

**Escambia County School District  
Mental Health Allocation Plan  
2020-2021**

***Describe the delivery of evidence-based mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery through a multi-tiered system of supports.***

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. The delivery occurs within the framework of internal processes and external collaboration.

ECSD will use a combination of direct-hire and community contracted mental health providers to provide the delivery of targeted individual and group counseling. Tier I interventions will be provided by school staff and community partners.

Tier I Resources: Early Warning System (EWS), assists with the early recognition that allows for broadly applied interventions to address and reduce anxiety and depression through the following programs: Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), Kognito, Trauma-Informed Care training and workshops, school-wide social-emotional learning (SEL) programs and curricula, one newly hired ECSD Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) coach, Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Suite 360, Sanford Harmony, Bullying Prevention campaigns, Capturing Kids' Hearts, Botvin Life Skills curriculum offered by CDAC Behavioral Health, substance abuse, and child human trafficking curriculum from the Monique-Burr Foundation offered by Gulf Coast Kid's House, Teen Dating Violence Prevention programs, Suite 360 Mental and Emotional Health Curriculum Modules, HOPE Squad, and a SEDNET manager who coordinates with community partners and connects identified students at community roundtable staffings to access local human services resources.

Tier II Resources: School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, licensed mental health counselors, SEL data from Suite 360 and Sanford Harmony, and Magellan Behavioral Health for Military and Department of Defense students, provide empirically-based interventions to a mental health challenge or mental health disorder, i.e. anxiety and depression.

Tier III Resources: Licensed mental health counselors, mental health counselors, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, Children's Home Society, Lakeview Community Mental Health, Lutheran Services, and Pace Center for Girls, Inc. provide one-on-one, or small group interventions to ameliorate the symptoms of a mental health challenge or mental health disorder, i.e. anxiety or depression.

***State how the plan will focus on evidence-based mental health services for students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses.***

All of the above resources are sensitive to, screen for and are expected to develop evidence-based treatments for the dually diagnosed as necessary or those vulnerable to substance use and addictions as a universal precaution. Furthermore, it is expected all mental health providers, whether contracted or ECSD 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 using evidence-based mental health strategies and interventions which may include, but not limited to, Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing, Trust Based Relational Intervention, Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions, Brief Therapy, and Solution-Focused Treatments.

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

The counseling needs of the students at ECSD's charter schools are met through access to many of the ECSD's resources, internal and external as mentioned above. Charter school staff are trained on the ECSD mental health referral system housed within the student information system, Focus. Identification, referrals, and interventions at each of the tiered levels of support for students who attend charter schools follow the same process as outlined in Student Services procedures.

***Include direct employment of school-based mental health services providers (i.e., school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors and other licensed mental health professionals) to reduce staff-student ratios and meet student mental health assistance needs).***

Currently, ECSD employs five (5) 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 Administrative Specialist, eighty-four (84) certified school counselors, fifteen (15) school psychologists, and seven (7) school social workers who are FLDOE certified.

***Identify strategies to increase the amount of time student services personnel spend providing direct mental health services (e.g. review and revision of staffing allocations based on school or student).***

- Addition of one (1) direct-hire licensed mental health counselor
- Addition of one (1) contracted community mental health counselor
- Timely reporting of students in distress for face-to-face intervention to school-based staff when alerted by ECSD's Go Guardian Safety Monitoring software
- Utilization and continued improvement of the automated Mental Health referral system  
The automated referral system will continue to save time by reducing paperwork and increase time spent counseling students
- Utilization of the district's automated Early Warning System to identify needs and interventions at their earliest point
- Utilization of Turnaround School Supplemental Services Allocation (TSSSA) funds to acquire six (6) social workers and/or mental health counselors at targeted schools
- Directives to school administrators to look for ways to reduce non-student time for their school counselors

***State how the plan will establish school board policies and procedures for all schools, including charter schools.***

As a part of the enrollment and registration intake, parents/guardians are asked to indicate any mental health concerns or needs. A referral process is in place for those parents/guardians who indicate a request or need for interventions. The Information Technology department will assist student services staff with access to data and reports in Focus, the student identification system, for compliance. The Student Services staff will work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure policies and procedures reflect mandates associated with SB 7030. The Coordinator of Mental Health Services will ensure community partners and ECSD staff understand the processes and procedures associated with initiating and receiving mental health and wellness services within our district.

***1. Students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within 15 days of referral.***

Information Technology staff has developed and continues to update readily-available report(s) within Focus that assists with monitoring compliance to ensure students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within 15 days of referral. School counselors and administrators have access to this report.

***2. School-based mental health services are initiated within 15 days of identification and assessment.***

School-based mental health staff utilize the above-referenced report to ensure school-based mental health services are initiated within 15 days of identification and assessment.

***3. Community-based mental health services are initiated within 30 days of referral.***

Community based-mental health providers are provided access to the electronic referral system for documentation and tracking purposes to ensure community-based mental health services are initiated within 30 days of referral. School counselors and administrators have access to this report.

