

**MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION PLAN  
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
SCHOOL YEAR 2020/2021**

**A. Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan (s. 1011.62(16)(a) and (b), F.S.)**

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

The School District of Okaloosa County, Florida, (“OCSD”) will utilize a team-based framework to facilitate identification and coordination of services and interventions through the Multi-Tiered System of Support (“MTSS”) Intervention process. In addition, OCSD will utilize licensed and/or certified mental health professionals to provide evidenced based mental health assessment, diagnosis, interventions, treatments, and recovery through a multi-tiered system of support, including but not limited to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (“CBT”) and Brief Solution Focused Therapy. For students needing intensive or medical based treatment or services, OCSD will refer these students to community based professionals, including but not limited to Bridgeway Center, Children’s Home Society, The Mental Health Association of Okaloosa/Walton County, Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center and the Mobile Response Team based upon the individual student’s needs. OCSD will continue to train all elementary, middle and high school staff using the evidenced based Youth Mental Health First Aid program as selected by the Florida Department of Education to help identify and understand the signs of mental health and substance use and/or abuse disorders. OCSD will continue the practice of providing Trauma Informed Schools training to school based staff and all new employees through the Newcomers Orientation Program. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (“PBIS”) and Social/Emotional learning programs will be encouraged to develop and enhance resiliency and protective factors among students. OCSD will continue to partner with The Children’s Advocacy Center to provide Child Safety Matters and Teen Safety matters Curriculum to elementary and middle school students during the 2020-2021 SY.

**b. Evidence Based Mental Health Services for students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and student at risk of such diagnoses.**

All students identified with one or more co-occurring mental health diagnoses will be referred to the school based Mental Health Counselor or Social Worker for evaluation and evidence based-treatment modality, including but not limited to CBT. For students needing intensive treatment or medical based services a referral to outside mental health and/or addiction treatment agency will be facilitated. School based mental health professionals will facilitate collaboration with community based mental health providers to ensure a continuum of care occurs within the school setting.

**c. School-based mental health service providers.**

In SY 2020-2021 OCSD will employ fifty-six (56) school counselors, twelve (12) Florida Department of Education (“FLDOE”) certified and/or licensed School Psychologists, sixteen (16) licensed or FLDOE certified mental health counselors/clinical social workers/marriage and family therapists, two of which are certified addiction professionals and eight (8) FLDOE certified social workers. This reflects an increase in 3 mental health counselors from 2019-2020 SY.

**d. During the SY 2020-2021, Mental Health Counselor assignments will be based on data and caseload review from 2019-2020 SY to more evenly distribute caseloads across all school sites.**

The addition of 3 additional Mental Health Counselors will allow an increase in the amount of time providers have to provide direct care by decreasing caseloads across assignments and schools.

**e. Interagency Agreements / Contracts / Partnerships:**

OCSD has Memorandums of Understanding, contracts and / or collaborative partnerships with the following agencies:

1. Children's Home Society : Provides onsite mental health counseling services to referred students.
2. Bridgeway Center, Inc. : Provides Behavioral Health and Community Action Team services to referred students both onsite and off-site. In addition, BCI, provides an array of collaborative supports to our school-based service providers including but not limited to training opportunities, collaborative consultation and referral source.
3. Mental Health Association of Okaloosa-Walton Counties: Referral source for mental health services for students using the Brain Health initiative.
4. Mobile Response Team: Provides onsite crisis diversion services and wrap around services by providing immediate assistance and intervention to assist in diverting from hospitals, ER's etc.
5. Magellan Health: Provides Military Family Life Counselors to provide counseling to military students.
6. Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department: Provides School Resource Officers to provide safety and security at all school sites.
7. Children's Advocacy Center of Okaloosa-Walton Counties: Provides Child Safety / Teen Safety Matters curriculum to participating elementary school and middle school students. Additionally, ECCAC provides all new employees with Mandatory Reporter Training through the Newcomer Orientation Program and Mandatory Reporter Training at various school sites.
8. United for a Good Cause: Implementation of a peer to peer suicide prevention program called HOPE SQUAD will be initiated in middle and high schools. A goal has been set by this organization to expand this program into elementary schools once implementation takes place in secondary schools.
9. Families First Network: Coordination of foster care children and services within the school district.
10. Department of Children and Families: Provides child protective services to students.

