

Section 1 -- Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan for Walton County School District (WCSD)

Introduction

Walton County School District is in the process of developing a comprehensive and integrated multi-tiered system of supports utilizing the MTSS process to provide all students with the supports necessary for success at school and to improve school safety and school climate. WCSD will implement the components described below with fidelity in order to meet those goals and to build capacity at all schools.

A. Focus on delivering evidence-based mental health services

WCSD will utilize an integrated and collaborative framework of leadership teams to facilitate and coordinate a multi-tiered system of mental health services and interventions. All WCSD school staff will be trained (over time) using the evidence-based youth mental health awareness (YMHA) program developed by FLDOE to help identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness, and substance abuse disorders. The training program will also provide personnel with the skills to assist students who are developing or experiencing an emotional disturbance, mental health or substance use problem. In addition, WCSD will contract with outside community-based agencies to introduce Student Services personnel (school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses and school mental health counselors) to evidence-based trauma treatments which may include, but not limited to, Trauma Informed Care school-supports. The continuation of Executive Functioning awareness and strategies through trainings and workshops will be offered for all schools and staff. School-wide social-emotional learning programs and curriculum will be implemented to develop and enhance resiliency and protective factors among students. Ongoing-efforts to increase the number of schools trained in Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) will continue in order to build capacity for implementing a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional and behavior support. WCSD will utilize its Early Warning System (EWS) to identify students in need of support services and to monitor the response and progress of the support services. Additionally, WCSD will collaborate with wrap-around service providers to evaluate the effectiveness of intensive interventions.

Youth Mental Health First Aid training: WCSD will seek training for 4-6 staff members as trainers who will then train guidance counselors, administrative staff, school-based assessment team members, and selected school and district personnel in year one. Staff training will continue until all staff has been trained in the complete YMHFA or abbreviated program.

WCSD will utilize the PREPaRE model to improve and strengthen school safety, crisis response and crisis management plans. WCSD will implement the M-PHAT model in order to integrate school safety and crisis management into the MTSS framework.

Guidance counselors, school psychologists and mental health counselors will be trained in Brief Therapies for school issues including, but not limited to: CBT, Solution-Focused Therapy & Motivational Interviewing to address issues related to anxiety, depression, NSSI behaviors, aggression, dysregulation, executive functioning, substance abuse and social withdrawal.

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

Overview: WCSD will utilize its MTSS format to identify, assess, provide referrals for services and provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention supports and services to identified students. By modifying the Early Warning System (EWS) in FOCUS to include additional available student information regarding mental health issues, including but not limited to, Baker Acts, psychiatric diagnosis, discipline referrals related to aggression, impulsivity and/or bullying, aggressive and/or disruptive behaviors, the school-based MTSS teams will identify & screen students for needs and services. WCSD plans to utilize funds allocated in SB7026 to hire personnel to: provide Tier 3 evidenced-based counseling interventions; to screen and assess students; and/or to refer appropriate cases for more intensive intervention, therapy and treatment. Training the guidance counselors through intensive professional development will build sustainable skills and systemic expertise for use in Tier 2 interventions. Professional development will also involve virtually all staff in a culture of awareness in mental health needs and issues.

Awareness: WCSD will provide the following professional development for staff and students:

- All school and district administrators will receive Youth Mental health First Aid (YMHFA) training.
- All guidance counselors, school psychologists, mental health professionals, resource teachers and members of the school threat-assessment team will receive YMHFA training.
- Targeted teachers and staff at each school will be selected to receive (YMHFA) training initially. All staff will receive some version of YMHFA training during the 2018-19 school-year.
- WCSD will adjust/modify its FOCUS system to create a new report in order to identify students at-risk for mental health services utilizing information from screening and assessments resulting from the MTSS referral process. The MTSS process includes referrals from parents and/or staff members as well as the modified FOCUS “at-risk” report.
- WCSD will screen students identified through the MTSS “at-risk” review to determine need and intensity of need for services.
- Parents and Students will receive information regarding counseling services directly from school officials, including but not limited to, school-based services and community-based evidence-based services in Walton County.
- WCSD website will contain similar information regarding school-based and community-based counseling services.
- Monthly PD for principals regarding Trauma Sensitive schools.

- Purchase screening and assessment tools to identify Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention based on severity levels
- Monthly PD for guidance counselors (all schools have at least one certified guidance counselor) on evidence-based counseling techniques provided by licensed school psychologists and or licensed mental health counselor.
- Updates to WCSD website to provide links to community-based resources, links to parent resources regarding mental health information.
- Seek additional resources for interventions specially designed for age-appropriate groups.

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Tier 1: At the core instructional level, students will be exposed to and instructed in a variety of social skills curriculum and mental health awareness programs including, but not limited to: PBIS, Suite 360 (social-emotional curriculum), Sanford Harmony, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Care, Bullying prevention campaigns, Capturing Kids Hearts, CDAC, EWS and progress monitoring. These tools will provide students, families and staff with mental health attitudes, competencies and wellness through professional development.

Screening and Assessment: WCSD will initiate the screening of all students identified by the specially created at-risk Early Warning System (EWS). WCSD anticipates that between 10-20% of all students may be identified through the EWS initiative. WCSD will utilize a standardized tool(s) such as: BASC3, Conners Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scale, Beck's Youth Inventory, GAD, Youth Internalizing Problems Screener, Youth Externalizing Problems Screener as a screening tool to measure children's adaptive and/or problem behaviors in school and community settings across prek-high school age groups. Trauma-Sensitive Schools will inform the process at all levels of support.

