

Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan

Walton County School District (WCSD)

Walton County School District (WCSD) has developed a comprehensive and integrated multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to provide all students the level of support necessary for success at school. Utilizing an MTSS framework of supports continues to improve school safety and mental health services for students with co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses, as well as for those students determined to be at-risk of such diagnoses, through a process of identification, assessment, treatment and recovery. WCSD implements the components described below in order to meet identified goals and to build capacity at all schools (including charter schools) within Walton county, with modifications of virtual interventions/therapy as necessary.

Delivering Evidence-Based Mental Health Services:

WCSD currently utilizes an integrated and collaborative framework of tiered interventions with school leadership teams to facilitate and coordinate a multi-tiered system of mental health services and intervention support. All WCSD school staff are/will continue to be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) with continuous ongoing training to newly hired staff. This training is designed to help identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness, and substance abuse disorders. This training program also provides personnel with the skills to assist students who are developing or experiencing an emotional disturbance, mental health or co-occurring substance use problem. WCSD has trained 14 staff members as YMHFA trainers who in turn have trained school guidance counselors, administrative staff, school-based assessment team members, and selected school and district personnel. More than 275 WCSD staff were initially trained during the 2018-19 school year. Staff training will continue until all WCSD staff have been trained in YMHFA.

WCSD has also contracted with outside community-based agencies to train psychological services personnel (school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses and school mental health counselors) in evidence-based trauma informed treatments, to include Trauma Informed Care and CBT for anxiety reduction and symptoms of depression. Suicide prevention programs such as Connect Program, Jason Foundation Professional Development Series, and Signs Matter are a few the resources utilized to help recognize and prevent school-age suicide. WCSD will continue to provide training and support related to issues of Executive Functioning and the regulation of behavior. Strategies and techniques will be provided through trainings and workshops for all appropriate staff. School-wide social-emotional learning programs and curriculum have been 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 those support services. Additionally, WCSD will

collaborate with wrap-around service providers to evaluate the effectiveness of intensive interventions.

WCSD currently employs 2 licensed school psychologists, 7 licensed mental health counselors and/or licensed clinical social workers, 16 certified school counselors and 3 educational diagnosticians for a total of 27 mental health professionals. Based on total enrollment of approximately 10,000 students, a ratio of less than 400:1 students/mental health provider exists. This ratio should allow for the identification and provision of services to students in need or at-risk for developing mental health issues.

A student support recovery grant was obtained through School-Based Healthcare Solutions Network (SBHSN) and will begin SY 2020-21. It will include funding of 7 mental health professionals (referred to as Transitional Coaches) at each Title 1 school in WCSD. The quality Care Coordination model will be followed, providing assessment, planning, monitoring and advocating for student program participants. Transition coaches and mental health professionals will be part of weekly staffings to monitor care plans and after care services, meeting virtually to discuss updates to minimize student risk and the need for additional services. Coaches will collaborate to keep students and families informed and assist with consultative services and transition planning.

WCSD has an interagency agreement with Chautauqua Healthcare and Pancare of Florida to provide support services to students and families in Walton county. The Community Action Team (CAT) and Mobile Response Team (MRT) assist in screening, assessment and counseling of students. WCSD personnel and CAT team members meet to discuss student needs and follow up on care plans. Additionally, WCSD staff meets weekly with the sheriff's department's investigative unit regarding cases of concern to help integrate school and community resources.

Referral Process:

Based on legislative action (SB 7030), the referral process for students identified with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and for students at-risk for developing such diagnoses will be the following: 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 at least 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.

Referrals from the school-based teams for mental health assessment pertaining to a student identified and/or a student potentially at-risk for mental health disorders **must** take place within **15** days of the referral. School-based mental health services as the result of identification and assessment of said referral must be **initiated** within **15** days following identification of need. Students referred to community based mental health services must be **initiated** within **30** days of referral. WCSD has community-based partners including Community Action Team (CAT), Pancare of Florida and Chautauqua Healthcare to assist in this process. Approval of this plan

constitutes a School Board of Walton County action. All schools (including charters) are covered in this plan. Charter schools are included in all in-service meetings related to MTSS interventions including the referral for mental health services and agree to follow WCSD practices and policies regarding this process.

