

Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan

Submitted by
Office of Safe Schools
Lafayette County School District

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Section 1 – Evidence-based Mental Health Services

The Lafayette County School Board is committed to delivering evidence-based Mental Health services to the students of Lafayette County. Mental Health services are categorized into three different tiers ranging from awareness and prevention to intervention and recovery. A referral process for Mental Health services are available to families for students who may struggle with a variety of barriers to learning including social, emotional or behavioral health problems, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal tendencies or substance abuse disorders. Emphasis will be placed on identifying those students with co-occurring mental health and/or substance abuse diagnoses or those at high risk for such diagnoses.

Tier 1 programs seek to address mental health issues at the awareness and prevention levels. These programs are designed to be implemented with the faculty and staff and/or the student body of the entire school. Tier 1 programs are not intended to isolate individual cases of mental health need, but provide training and programs in order to create an awareness of mental health issues and a forum for individuals who may need further assessment to be identified and referred.

- Youth Mental Health First-Aid is an 8-hour mental health awareness program designed to train all administration, faculty, and staff in helping adolescents who are experiencing mental health or addiction challenges or are in crisis. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations.
- Provide an opportunity for parents, administration, faculty, and staff to receive training on how to help students cope with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and to identify helpful strategies and available resources for students returning to the traditional school setting, as well as for those who will continue distance learning.
- All schools will implement character education through various methodologies (classroom management, school announcements, etc.) to assist students with learning basic social skills and manners that will contribute to the overall morale of the student body. More specifically:
 - Monthly character education lessons will be provided at Lafayette Elementary School. In addition, an annual anti-bullying training will be delivered by the School Resource Office to students and staff with the goal of identifying a common language around bullying and a consistent set of responses to bullying behavior.
 - Daily, at the Lafayette County Middle/High School, via morning announcements, specific character traits are highlighted and explicated with relevant quotations.
- In the spring of the school year, the School Resource Officer will work with fifth graders, using archery, to teach resilience and overcoming adversity in order to inoculate them against the stress of moving to middle school the following year.
- The School Resource Officer currently implements the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) curriculum with students in the 5th and 6th grades.

- Mental Health Awareness and Prevention training will be provided at all grade levels to increase student and staff sensitivity to mental illness and to promote a positive school culture around responding to the needs of others.

Tier 2 programs, in addition to general mental health awareness, seek to provide mental health interventions and services to specific groups of students. Tier 2 programs are not intended to isolate individual cases of mental health need, but provide small group training and programs to address elevated need as identified through early warning indicators such as attendance, discipline referrals, and grades, and/or marked changes from baseline behavior or mood. These programs are intended to raise self-awareness in the participants and to provide a pathway for individuals who may need further assessment to be identified and referred.

In order to receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 services, the following referral processes will be followed:

- Early Warning System: Monthly, school-based Threat Assessment Teams will review all students' attendance, discipline referrals, and academic achievement data in order to identify which students might benefit from an increased intensity of mental health support.
- Teacher referral: Individual teachers may refer students for review by the Threat Assessment Team by submitting a referral to their school counselor. Referrals should be accompanied by data (objective or anecdotal) clearly indicating the reason for referral.
- Family referral: Family members of students may refer their children for review by the Threat Assessment Team by approaching any school staff member or SRO and request assistance.
- Self-referral: Students may approach any school staff member or SRO and request assistance.
- Information gleaned from Fortify FL and social media monitoring will also be used to determine whether students pose a threat or are in need of additional mental health support.

At Tier 2, students will be referred to the school's MTSS team in order to identify strategies that have been implemented and were unsuccessful, recommend strategies to be tried next, and determine whether the student should be referred for Tier 3 interventions, based on screenings and data reviewed by the MTSS team.

- Students at Lafayette Middle/High School that have been identified as needing Tier 2 services will participate in small groups with the district mental health counselor to focus on a variety of social/emotional and academic success skills.
- At the elementary school, students who are identified as needing additional intervention, beyond Tier 1 will work in small groups along with the school counselor with the goal of encouraging open conversation and surfacing underlying issues that can be addressed in this forum, by the group or the school counselor.
- Lafayette Elementary School will continue to utilize Rippleeffects for Kids for Grades 2 through 5 in order to provide intervention strategies in a wide range of social emotional

learning areas in an effort to reduce exclusionary discipline practices and increase academic success.

- In both the Elementary and the Middle/High School, evidence-based social, emotional, and behavioral intervention groups, as well as groups focusing on recovery for traumatic events or acts of violence will be facilitated by the school counselor and/or mental health counselor, based on need.

The Director of Safety and Mental Health will provide information and consultation support to teachers, students, and families (as needed) regarding school and community-based supports and services that may address identified needs.

Tier 3 mental health services are those services provided to individual students and their families based on recommendations or referrals from school personnel or family members. While Tier 2 services are implemented in groups, Tier 3 services, while often the same as Tier 2, are implemented individually.

