

## SUWANNEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION PLAN

School mental health services are essential to creating and sustaining safe schools. "Increased access to mental health services and supports in schools is vital to improving the physical and psychological safety of our students and schools, as well as academic performance and problem-solving skills. Additionally, in the aftermath of a crisis, school-employed mental health professionals provide supports that facilitate the return to normalcy, are sustainable and can help to identify and work with students with more intense or ongoing needs"(National Association of School Psychologists).

This plan is to establish and expand school-based mental health care in Suwannee County.

### Focuses on delivering evidence-based mental health services.

An evidence-based mental health awareness and assistance program will be established to assist school personnel to identify and understand signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness, and substance abuse disorder and to provide the skills for delivery of services. Problem solving teams will be established at each school which may include counselors, instructional coaches, nurses, school administration and law enforcement whose duties will be to assess and intervene with students who exhibit behavior which may indicate a threat to the safety of school, students, or staff.

Mental health services will be provided in the form of operationalizing evidence-based intervention strategies. Mental health programs offer three tiers of supports: Universal (Tier 1) mental health promotion activities for all students, Targeted (Tier II) prevention services for students identified as at risk for a mental health problem, and Intensive (Tier III) services for students who already show signs of a mental health problem. "The three general approaches to intervention-altering antecedents, altering consequences, and teaching skills-are often packaged, combined, and presented differently across the three tiers of service delivery, yet the strategies themselves remain the same. Problem solving teams should not only select an intervention that has evidence supporting it, but should also examine the contents of the intervention to determine if it contains appropriate strategies to target the present problem behavior. Given that mental health problems are often complex, it is also appropriate to select multiple evidence-based interventions or to supplement interventions when needed" (School Mental Health Referral Pathways\_Toolkit). Suwannee County will implement an approach that encompasses the continuum of need, enabling schools to promote mental wellness for all students, identify and address problems before they escalate or become chronic, and provide increasingly intensive, data-driven services for students.

### Includes description of supports that addresses mental health needs (assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery).

Awareness and training efforts will be coordinated on monthly Professional Development days with employees of the Suwannee County School District. These may include PREPaRE, Mental Health First Aide, Restorative Practices, and Trauma Informed Care. We will promote awareness to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and enhance the ability of educators to appropriately identify young people in need of mental health supports and improve help-seeking and referrals by young people and their families. Prevention is included in Tier One activities at each school. These may include CHAMPS, Monthly Character Traits, Boys Town curriculum, and BASE modules by Odysseyware.

Standardized measures are used for assessment of mental health needs. All assessment strategies serve the need to recommend and apply intervention strategies. The PETRA, ACUTE, direct behavior observations, behavior rating scales, surveys and structured interviews may be completed by qualified personnel as assessment tools. Student records are reviewed to determine if there has been a previous diagnosis by school or outside professionals.

Interventions are determined by the Student Support Team using the multi-tiered system and may include the following: Guidance Counseling; Meridian or other contracted counseling services; Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Plan; Baker Act; Social Modules from Odysseyware BASE; Parent/Guardian Conferences. The interventions are developed by a specific plan to ensure it is capable of being effectively implemented to resolve the problem behavior. The problem-solving team will create a measure that can be used to track implementation of the intervention procedure. It is important that the intervention include a goal that is observable and measurable.

There is no perfect way to use the problem-solving model to promote students' mental health. Treatment will be determined by the severity of the problem behavior and the availability of the school personnel's expertise and resources. Alternate sources of treatment will be provided by Meridian Behavioral Mental Health Counselors, other contracted providers, and private providers obtained by parents/guardians. School personnel must recognize the limits of their expertise and resources and arrange relationships with community partners.

Recovery is determined by an evaluation of the results of the services and gaps which may occur. The team may need to determine where there are gaps in care and prioritize outreach to programs and services to help address the students' recovery. Feedback will need to be integrated with school-based staff and community partners on the comprehensiveness of interventions and treatment.

Outcomes will be measured by the EWS System, rating scales; pre and post self-reports and assessment of individual measurable and observable goals from Behavior Intervention Plans.

Identifies evidence-based mental health services for students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and students at risk of such diagnoses.

School counselors, school psychologists and school social workers can provide group and individual counseling and other interventions to students using evidence-based practices to address:

- School stress and anxiety
- Family stress (divorce, homelessness, death, illness)
- Self-regulation and coping skills
- Depression
- Poor self-concept and anger/aggression
- Grief and loss
- Substance use

Appropriate services will be determined through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports process. These professionals possess the skills needed to intervene and address mental health issues that impact a student's ability to be successful in school.

Describes the collaborative partnerships with community providers and agencies. Describes process for coordinating mental health services with a student's primary care provider and other mental health providers. including procedures for information sharing.

