

# Hamilton County School District Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan



2020-2021

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## I. Mental Health Services Overview

In order to ensure a safe and healthy environment, the Hamilton County School District (HCSD) will continue to implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) aimed at delivering evidence-based mental health care assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses as well as to students with high risk of such diagnoses. Through the collaborative efforts of school personnel, mental health care providers, and community stakeholders, the three-tiered support system will provide the following:

### I. Tier 1 – Universal Screening and Services

The goal of Tier 1 services for our schools is to increase resilience in our students and decrease risk factors. As data provided from the Kids Count Data Center indicates, the district poverty rate for children under 18 is 19% higher than the state average as of the last calculation (2017). Research suggests Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) – developmental risks have a high correlation to free and reduced lunch eligibility. This is concerning as ACE are considered predictive of academic risk and chronic health problems; thus, making the Early Warning System our primary universal screener.

#### Screening

- The Early Warning System (EWS), Skyward and Performance Matters data, will be utilized as the district/school level screener. Data will be pulled monthly to identify students in need of potential Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports.

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- The school based support team will utilize a referral source beyond EWS allowing for referrals from school faculty, parent or guardian, and self or a peer such as that modeled in the School Mental Health Referral Pathways Toolkit from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Additional measures for non-student specific screening will include ongoing analysis of data such as climate surveys, restraint-seclusion data, and the Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

### Services (Prevention Efforts)

- The CHAMPS Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program PreK-12 is currently in place and will continue to be supported and implemented; thus, providing a framework supporting students as orderly, responsive, engaged, and motivated.
- All staff will continue to be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid in order to increase mental health awareness, learn how to build resiliency among our youth, understand how to better assist students in dealing with traumatic and violent events, recognize how to better assess for risk of suicide or harm including potential substance use disorders, and ascertain how to assist young people who are experiencing the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- All students in Grades 6-12 will receive a minimum of 5 hours of mental health instruction through our Apex Digital Learning platform to include awareness of signs and symptoms, processes for getting or seeking help, awareness of resources such as FortifyFL and the

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National Suicide Prevention hotline; and what to do or say to peers who are struggling with mental health disorders.

- Counselors and Social Workers will continue to formalize a way of work and provide services with a proactive social emotional curriculum such as that provided by Cloud9World; Safer, Smarter Schools; Sanford Harmony; Sandy Hook Promise; and Skillstreaming. Cloud9World is a social and emotional learning program that integrates literacy as the vehicle for teaching character strengths such as empathy, self-efficacy, collaboration, social interactions, and positive behaviors. Our Lauren's Kids Safer, Smarter Schools curriculum is a Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade school-based prevention and personal safety curriculum series consisting of age-appropriate social and emotional curriculum for children, parents, teachers, and administrators which is aligned to state and national standards. Sanford Harmony is a PreK-6 social emotional learning program designed to provide a foundation for safe and positive learning environments while building healthy relationships, increasing student confidence, and reducing bullying. The Hamilton County School District is proud to partner with Sandy Hook Promise. SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Clubs have already been established on each campus to create powerful student organizations aimed at preventing gun violence and other forms of violence and victimization. Also, through Sandy Hook Promise's Know the Signs Program, adolescents will participate in initiatives such as Start with Hello, Say Something, and understanding the Signs of Suicide Prevention Program. Skillstreaming is a research-based curriculum designed to employ a four-part training approach of modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and generalization techniques focused on teaching essential pro-social skills to students.

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### II. Tier II

#### Way of Work

- Students identified in need of potential Tier 2 or Tier 3 services via universal screening or a referral form process will participate in the Multi-Tiered System of Support problem solving team. A meeting will take place regarding each student individually, with parent participation encouraged via invitation. The four-step problem solving process will be utilized by the team with a focus on problem identification; problem analysis; intervention development; and scheduling for and completing appropriate follow up meetings for intervention evaluation.
- As part of the problem solving process, interagency collaboration may take place with private providers. MOU's will be analyzed and expanded where needed to have a clear process for interagency sharing of records while being mindful of FERPA and HIPPA.
- Self-reports of internalizing and externalizing behavior may be utilized as part of the analysis phase and completed by tools such as the Youth Internalizing Problems Screener (YIPS) and the Youth Externalizing Problems Screener (YEPS). Observations, additional rating scales, direct behavior ratings, and interviews will also be utilized in the problem solving process when determined needed.