***Describe the process for coordinating mental health services with a student's primary mental health care provider and other mental health providers involved in the student's care.***

Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a Release of Information between their child's primary and other mental health providers and the ECSD upon intake. Mental health providers (direct-hired or contracted) may then share information to coordinate treatment interventions for the student. Additionally, collaboration meetings with a community behavioral agency are held weekly to identify and staff those students in need of wrap-around services. Memoranda of Understanding and contract agreements are in place that allow for the coordination of treatment and the sharing of information that impact student and community safety. The information exchanged to support students' individual treatment plans follow HIPAA and FERPA requirements.

***Identify 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.***

ECSD advertises and promotes the availability of school-based counseling through its district website. School-based mental health counseling can be accessed through referrals initiated by the concern of teachers, friends, clinic staff, community doctors, residential or day treatment providers or the student themselves. These programs can screen for and refer students who present anxiety, depression and trauma-related symptoms. Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan can be identified for counseling assessment as a possible related service at the discretion of the IEP or 504 committee. Through a partnership with *Say Something*, middle and high schools are offered the *Say Something* assembly to teach students how to identify warning signs and concerns with their peers, including a focus on the risks of social media, and encouraging the finding of a trusted adult with whom to share information. Through grant funding from SEDNET, ECSD is able to provide professional development in youth mental health awareness for school-based faculty and staff (i.e., trauma-informed care, restorative practices, compassion fatigue, mindfulness). The HOPE project is a school-wide, peer-to-peer program with teacher sponsorship that addresses suicidality. This program will be piloted in two middle schools this year. The Crisis Text line is a resource that can be made available upon request from a school counselor. Each of our school counselors, mental health counselors, school psychologists and social workers are trained to identify and assess for suicidal ideation and self-harm in students. A partnership with Gulf Coast Kids House provides Human Trafficking and Substance Abuse awareness for grades Kindergarten through five (5). ECSD utilizes Suite 360 Mental Health online modules to meet Florida's Mental Health Education Statute grades six (6) through twelve (12) which includes a lesson on Suicide Prevention.

***Identify strategies to improve the early identification of social emotional or behavioral problems or substance abuse disorders:***

Each school utilizes the EWS built into Focus with automatic alerts that are indicative of a student's overall well-being and functioning. The use of these at-risk indicators (assessment, course failure, absenteeism, in-or out-of-school suspensions) by the MTSS team can result in a referral to school-based mental health professionals. In addition to teaching staff to identify signs through Youth Mental Health First Aid and Kognito training, school-based staff will use observations and parent/teacher conferences for early identification. The Fortify app allows all students and teachers to report concerns, the Crisis Text Line is available to students to utilize, and through socio-emotional education curriculum students are learning about the warning signs of mental health concerns.

***Identify strategies to improve the provision of early intervention services:***

The early identification strategies mentioned above will allow staff to intervene, faster, earlier and more effectively. Once identified students will be referred for the necessary tiered level intervention. In addition, teachers and staff will use methods learned in YMHFA, and Kognito

training. Behavior modification and solution-focused interventions can be implemented before the mental health challenge worsens.

***Identify strategies to assist students dealing with trauma and violence:***

ECSD staff assists students dealing with trauma and violence by helping children manage their feelings by teaching and modeling effective coping strategies, answering questions related to the traumatic event(s) in honest, developmentally appropriate language and terms, creating clear and concrete safety plans with the child, and engaging students in activities that stimulate the mind and body. Students are encouraged to expand their "feelings" vocabulary so they can more easily express themselves, maintain usual routines, and anticipate challenging times or situations that may be reminders of the event and develop self-supportive strategies.

ECSD staff are trained to watch for changes in behaviors and report to a qualified/trained expert in the field, allow children to tell the story of the trauma they experienced, as they see it, so they can begin to release their emotions and make sense of what happened, respond calmly and compassionately, but without displaying shock or judgment, and reassure children that the adults in their life are working to keep them safe. Personnel are also encouraged to set boundaries and limits with consistency and patience, remind students repeatedly how much they care for them, give students choices to regain a sense of control, and provide children who are acting out with opportunities to redirect their energy in a helpful way such as giving them additional responsibilities or leadership roles.