Prevention: A variety of age-appropriate tools will be utilized at Tier1. They include, but are not limited to, Sanford Harmony, Stop and Think, Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving, SEL curriculum and CASEL.

Tier2 interventions will focus on targeted instruction based on presenting problems (see EWS identifiers). Small group instruction might involve Smarts for issues associated with executive functioning, role-playing utilizing any of the materials mentioned above and/or specific tools designed for anxiety, depression, suicide prevention and/or peer relationship difficulties.

Tier3 interventions will involve additional direct intensive instruction/counseling services by school psychologists, mental health counselors or outside agency/physician referrals. WCSD will utilize the materials provided by DOE in A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools for referrals to outside providers for mental health services; to locate available resources for school-based problem-solving; cultural and linguistic considerations and other resources. Community and family involvement in the problem-solving process is critical to Tier3 interventions.

Referral Process:

The school-based MTSS continuous improvement process and school-based threat assessment teams can refer any student for mental health services. School-based teams will meet monthly to review EWS data and monitor the progress of on-going interventions. Referrals for additional services may result from the monthly meetings. Students who exhibit aggressive and/or highly disruptive behavior will be referred for mental health services as required by the Code of Conduct. Students who make threats of violence will be assessed through the Virginia model of Threat Assessment.

Tier 2 – Referrals will initiate from MTSS process, parents, teachers or as the result of ongoing progress monitoring of interventions provided through: EWS, Suite 360, Suite 360 ISS, individual and group counseling provided by Student Services Personnel.

Tier 3— Referrals for intensive services to school psychologists, mental health counselor or contracted counseling services, individualized re-entry plans, CAT team, collaboration of private providers, family involvement and/or community planning teams based on needs will initiate through the MTSS process and continuous progress monitoring. These students present with the highest level of need and will be referred for additional intensive services in an expeditious manner.

C. 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 diagnosis.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that between 15-20 percent of children meet the criteria for diagnosis of a mental health condition and/or substance abuse issues. This estimate is consistent with the MTSS model which suggests that a healthy core instruction for social skills, mental health awareness and bullying prevention for all students should result in 80% of students achieving grade-level skills in those areas. Thus, 1000-1500 students may require additional supports (Tier2 and Tier3 services). WCSD will utilize the SWPBIS system and documents to identify fidelity and implementation issues. Tier 2 and Tier3 readiness guides will be utilized to help determine the supports necessary at each school. Once Tier1 installation is implemented with fidelity, the phase-in of Tier2 will follow. Tier3 implementation will follow accordingly.

Tools such as SAMHSA Evidence-Based Practice Kits will help inform the development of mental health services for co-occurring mental health or substance abuse and/or students at risk of such diagnosis.

D. Describes the collaborative partnerships with community providers and agencies

WCSD will contract for services with local mental health agency. Contracted services enable WCSD to provide a broad range of student and family behavioral health and substance abuse services. WCSD will also utilize its Circuit One relationships in order to offer families options for mental health services. The agreements provide for effective communication between personnel of district and contracted agencies, individual and group counseling, psycho-social evaluations, transition services, consultation and education services and implementation of behavioral health and/or crisis plans. Risk and Suicide assessment progress monitoring meetings for identified students will take place monthly, at least. District Safety Committee will hold monthly safety meetings and quarterly collaboration meetings with Mental Health providers and Law Enforcement. All meetings will be properly noticed and minutes reviewed to allow for community involvement.

E. Describes process for coordinating mental health services with a student's primary care provider and other mental health providers, including procedures for information sharing.

WCSD will develop MOUs and Cooperative agreements that allow for collaboration and data sharing with primary care providers. The release of information signed by parent will allow collaboration between parties by utilizing DOE provided documents/guidance.

A. 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).

The assumption is that 15% or more of the total student population will be screened. The numbers identified and served will differ from school to school. WCSD anticipates 1000-1500 students to be screened/served as a result of the comprehensive MTSS process.

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

The district will start the year with 4 school psychologists and 16 guidance counselors. WCSD intends to hire a LMHC and use allocation funds to hire staff to free guidance counselors 15-20 hours per week.

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

The number and credentials of mental health service providers is unknown at this point. All guidance counselors, school psychologists and mental health counselors will either be certified and/or licensed. There will be students who require outside service providers for more intensive intervention.

Section 3 – Expenditures

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

WCSD stipulates that at least 90% of the funds received were allocated to direct mental health services as described above. WCSD expects that allocation funds will be budgeted in the manner below:

4 Mental Health Counselors/LCSW @ \$50,000.00 per= \$200,000.00

2-3 Assessment Screening Specialists: \$75, 000.00

Community Healthcare Referrals: \$10,000.00

Charter School Share: \$5,430.00

These amounts are best estimates and may change with actual hires.

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

All newly direct hire employees and contracted services are in addition to the previous mental health services provided by the District.

B. Describes how district will maximize use of other sources of funding to provide school-based mental health services, where appropriate (e.g., Medicaid reimbursements, 3rd party payments, grants).

WCSD will utilize Medicaid reimbursement funds to provide tier3 mental health services and hire a LMHC with reimbursement funds.

Section 4 – Plan Approval and Submissions