**f. Procedures for Referral Timelines**

The OCSD Department of Student Intervention Services will establish procedures within the OCSD Mental Health Manual and develop monitoring tools to ensure referral timelines are met as follows:

1. Students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within 15 days of referral.
2. School-based mental health services are initiated within 15 days of identification and assessment.
3. Community-based mental health services for students are initiated within 30 days of referral. Student Services leadership will meet and collaborate regularly with community partners through the Okaloosa Community Collaborative work-group facilitated by Big Bend Community Based Care to assess and address gaps in services and care for at risk youth.

Student Intervention Services leadership has established a system to monitor these timelines through the OCSD's PAWS Behavioral/Mental Health digital documentation system.

**g. Process for coordinating mental health services with a student's primary care provider and other mental health providers, including procedures for information sharing.**

Parental consent and parental release of information will be required and obtained at the onset of screening and initiation services in order for information and data sharing with the student's primary mental health provider and other community providers involved in the student's care. OCSD will continue Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements that allow information and data sharing and will provide the process and procedures for such information release.

**h. 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.**

OCSD will continue the practice of providing Trauma Informed Schools Awareness training to school based staff and all new employees through the Newcomers Orientation Program. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) will be implemented or continued in nineteen (19) schools in Okaloosa County School District and Social/Emotional learning programs will be encouraged to develop and enhance resiliency and protective factors among students. OCSD will continue the partnership with The Children's Advocacy Center to provide Child Safety Matters and Teen Safety Matters Curriculum to elementary and middle school students during the 2020-2021 SY.

OCSD will continue to train all elementary, middle and high school staff using the evidence based Youth Mental Health First Aid program as selected by the Florida Department of Education to help identify and understand the signs of mental health and substance use and/or abuse disorders.

The peer to peer suicide prevention program HOPE SQUAD will be implemented in middle and high schools within the district through a partnership with United for a Good Cause.

**i. Charter Schools**

The charter schools within the OCSD will be informed of the school district's Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan via email and will be offered the option to participate in the district's plan or advised that they will be required to submit their own plan to their governing board, OCSD School Board and FLDOE for approval. Each charter school within the district will complete the MHAAP Assurances form designating their option.

For charter schools that participate in the school district's plan, the following coordinating services will be offered:

- An itinerant School-based Mental Health Counselor will be assigned to each charter school to serve their students.
- Charter school staff will be offered opportunities to participate the school district's Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings throughout the school year.
- For those schools with an identified high number of at risk students, such as Okaloosa Academy, the district's contracted alternative placement program, a collaborative

agreement with Bridgeway Center, Inc., will be encouraged to provide additional onsite assessments, screenings, therapy and treatment.

- Charter school staff will be offered Trauma Informed Schools training.
- Charter school staff, including but not limited to, school counselors and administration, will be encouraged to participate in monthly trainings related to mental health professional development and strategies for at-risk students.

**j. Identifies strategies to provide student supports in the following areas:**

1. The Early Warning System (EWS), MTSS Process, and teacher/staff input will be used to improve early identification of social, emotional or behavioral problems. The district’s Mental Health Team will continue the use of screening tools (CFARS) for early identification of social, emotional or behavioral problems or substance abuse disorders and implement services based on the findings of this screening tool.
2. Students identified with mental health concerns will be assessed and referred to the School-based Mental Health Counselor for services. Based on school staff concerns and collaboration with mental health providers students will be identified and discussed with the MTSS Problem-Solving Team, to include a mental health professional. Through the tiered system, students identified as needing tier 2 or tier 3 mental health supports will be referred to the Mental Health Counselor or Social Worker for intervention, treatment and recovery support.
3. Students identified as dealing with trauma and violence will be referred to the School-based Mental Health Counselor or Social Worker for assessment, intervention and services as necessary. The OCSD is collaborating with district SROs utilizing a “handle with care” strategy to inform school administration of those students who experienced “law enforcement encounters” or Baker Act evaluation while outside the school setting.