Meeting the full continuum of student needs is dependent on collaboration between schools and community mental health providers and is accomplished through the MTSS process. School teams and partners work together to analyze data to determine appropriate mental health supports and services. The collaboration reduces barriers to access, allows interventions to occur in natural settings, provides schools with a more diverse range of resources and supports and improves outcomes for young people. These may include community or school-based mental health services who may provide supplementary or intensive services that go beyond school capacities. Partnerships include:

- State and local law enforcement agencies
- The Department of Juvenile Justice
- The Department of Children and Families
- The Agency for Health Care Administration
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- The Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office
- Severely Emotionally Disturbed NETwork
- Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Training Program
- Meridian Behavioral Health Care
- Community Action Team
- Interface Youth Program Shelters
- Haven Hospice
- The Suwannee County Health Department
- The University System
- Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.

The process for coordinating with providers is through direct contact through a referral. The parent/guardian signs a Consent to Release Information for agencies to be able to share information. The sharing of confidential information between agencies concerning students at risk of emotional disturbance or mental illness is necessary to access appropriate services to ensure the safety of the student or others.

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

Students will be referred by an adult with knowledge of the student which may include a parent/guardian, teacher, or administrator. If the student is of consenting age and ability, they may self-refer.

Suwannee County will use the FOCUS system to identify the number of:

- Students who received mental screenings or assessments
- Students referred to district-employed school-based mental health services providers
- Students who received services or assistance

These services are provided by district-employed mental health service providers and collaborative mental health service providers. Quantitative data will be reported to the Office of Safe Schools.

Identifies number and credentials of mental health services providers employed by the district.

{1} School Psychologist-Ed.Din Counseling Psychology; Licensed by the Department of Health; Certified by State of Florida

{1} School Psychologist-Ed.S. in Psychology; Certified by the State of Florida

{12} School Counselors-Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling; Certified by the State of Florida

School employees are specially trained in school system functioning and learning and how students' behavior and mental health impacts their ability to be successful in school. Areas of expertise may include classroom and behavior management, interventions, individual and group counseling, school safety and crisis response, cultural competence, and awareness of community resources.

Identifies number and credentials of mental health services providers contracted by the district.

Meridian Behavioral Health and other Contracted Service Providers-licensure or credential required by employing agency.

Providers will meet the highest standards to practice in schools. They should have experience working with children, knowledge of child and adolescent development, an understanding of the school system and interventions appropriate for the school setting, awareness of how mental health and achievement relate, and adhere to the professional code of ethics.

Documents 90% of expenditures allocated were allocated to direct mental health services or coordination of such services with primary care and mental health providers.

A newly created job description includes salary and benefits of \$89,496 to include salary and benefits for a Mental Health Counselor.

Contracted services of \$135,960 include contracted mental health counseling to students.

The total for direct mental health services is \$225,496.

Travel of \$4,000 and \$1,000 for supplies is included.

The total is \$230,456. The total budgeted for direct mental health services is 98% of the total budget.

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

The Mental Health Assistance Allocation will include a new position of Mental Health Counselor. Two school psychologists and twelve guidance counselors are currently employed by the district. Contracted services funded by Medicaid are provided for students who qualify.

Describes how district will maximize use of other sources of funding to provide school-based mental health services, where appropriate (e.g., Medicaid reimbursement, Third party payments, grants).

The district will maximize other sources of funding by collaborating with the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Juvenile Justice and other agencies to access services which are not

currently in place. We will attend initial and quarterly meetings initiated by the Governor's Executive Order on March 26, 2018. These meetings are convened by the Department of Children and Families. The purpose of the meetings is to improve communication, collaborate with participating agencies, and coordinate services and care of individuals identified as most in need by the participants.

Local school board approved the district plan. Date of Approval: June 26, 2018

Charter school governing body(ies) approved plan(s) when applicable: NA

Approved plan(s) was submitted to the Commissioner of Education by August 1, 2018 (attached).

Plan(s) establishes or expands school-based mental health care.

MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

JULY, 2018

Services provided by district-employed mental health services providers:

Students who received mental screenings or assessments: \_\_\_\_\_

Students referred to district employed school-based mental health services providers: \_\_ \_

Students who received services or assistance: \_\_ \_

Services provided by contracted or collaborative mental health services providers:

Students who received mental screenings or assessments: \_\_\_\_\_

Students referred to district employed school-based mental health services providers: \_\_ \_

Students who received services or assistance: \_\_ \_

Number of FTE-equivalent hours of service delivery for contract-based collaborative efforts with community mental health programs, agencies, and providers: \_\_\_\_\_

Partnerships with community mental health programs, agencies and providers: \_\_\_\_\_

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Establishment or expansion of school-based mental health services: \_\_\_\_\_

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Medicaid reimbursement/Third Party insurance payments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Other sources of funding: \_\_\_\_\_