agreements. The electronic referral system will be utilized with community providers as well to help monitor and ensure the thirty (30) day timeline is met.

It is expected that all mental health providers, whether contracted or district employees, will diagnose within the limits of their credentials and /or refer to other providers as necessary. Following the diagnosis, a treatment plan will be developed and shared with parents/guardians/adult students to obtain consent for implementation. Mental health providers will provide ongoing intervention and treatment as long as deemed necessary to move the student toward recovery or a level of stability no longer requiring ongoing counseling.

**C. Identify evidence-based mental health services for students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and students at risk for such diagnosis**

Through a vetting process using recommendations from FLDOE and District staff based on research of evidence-based programs, the following programs were determined to best meet the needs of ECSD students for the following tiers:

Tier 1 - PBIS, social-emotional curricula (Suite 360 and Sanford Harmony), YMHFA, Trauma-Informed Care, bullying prevention campaigns, Capturing Kids Hearts, Community Drug and Alcohol Council (CDAC), EWS and progress monitoring

Tier 2 – EWS, Suite 360, Suite 360 ISS, individual and group counseling provided by Student Services Personnel, Risk and Suicide Assessment meetings for identified students and family involvement

Tier 3—referral to contracted counseling services, individualized re-entry plans, progress monitoring, Lakeview Center, Inc.'s Community Action Team (CAT) and Wellness Recovery Action Plan Team (WRAP), collaboration with private providers, and family involvement

#### **D. Describe the collaborative partnerships with community providers and agencies**

ECSD will enter into contractual agreements or memoranda of understanding with the following community mental health services providers: Lakeview Center, Inc., Children's Home Society, Pace Center for Girls, Inc., Lutheran Services Florida, Magellan Behavioral Health, CDAC Behavioral Healthcare Inc., and MHN Government Services. Collaborative partnerships enable a broad range of student and family behavioral health and substance use services. The agreements provide for effective communication between district personnel and contracted agencies; individual and group counseling; psycho-social evaluations; transition services; consultation and education services; and implementation of behavioral health and/or crisis plans. Risk and suicide assessment meetings will be held to discuss identified students who may be at-risk for mental health and/or substance abuse problems or those who are currently receiving services. In addition, district staff will attend the scheduled collaboration meetings with community mental health providers and members of law enforcement for coordination of care for identified students.

#### **E. Describe the process for coordinating mental health services with a student's primary care provider and other mental health providers, including procedures for information sharing.**

Collaboration meetings with school staff, law enforcement, and mental health providers will be held for discussion of students who are at-risk or receiving services. If a parent/guardian/adult student provides primary care provider contact information and signs a release of information form, school staff will attempt to establish communication with the primary care provider so that

coordination of care is fostered. Memoranda of understanding and contract agreements will include data sharing protocol so that critical information is exchanged to support students' individual treatment plans following HIPAA and FERPA requirements.

**F. Describe the process for coordinating mental health services for students at charter school that are part of the school district's plan.**

All charter schools within Escambia County School District have access and utilize FOCUS, our Student Information System (SIS). Referrals for assessments and mental health services are generated through FOCUS. If a student is identified for a mental health referral, the administrator or school-based counselor initiates the referral through FOCUS. Mental health counseling services will be provided by a contracted agency and available to all charter school students. It is expected that all mental health providers, whether contracted or district employees, will diagnose within the limits of their credentials and /or refer to other providers as necessary. Following the diagnosis, a treatment plan will be developed and shared with parents/guardians/adult students to obtain consent for implementation. Mental health providers will provide ongoing intervention and treatment as long as deemed necessary to move the student toward recovery or a level of stability no longer requiring ongoing counseling. Collaboration meetings involving district mental health staff, Director of Alternative Education, and/or other stakeholders to discuss students of concern on an as-needed or requested basis throughout the school year. All mental health services and school resources provided for public school students are equally provided for students attending charter schools.