Coordination of Care:

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

Early Intervention:

WCSD will utilize its MTSS model to identify, assess, provide referrals for services, and provide intervention supports and services to identified students in order to reduce the likelihood of the development of mental health issues across all grade levels and tiers.

Core instruction at all grade levels will be infused with age and developmentally appropriate activities which support mental health, understanding, and intentional practice opportunities to develop protective factors. All Elementary schools will utilize Sanford Harmony as a vehicle for daily mental health and social emotional learning opportunities, with all elementary schools including the social emotional learning component into School Improvement Plans. Secondary schools will provide the required 5 hour mental health curriculum and have scheduled small group activities to promote wellness and mental health initiatives. Secondary schools will use Second Steps and Ripples Effects curriculum and have identified mental health supports into School Improvement Plan.

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, while utilizing EWS for Tier 1 progress monitoring. These tools will provide students, families and staff with mental health education and competencies through professional development. Core instruction at all grade levels will be infused with age and developmentally appropriate activities which support mental health, understanding and intentional practice opportunities to develop protective factors. Elementary schools will utilize Sanford Harmony as a vehicle for daily mental health moments. Secondary schools will utilize Second Steps and Ripple Effects to provide education/information, in addition to promote wellness and mental health initiatives.

Screening and Assessment: WCSD will initiate the screening of all students identified by the specially created at-risk Early Warning System (EWS). For those students flagged using EWS data, WCSD will utilize a standardized tool(s) to include behavior rating scales or interview assessment tools such as the Beck Youth Inventory or CFARS. Students having experienced trauma and/or experiences with violence should be identified and receive appropriate supports as quickly as possible.

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, Second Steps, Ripple Effects and CASEL.

Tier 2: Interventions will focus on targeted instruction based on identified areas of need. Small group instruction within the classroom setting and pull out small group support to build social-emotional/behavior skill deficits, role-playing exercises, and behavior techniques to address executive functioning deficits, anxiety, depression, suicide prevention and/or social interactions/peer relationship difficulties. Tier 2 interventions will be provided by classroom teachers, transitional coaches, school guidance counselors, and/or licensed mental health counselors.

Tier 3: Interventions will include additional, intensive supports; specifically, more intensive individual counseling services by school psychologists, mental health counselor or outside agency/physician referrals. WCSD utilizes the materials provided by DOE in A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools for referrals to outside providers for mental health services, to include identified community partnerships/agencies. Community and family involvement in the problem-solving process is critical to Tier3 interventions. Newly funded Transitional Coaches will play an important role in the coordination of supports across agencies, school and family.

Expenditures and Assurances

The allocation funds are spent on providing licensed mental health providers for direct student contact. Currently, the funds are used to employ 7 licensed professionals (LCSWs and LMHCs) who assess student need and provide direct mental health services. Funds are also spent on 6 additional part-time guidance support positions, to assist schools with the highest number of students. A portion of the allocation funds are set aside in order to compensate for any community referrals that require reimbursement. Remaining funds are spent for training and intervention related to mental health.

Mental Health Assistance Allocation	\$443,594
School District Staff/Positions (salary)	\$402, 739
Intervention Programs, Materials, Training	\$40,855
Total Mental Health Assistance Allocation Expenditures	\$443, 594

No allocation funds are used to supplant other funds or to increase salaries or provide bonus money. WCSD utilizes Medicaid reimbursement funds and Title IV funds to help provide school-based mental health services and materials as needed.

Program Implementation and Outcomes

WCSD has created a system within its MIS system designed 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 EWS “at-risk” report. A separate data base has been created to log threat assessments, Baker Acts and other high-risk behaviors, referrals for services and treatment/safety plans. Each school has its own tab to enter data ongoingly regarding referrals for assessment, counseling, threat assessments, referrals to outside providers, Baker Acts and/or other issues of concern. This data can be reviewed and analyzed at any time by school or district staff. The data base is password protected for privacy.