- Lafayette County School Board employs a full-time mental health counselor to ensure appropriate screening, evaluation and therapy services are provided in a timely manner to students referred for mental health services, as well as provide curriculum and educational support to teachers and school counselors.
- In addition, the Board has entered into an agreement with the Dixie County School Board to contract a school psychologist who will be on campus one day a week to provide crisis intervention, observation, and assist with the development of appropriate Behavioral Intervention Plans for students with mental health disorders or those at high risk for such disorders.
- Students who are identified as needing Tier 3 intervention services may also be referred to individual counselors or psychologists that are provided by the district's agency partners such as Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, A New Dawn, A New Beginning, and Children's Home Society.

Facilitating, Supporting, and Monitoring Recovery

- Early Warning System data, such as attendance, discipline referrals, and grades will be monitored for each student who received Tier 2 or Tier 3 mental health support in order to gauge the impact of therapies and community-based supports.
- Teachers will provide objective and anecdotal data to the MTSS team, monthly, for all students who receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports in order to monitor impact.
- Families of students will provide anecdotal feedback to the MTSS team and/or the therapist working with the student and family in order to know whether improvements at school are being carried over in-home.
- The subjective experience of the student in response to therapy will be reported to the MTSS team through the therapist or counselor along with any assessment data the therapist is using to drive treatment.

In the event that improvements in student functioning are not noted and/or there is a recurrence of the original symptoms or behaviors, the MTSS team will adjust interventions and supports to address this recurrence.

The district will partner with local agencies to provide support for addressing mental health needs within the district. The district's Director of Safety and Mental Health will provide case management and care coordination services to families in order to ensure continuity of care and communication among medical professionals working with the family, and facilitate access to other supports and services available through community partners and agencies. In the role of case manager, the Director of Safety and Mental Health facilitates communication between the agencies and the district in order to track the student's progress. The district's agency partners provide the following support services:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – This service provides counseling for mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, substance 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 diagnosis and implementing interventions.
- Functional Family Therapy – This service provides counseling that assists families in dealing with delinquent and disruptive behavioral issues.
- Counseling is also provided to help students develop social skills aimed at making them more successful in the classroom as well as solution focused therapy for academic underachievement.

Section II – Availability of Services / Collaboration

Lafayette County currently has three (3) full time school counselors assigned to the elementary, middle and high school student population as well as one full time licensed mental health counselor (LMHC). School administration has reviewed staffing allocation to ensure counselors are maximizing the amount of time spent providing direct mental health services to their student population.

The district will continue to work with Meridian Behavioral Health to provide referral based mental health services. Lafayette County Schools and Meridian Behavioral Health have entered into a cooperative agreement with Meridian agreeing to provide professionally trained psychiatrists, advanced practiced registered nurses, clinical social workers, licensed therapists, mental health counselors, case managers, and prevention specialists as needed.

The current student to school counselor ratio is 400 to 1, the student to LMHC ratio is 1200 to 1. The ability, however, to contract with our community partners drastically reduces the overall student to counselor ratio and provides for immediate access to care.

Section III - Referral Process/Timelines

Students will be identified through the referral processes outlined above. These referrals will be logged into a database when the Director of Safety and Mental Health receives them. Any student referred for mental health services will be assessed within 15 days of receipt of referral. School based mental health services will be initiated within 15 days of identification and assessment. Community based services will be initiated within 30 days of referral.

Upon referral, the parent will be contacted to schedule an appointment to speak with the district Mental Health Counselor. During this meeting, a social history questionnaire and other demographic and financial information will be collected in order to process the referral and to set up counseling. If the student does not have health insurance coverage, steps to obtain coverage for the student will be initiated. As part of their case management duties, the Director of Safety and Mental Health will monitor student participation in therapeutic supports.

Section IV - Data Management

Using a combination of Skyward Student Information System and data kept in a spreadsheet curated by the Director of Safety and Mental Health, the following variables will be tracked:

1. Number of students at high risk for mental health or co-occurring substance abuse disorders who received mental health screenings or assessments.
2. Number of students referred for school based mental health services
 - a. Number of students who received school based mental health interventions, services, or assistance.
3. Number of students referred for community based mental health services
 - a. Number of students who received school based mental health interventions, services, or assistance.

Additionally, the district will maintain records on the number and credentials of all of the counselors and therapists providing services either as direct employees of the district or as contracted providers.

Section IV- Monitoring of Expenditures

Lafayette County School Board received \$138,524 for the 2020-2021 school year to be expended as follows:

- Licensed Mental Health Counselor:
\$76,680 (salary & benefits)
- Part Time Licensed School Psychologist:
\$12,413 (salary & benefits)
- Director of Safety and Mental Health:
\$89,637 (salary & benefits)
-\$26,891 (Mental Health Allocation Funds)
\$62,746 (Expense will be absorbed with other district funding)
- Contracted Mental Health Services:
\$22,540 (Cooperative agreement with Meridian Behavioral Health, to include services provided by the following professionals - psychiatrists, advanced practiced registered nurses, clinical social workers, licensed therapists, mental health counselors, case managers, and prevention specialists)

Mental Health Assistance Allocation funding will not supplant other funding sources or increase salaries or provide staff bonuses.