**Section 2 – Program Implementation and Outcomes**

**A. Identify how many students are screened/assessed, how many students are referred for services and how many students receive services/assistance (school-based and community)**

The District will maintain its electronic database tracking system within our current Student Information System (SIS), FOCUS, to document how many students are screened/assessed, referred for services, or have received school-based and community services. The EWS indicators will be used to evaluate effectiveness of mental health services. The Coordinator of Mental Health and clerical support staff will assist in tracking and verifying student data for state reporting elements. All students referred for mental health screening will be assessed within fifteen (15) days. School-based mental health services will be initiated within fifteen (15) days of identification and assessment. The electronic referral system will help to ensure the fifteen (15) day timeline is met. Students referred to community –based mental health providers will initiate services within thirty (30) days of the referral as stated and agreed upon in board approved contractual agreements. The electronic referral system will be utilized with community providers as well to help monitor and ensure the thirty (30) day timeline is met.

**B. Identify the number of and credentials of mental health services providers employed by district**

Currently, ECSD employs four (4) Licensed Mental Health counselors, one (1) Mental Health counselor, one (1) Coordinator of Mental Health who is also a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, one (1) Confidential Mental Health assistant, eighty-four (84) certified school counselors, fourteen (14) school psychologists and seven (7) school social workers. The District will hire one (1) additional Licensed Mental Health counselor to serve Success Academy due to its expansion and other identified schools. This direct hire will also become a YMHFA trainer and be available to respond to crises within the District (i.e. grief counseling). A school psychologist will be hired to provide additional support facilitating the Response to Intervention (RtI) process for identified students and psycho-educational assessments as needed.

**C. Identify the number of and credentials of mental health services providers contracted by district**

ECSD will enter into agreements and /or contracts with multiple agencies to provide preventive and treatment based mental health counseling services.

| <i>School Category</i>                                 | <i>Provider</i>  | <i># of Counselors</i> | <i>Licensure</i> |
|--|--|------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Elementary</b>                                      | <b>Lakeview Center, Inc. (contract)</b>                                | <b>12</b>              | <b>5</b>         |
| <b>Middle</b>  | <b>Children’s Home Society (contract)</b>                              | <b>9</b>               | <b>4-5</b>       |
| <b>High</b>  | <b>ECSD employees</b>  | <b>6</b>               | <b>4-5</b>       |
| <b>ESE Center School - Lakeview School Day Support</b> | <b>Lakeview Center, Inc. (contract)</b>                                | <b>6</b>               | <b>2</b>         |
| <b>Alternative Schools</b>                             | <b>Contracts identified above will provide services at these sites</b> |                        |                  |
| <b>Charter Schools</b>                                 | <b>Services provided under District plan</b>                           |                        |                  |

**D. Indicate strategies to increase the amount of time that school-based student services personnel spend providing direct services to students**

1. All school-based administrators will work with their staff to review current school counselor duties to allow more time for school counselors to provide direct services to students.
2. Consultation with Student Services department is recommended for school-based administration to evaluate and begin incremental alignment of their respective school counseling departments' program with the American School Counselor Association National Model.
3. Addition of one (1) district-hired Licensed Mental Health counselor
4. Timely reporting of students in distress, for face-to-face intervention, to school-based staff when alerted by the District's Go Guardian Safety Monitoring software.
5. Utilization and refinement of our automated Mental Health referral system. This will continue to save time by reducing paperwork and speeding up the communication and data collection necessary to begin mental health counseling for a student.
6. Utilization of the district's automated Early Warning System to analyze data and identify areas of deficit for school counselors to address with students in an effort to intervene as early as possible with an attempted solution.
7. Utilization of Turnaround School Supplemental Services Allocation (TSSSA) funds to acquire six (6) to nine (9) additional school-based mental health providers for direct counseling services at targeted schools.