#### Interventions/Follow Up

- Parent notification will be provided as interventions are designed and parent literature will be provided outlining the MTSS process during the problem-solving meeting if the parent is present. Information will be provided in writing after the meeting if parents choose not to participate.

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- An individualized positive behavior intervention plan (PBIP) may be developed as part of the Tier 2 support.
- Short-term school-based counseling services may be initiated in the form of individual or group support by school-based counselors hired/contracted with additional funds.
- Follow up will be scheduled at the Tier 2 problem solving meeting to allow for analysis of response to intervention and determine appropriate next steps.
- Depending on circumstances, coordination and delivery of virtual mental health services may be implemented as needed for Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports.

### III. Tier III

#### Way of Work

- Problem Solving Meeting may take place and be considered Tier 3 for multiple reasons. Tier 3 may serve as a follow up to the Tier 2 meeting where response to intervention is determined not sufficient and more intensive supports are determined necessary. It may also take place as the initial problem solving meeting if warranted, crisis concerns. Crisis concerns may be homicidal or suicidal in nature and a formal threat assessment process will be utilized with appropriate agency supports to occasionally include Meridian Mobile Response teams. The parent will be encouraged to participate in the problem solving meeting. Literature will be provided to the parent explaining the Tier 3 process if present and will be provided in writing along with a copy of the adjusted intervention plan at a later date if not present.
- Tier 3 interventions may involve interagency and contracted supports such as those provided by Meridian Behavioral HealthCare, Corner Drug Store, a contracted board certified behavior analyst, and a contracted licensed school psychologist. Memorandums

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of Understanding and contracts are in place for the above mentioned services. The formal referral process for interagency referrals will be analyzed to assure not only parent permission but also tracking of services.

- In order to fund Tier 3 services requiring support beyond that provided from district staff, multiple funding streams are likely to be utilized. For students determined eligible for exceptional student education and in need of mental health services as outlined by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team, IDEA funds may be utilized. In an attempt to support students with early intervention, funds may be accessed from Title I, Title IV, or general when needed. Title II funds may assist in providing professional development and support for implementation. The current contract with Meridian Behavior Healthcare includes Medicaid billing on behalf of Medicaid eligible students by Meridian staff, and Corner Drug Store supports are at no cost to the district.

### Interventions/Follow Up

- Intervention plans will be developed using the problem-solving process.
- If referrals are made to other agencies, appropriate releases will be signed in order to maximize collaboration.
- Additional agencies other than those currently contracted may also provide support at the Tier 2 or more specifically Tier 3 level. These agencies are state provided and are inclusive of the Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET), and the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD).
- Follow up meetings will be scheduled after each problem-solving meeting unless needs are determined met and Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports are no longer needed.
- Potential referrals to look at exceptional student education eligibility.

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- In regards to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and to students at risk of such diagnoses, the provision of services will be coordinated with the student's primary health care provider as well as other mental health providers involved in the student's care. Students referred to Meridian Behavioral Healthcare will have access to an initial evaluation, which includes a mental health and substance abuse assessment, and if it is deemed that there may be a substance abuse issue, a drug screening will be requested. The necessary Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention and treatment will be determined and monitored by Meridian Behavioral Healthcare.

### Evidence-Based Outcomes:

- Data will be reviewed at least annually for the purpose of school and district outcome assessments utilizing the Early Warning System. Baseline data for EWS was pulled for the 2019-20 school year.
- The District will track referrals provided to all outside agencies and contracted staff.
- Schools and the district will continue to review and problem solve based on outcome data as provided from climate surveys, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), etc.