**Expenditures**

***Number and licensure/certification of school-based mental health providers funded by allocation. Number and licensure of community-based mental health providers funded by the allocation.***

<b><u>School Category</u></b>	<b><u>Provider</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Counselors</u></b>	<b><u>Number Licensed</u></b>
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	<b>Lakeview Center, Inc. (contract, community-based)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>Children’s Home Society (contract, community- based)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>Direct-Hire Mental Health Counselor</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>High Schools</b>	<b>Direct-Hire Mental Health Counselor</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

<u>School Category</u>	<u>Provider</u>	<u>Number of Counselors</u>	<u>Number Licensed</u>
Alternative Schools	Contracts identified above will provide services at these sites		
Charter Schools	Services provided under ECSD's plan		
Bilingual Therapist	Contracted	1	1

*School district expenditures for services provided by contract-based collaborative efforts or partnerships with community-based mental health program agencies or providers and other expenditures*

Children's Home Society	A combination of (9) mental health counselors (3) of whom are licensed, (3) of whom are registered interns (3) of whom hold master's degrees in mental health counseling to provide mental health services to middle, alternative, charter and northend school students, one (1) of whom will serve as a clinical supervisor	\$518,988.00
Mental Health Coordinator	Clinical supervision for district-hires, responds to district-wide crises, coordinates services for students and families, training, CSTAG duties as assigned. This person is a LMHC.	\$80,133.00
Four (4) Licensed Mental Health Counselors	Provide mental health services for students in high school, middle school, charter, and alternative schools as necessary	\$294,948.00
One (1) Mental Health Counselor	Provide mental health services for students in high school, charter, and alternative schools as necessary. This person is a FLDOE certified school counselor.	\$59,785.00
School Psychologist	Provide support in EWS, RtI and conduct psychoeducational assessments for identified students	\$82,466.00
Registered Nurse	With physical health and safety in mind, train school staff, students, parents and community partners in detecting and responding to physical and mental health issues with appropriate support and services as we increase accessibility to school-employed nurses for school reentry	\$75,049.00
Confidential Mental Health Administrative Specialist	Provides support for the Mental Health services staff and contracted agencies. Prepares and manages contracts, monitors compliance, and assists with student safety and training	\$49,781.00
Lakeview Center, Licensed Mental Health Counselor	Provides Tier III onsite clinical counseling to K-5 students	\$49,049.00

<b>Bi-Lingual Licensed Mental Health Counselor</b>	<b>Provide mental health counseling for ESOL students</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
<b>GoGuardian Beacon (Core)</b>	<b>Software program to identify students at risk for suicide, mental health/substances abuse challenge/crisis</b>	<b>\$56,000.00</b>
<b>Youth Mental Health First Aid training</b>	<b>Costs associated with training all school-based personnel in Youth Mental Health First Aid to include materials, supplies, substitute pay, stipend pay and ancillary items</b>	<b>\$80,072.00</b>
<b>Supplies for Mental Health Services</b>	<b>Supplies, equipment, ancillary items for Mental Health Services staff</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>
<b>Local travel</b>	<b>Local mileage for Mental Health services staff</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>
<b>Extra Pay</b>	<b>Mental Health Services Staff to train Youth Mental Health First Aid outside of contracted hours</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>
<b>Training Tuition Fees</b>	<b>Professional Development required to maintain licensure</b>	<b>\$5,600.00</b>
<b>Total Mental Health Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,394,571.00</b>

### **Expenditure Assurances**

*State how 100 percent of funds are used to expand school-based mental health care; trained educators in responding to mental health issues; and connect children; youth and families with appropriate behavioral health services.*

One hundred (100) percent of Mental Health Assistance Allocation (MHAA) funds are being used to expand school-based mental health care; train educators in responding to mental health issues, and connect children, youth and families with appropriate behavioral health services.

*Provide a statement that ensures the Mental Health Assistance Allocation does not supplant other funding sources, increase salaries or provide staff bonuses.*

All direct-hire employees and contracted services are in addition to previous mental health services provided by ECSD. MHAA funds do not supplant other funding sources, increase salaries, or provide staff bonuses.

*Describe how the district will maximize the use of other sources of funding to provide school-based mental services (e.g. Medicaid, third-party payments and 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). 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.

### **Program Implementation and Programs**

***Identify the number and ratio of Florida Department of Education-certified or licensed school-based mental health services providers employed by the district (i.e. school psychologist, school social workers, school counselors and other mental health services providers by licensure type).***

ECSD employs qualified student services personnel to best meet the needs of the total student population (37,805):

- Twenty-nine (29) high school counselors that serve a population of 10,116 high school students in seven (7) high schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the high school level to students is 1:349
- Eighteen (18) middle school counselors that serve a population of 8,377 middle school students in nine (9) middle schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the middle school level to students is 1:465
- Thirty-six (36) elementary school counselors serve a population of 17,710 elementary school students in thirty-two (32) elementary schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the elementary school level to students is 1:492
- Seven (7) certified school social workers provide services to all students, including charter school students. The ratio of certified school social workers to students is 1:5463.
- Seven (7) licensed mental health counselors and/or mental health counselors. The ratio of mental health counselors to students is 1:1445.

***Describe a 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; the number of students referred to school-based mental health services providers; the number of students referred to community-based mental health services providers; the number of students who received community-based interventions, services or assistance.***

ECSD will utilize the electronic referral and monitoring system in Focus 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. Focus will also track the number of students referred to school-based mental health services providers; the number of students referred to community-based mental health providers; the number of students who received school-based interventions, services or assistance; and the number of students who received community-based interventions, services or assistance.