**E. The number and ratios of FDOE-certified or licensed, school-based mental health services providers employed by the district**

The Escambia County School District employs twenty-nine (29) high school counselors that serve a population of 10,677 high school students in seven (7) high schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the high school level to students is 1:368. The Escambia County School District employees eighteen (18) middle school counselors that serve a population of 8,781 middle school students in nine (9) middle schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the middle school level to students is 1:487 The Escambia County School District employees thirty-six (36) elementary school counselors that serve a population of 16,686 elementary school students in thirty-two (32) elementary schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the elementary school level to students is 1:463. The Escambia County School District employs seven (7) certified school social workers provide

services to all students, including charter school students. The Escambia County School District has a total student population of 37,805. The ratio of certified school social workers to students is 1:5400. The Escambia County School District employs seven (7) licensed mental health counselors and/or mental health counselors. The ratio of mental health counselors to students is 1:1525.

### Section 3 – Expenditures

#### A. Documents of expenditures allocated for mental health services or coordination of such services with primary care and mental health providers.

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|---|---|---------------------|
| <b>Children’s Home Society</b>  | <b>A combination and total of nine (9) licensed and non-licensed mental health counselors to provide mental health services for middle, alternative, charter and north end school students, one (1) of whom will serve as a clinical supervisor</b> | <b>\$518,988.00</b> |
| <b>Mental Health – Coordinator (professional scale - 12 month)</b>              | <b>Serve as lead for mental health counselors, manage mental health contracts, and coordinate services for students and families</b>  | <b>\$76,511.74</b>  |
| <b>Three (3) Licensed Counselors (professional scale - 10 month)</b>            | <b>Provide mental health services for high school students and students in charter or alternative schools as necessary</b>  | <b>\$215,076.57</b> |
| <b>One (1) Licensed Mental Health Counselor (professional scale – 10 month)</b> | <b>Provide mental health services to students at Success Academy, and other high, charter or alternative schools as necessary.</b>  | <b>\$57,117.29</b>  |
| <b>School Psychologist (professional scale - 12 month)</b>                      | <b>Provide support in EWS, RtI and conduct psycho-educational assessments for identified students</b>   | <b>\$85,407.66</b>  |
| <b>Confidential Administrative</b>  | <b>Provide administrative</b>   | <b>\$44,438.32</b>  |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Specialist<br/>(professional scale - 11<br/>month)</b> | <b>support for the Mental Health<br/>Coordinator and the<br/>Protection Services<br/>department</b>              |   |
| <b>Training YMHFA for<br/>school staff</b>                | <b>To include travel, training<br/>materials, supplies,<br/>substitutes, stipend pay and<br/>ancillary items</b> | <b>\$50,686.42</b>  |
| <b>Six (6) – Nine (9) Social<br/>Workers</b>              | <b>To provide direct mental<br/>health counseling to students<br/>and families at targeted<br/>schools</b>       | <b>To be determined, funded<br/>by TSSSA grant.<br/>Contracted through<br/>Lakeview Community<br/>Mental Health Center.</b> |

**B. Includes assurances that Mental Health Assistance Allocation does not supplant other funding sources OR increase salaries or provide staff bonuses.**

All new direct-hire employees and contracted services are in addition to the previous mental health services provided by the District. Lakeview Center, Inc. contract agreement with ECSD for mental health services has been intact for numerous years and this established relationship will continue to be utilized and will not be funded through the Mental Health Allocation.

**C. Describes how district will maximize use of other sources of funding to provide school-based mental health services, where appropriate (e.g., Medicaid reimbursements, 3<sup>rd</sup> party payments, grants).**

The contractual agreements and MOUs have provisions for ensuring that other funding sources will be utilized prior to billing ECSD. ECSD School Psychologists and mental health counselors will seek Medicaid reimbursement for billable services provided. The Title IV, Part A Grant will be funding social emotional curriculum (Suite 360). Additionally, the Title IV Grant will fund training for Capturing Kids Hearts. TSSSA funds will pay for an additional six (6) to nine (9) Social Workers to provide direct mental health counseling to students and families at targeted schools.