## II. Collaborative Partnerships, Service Providers, & Supports

Collaborative partnerships are necessary for comprehensive services with the purpose of increasing preventive factors, building resiliency, and providing research and evidence-based interventions. Partnerships exist with a systems framework and are inclusive of school staff; student and family; contracted individuals; and other agencies. Collaborating agencies/groups are dependent upon the individual needs of each student (i.e. Department of Juvenile Justice, Partnership for Strong Families, Department of Family and Children Services, primary care physicians, etc.). The Hamilton County School District is committed to expanding school-based student services in order to reduce the ratio of students to staff. District and school-based administrators have reviewed the staffing allocation for the upcoming year in order to maximize the amount of mental health supports provided to students. With

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approximately 1600 students and a total of 4 school counselors within the district, the current overall student to counselor ratio is estimated at 400:1. With an additional day of support provided by our part-time school psychologist as compared to the previous year as well as the continued mental health services delivered through other contracted providers within the district, our ratio will be subsequently reduced. The following outline will provide specific information in regards to mental health team members, and specific school-based mental health services as well as contracted and other supports.

### I. District/School Problem Solving Mental Health Team may include:

- Administrator
- School Resource Officer
- School Psychologist – Contracted
- School Counselor
- School Social Worker
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
- Teachers (General Education & Exceptional Student Education)
- School Nurse
- Family Members
- Other community agency representatives as needed

### II. School-Based Mental Health Services (Hamilton County Elementary School):

- Approximately 900 Students in Grades PreK-6 (Student to Counselor Ratio is 450:1)
- 2 School Counselors (Both are FLDOE Certified Counselors)
- 1 Meridian Specialist Serving PreK-12 (Contracted)
- 1 Social Worker (Projected Allocation Expenditure)
- 1 Part-Time School Psychologist Serving PreK-12 (Projected Allocation Expenditure)

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- III. School-Based Mental Health Services (Hamilton County High School):
- Approximately 650 Students in Grades 7-12 (Student to Counselor Ratio is 325:1)
  - 2 School Counselors (1 FLDOE Certified Counselor; 1 FLDOE Certified Social Worker)
  - 1 Meridian Specialist Serving PreK-12 (Contracted)
  - 1 Social Worker (Projected Allocation Expenditure)
  - 1 Part-Time School Psychologist Serving PreK-12 (Projected Allocation Expenditure)
- IV. Contracted Supports currently include:
- Meridian Behavioral Healthcare – See Contract for specifics (counseling services)
  - Board Certified Behavior Analyst – See Contract for specifics (PBIP supports)
  - Licensed School Psychologist – See Contract for specifics (assessment & intervention)
- V. State/Grant Funded Agency Supports include:
- SEDNET
  - University of Florida Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Training Program (UFMDTP)
  - Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
  - Florida Diagnostics & Learning Resources System (FDLRS)
  - Florida Department of Health: Hamilton County (School Health Services)

### Evidence-Based Outcomes:

Previously identified data will be the overall outcome measure. Additional data will be tracked as related to guidance prevention lessons, PBIP's developed by school staff, counseling sessions completed by school staff, screenings completed, screenings resulting in Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention services, and referrals to each specific contracted entity.

### III. Capacity Building

In an effort to increase the knowledge of school based staff on accurately making referrals for helping students access mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery, professional development activities such as those listed below will be provided:

- Trauma Informed Care
- Crisis De-escalation
- CHAMPS
- Suicide Prevention
- Bullying Prevention
- Behavior Management
- Youth Mental Health First Aid

Evidence-Based Outcomes:

Professional Development Agendas, Sign-in Logs, etc.