**B. Expenditures (s. 1011.62(16), F.S.)**

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

OCSD will directly employ sixteen (16) Florida licensed or FLDOE certified school-based mental health providers using the Mental Health Assistance Allocation.

All providers will carry Florida licensure or FLDOE Certification in at least one of the following areas:

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed Mental Health Counselor
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy
- Certified Social Worker
- Certified School Counselor

- b.** OCSD will not fund any community-based mental health providers using the Mental Health Assistance Allocation, however, OCSD will have contracts and agreements with those agencies listed in Section A (e) above.

c. OCSD will not fund any contract-based collaborative efforts or partnerships using the Mental Health Assistance Allocation, however, OCSD has contracts and agreements with those agencies listed in Section A (e) above not requiring school district expenditures for services.

d. In State Categorical Project 9110 – Mental Health Assistance Allocation, the following expenditures totaling \$1,162,629.00

1. 13 Mental Health Counselors	\$958,787.00
2. Other compensation 0102.6140 to pay for summer work for MHCs	\$5,000.00
3. Temporary personnel 0750.6140	\$69,120.00
4. FL Retirement 0210.6140	\$500.00
5. FICA 0220.6140	\$1,385.00
6. In-County travel for Mental Health Counselors 0330.6140	\$3,500
7. Printing materials, brochures and Mental Health Record folders 0390.6140	\$1,000
8. Supplies for general operations	\$5,000
9. Technology supplies (ink for printers, flash drives, etc.) 0519.6140	\$2,500
10. Computer Hardware (iPads and computer accessories) 0644.6140	\$9,000
11. Software for iPad for mental health / social emotional learning apps 0692.6140	\$500.00
12. Charter Schools 0394.5100	\$47,440.00
13. Contracts 0396.5100	\$5,978.00
14. Reserves 0997.9890	\$52,919.00
	<b>TOTAL \$1,162,629.00</b>

**C. Expenditure Assurances (s.1011.62(16), F.S.)**

- a. One hundred percent of state funds are used to expand school-based mental health through direct employment of Florida licensed or FLDOE Certified mental health providers to provide direct mental health services to students, support school staff in detecting mental health issues and to connect children, youth and families with appropriate behavioral health services.
- b. Mental Health Assistance Allocation funds will not supplant other funding sources, increase salaries or provide staff bonuses.

**c. Maximize the use of other sources of funding to provide school based mental health services, where appropriate. (e.g. Medicaid reimbursement, 3<sup>rd</sup> party payments, grants).**

All mental health professionals will be required to bill Medicaid for services provided for eligible students. School psychologists will continue to bill Medicaid for direct services provided to eligible students.

Title IV grant funding will be applied for and utilized as an additional funding source for mental health programs, and other mental health resources.

**D. Program Implementation and Outcomes (s. 1011.62(16)(d), F.S.)**

**a. Number and ratios of FLDOE-certified or licensed, school-based mental health services providers employed by OCSD**

In SY 2020-2021 OCSD will employ fifty-one (51) FLDOE certified school counselors, five (5) out-of-field school counselors, twelve (12) FLDOE certified and/or licensed School Psychologists, sixteen (16) licensed or certified mental health counselors/clinical social workers/marriage and family therapists and eight (8) FLDOE certified social workers. Based on current enrollment of 32,692 the ratios averages are:

- School Counselors – 1 per 583 students
  - School Psychologists – 1 per 2724 students
  - Licensed Mental Health Providers – 1 per 2,043 students
  - ESE Social Workers – provides mental health services and social emotional leaning / supports to ESE students with specific eligibilities of Emotional Behavioral Disability, Autism Spectrum Disability and Varying Exceptionalities.
- b.** OCSD will utilize a data / documentation system developed by the MIS department to document and track all students identified and / or receiving screenings or assessments, referrals or interventions through both school-based and community-based providers.