### IV. Referral Procedures & Data Monitoring

Referrals for school-based mental health services will be available in an electronic as well as a paper-based format. Any staff member, parent/guardian, or student may submit a school-based mental health referral form along with supporting details to the school's counselors or social worker. Threat assessment and mental health teams may also submit referrals based upon on-going Early Warning System monitoring. Upon receipt, the counselor or social worker will immediately notify the Coordinator of Safety and Mental

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Health, School Safety Specialist, who will maintain records of all mental health referrals and outcomes and will ensure that the following procedures take place:

- Students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within 15 days of the referral;
- School-based mental health services are initiated within 15 days of identification and assessment;
- Community-based mental health services for students are initiated within 30 days of the referral.

### Evidence-Based Outcomes:

The Skyward Student Information System as well as a spreadsheet maintained by the Coordinator of Safety and Mental Health, School Safety Specialist, will be used to track the date when referrals are received, the date and time when students obtain school-based mental health services, and the date and time when students received community-based mental health services. By September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, a report indicating program outcomes and expenditures for the fiscal year will be submitted to the Florida Department of Education to include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Number of students who receive screenings or assessments;
- Number of students who are referred to either school-based or community-based providers for services or assistance;
- Number of students who receive either school-based or community-based interventions, services, or assistance;
- Number of school-based and community-based mental health providers including licensure type, paid for from funds through the allocation;
- Number of contract-based collaborative efforts or partnerships with community mental health programs, agencies, or providers.

\*Our Early Warning System and threat assessments will assist in identifying and tracking students at high risk for school-based mental health services. In addition, the District Office will maintain records of certifications and credentials of all mental health personnel providing services to students.

## V. Coordination of Plan & Use of Fiscal Resources

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

- A full-time Grades PreK-6 School Social Worker with a Bachelor of Arts in Human Services and certification through the Florida Certification Board in Case Management who will play a vital role in the facilitation of our MTSS process and implementation of our Hamilton County Elementary School social emotional curriculum as well as Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) Promise Clubs.
- A full-time Grades 7-12 School Social Worker with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and valuable work experience as an AMI family therapist through DJJ and as a child abuse investigator through DCF who will play a vital role in the facilitation of our MTSS process and implementation of our Hamilton County High School social emotional curriculum as well as Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) Promise Clubs.
- Part-time Licensed School Psychologist for the purpose of added mental health counseling and the implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports for students in Grades PreK-12.
- Partial funding for the School Safety Specialist (20% of Salary/Benefits) who is the Coordinator of School Safety and Mental Health within the district and who is in charge of overseeing mental health awareness trainings, facilitating mental health team and threat assessment meetings as well as monitoring referrals and ensuring implementation of mental health services and interventions.
- Additional contracted services for intervention supports and mental health counseling.
- Trainings focused on the mental health awareness, assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and/or recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses as well as students at high risk of such diagnoses.

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**Evidence-Based Outcomes:**

The Hamilton County School District projects a Mental Health Assistance Allocation of \$150, 529 for the 2020-2021 school year and anticipates a roll-over of approximately \$30,000 from the previous year’s allocation to be disbursed as indicated on the following itemized list. It is important to note that 100% of the mental health allocation budget will be used to expand school-based mental health care; train educators and other school staff in detecting and responding to mental health issues; and connect children, youth, and families with appropriate behavioral health services. These funds will not be used to supplant other funding sources or increase salaries or provide staff bonuses. Medicaid reimbursements will be used to support Meridian services. Additional funding sources designed to support mental health services may include SEDNET allocations when available. An itemized list of projected expenditures for the 2020-2021 school year are as follows:

**Projected Allocation:**

2020-2021 Mental Health Allocation:	\$150,529
2019-2020 Estimated Allocation Roll Over:	\$30,000
<b>Total Projected Allocation:</b>	<b>\$180,529</b>

**Projected Expenditures:**

2 Social Workers:	\$100,000
1 Licensed School Psychologist (Part-Time):	\$59,500
School Safety Specialist (20% of Salary/Benefits):	\$16,000
Contracted Services/Trainings:	\$5,029
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$180,529</b>