

# **Mental Health and Wellness in Pinellas County Schools Plan**

**2019-2020**

In 2018-2019 we developed a multifaceted approach to ensuring mental health and wellness for all students in Pinellas County Schools. For the 2019-2020 school year we are expanding this plan to further ensure safety and wellness for all students. The components of this plan include:

- Expanding Mental Health and Wellness Training
- Increasing Access to Student Services Staff
- Strengthen Community Partnerships
- Refining Behavioral Threat Assessments and increasing Screening and Assessments of at-risk students
- Ensuring Charter Schools choosing to opt into the district plan receive all the services afford to other schools.

## **Expanding Mental Health and Wellness Training:**

Schools will update their Mental Health and Wellness Planning Rubric that they completed last year. This rubric is designed to assist school leadership in determining what gaps in training exist at their school and to plan professional development to address these areas of need. These rubric plans will be submitted to Student Services Leadership for review to ensure each school has a viable plan for increasing their staff's knowledge and preparedness for identifying and responding to students' mental health needs. Training district staff on these topics will assist in the identification and appropriate referral of students with mental health issues. As the plan progresses through the years, the district will most likely use mental health funding to increase prevention and training services. We will continue to push out Youth Mental Health First Aid and our goal remains for all staff to receive this high-quality training. In the interim we are implementing the online one-hour mental health awareness training recommended by the state called "Kognito". This summer we held our first Mental Health Training Summer Institute where over 600 teachers and other staff members received training. This was such a success that we plan to hold another in the summer of 2020.

In addition, Pinellas County Schools is expanding their partnership with Sandy Hook Promise to provide a continuum of violence prevention training to students, families, community partners and staff. The Sandy Hook Promise Anonymous Reporting App has been fully implemented as well, all at no cost to the district. This year we are developing an internal cadre of trainers so that all district teams and all middle and high school students including charter schools are be retrained in Say Something Anonymous Reporting App. All of these trainings are available to every charter school choosing to opt into the district plan. These charter schools will be onboarded into the Sandy Hook Promise app as well.

## **Increase Access to Student Services Staff:**

DOE certified school social workers (many of whom are also Licensed Clinical Social Workers), DOE certified school psychologists, and DOE certified school counselors will be hired to reduce the ratio of students to staff in order to better align to the national recommended ratio models. Our ratios apart from the mental health allocation are as follows:

Social Workers:1:867  
Psychologists:1:1,195  
Counselors: 1:440

With the Mental Health Allocation funding our ratios will be:

Social Workers:1:772  
Psychologists: 1:1,090  
Counselors: 1:438

As we utilize this funding to increase DOE certified staff we also have taken steps to increase the time all student services personnel spend providing direct mental health services to students. The strategic changes include: freeing up school psychologists from time spent on testing by contracting with them to do gifted testing beyond the regular work day, allow them to spend those hours providing mental health supports to children; School Psychologists are provided an additional half hour in their work day; assigning full time social workers to every middle and high school; training behavior specialists to facilitate Functional Behavioral Assessment plans; no longer allowing schools to use counselors as testing coordinators, tier three coordinators or to perform other clerical based duties; and conducting focus groups with student services staff to gather their input on strategies that would allow them more time with students.

In addition to the mental health assistance allocation, Pinellas County Schools will utilize funds obtained through Medicaid and other available third-party billing to pay for the Student Services positions. We also are applying for additional grants to pay for staff and hope to receive two STOP federal grants. Increasing these mental health providers in schools will allow for the provision of a more comprehensive service delivery model with a full range of services across Tier 2 and Tier 3. Staff will be assigned based on formulas to include data points that help anticipate the risk levels of a school's student population. All the staff hired will be Florida Department of Education certified in their discipline. Their role includes delivering evidence-based mental health services including assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery. Currently these include: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Safe and Civil Schools Classroom Management (CHAMPS), Restorative Practices, Olweus Bullying Prevention, Trauma Informed Care, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), FACE IT for Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs, Jason Foundation Suicide Prevention, Check and Connect, and Culturally Relevant Teaching. These staff also support school-based threat assessments as outlined below. Every charter school choosing to opt into the district plan will have access to these services and trainings as well as crisis intervention and mental health supports as needed. We are very pleased that all but one small charter school has chosen to participate in our plan. Charter students are part of Pinellas County Schools and we want to ensure that all students receive services including those who attend charter schools in our community. Pinellas County Schools has a rigorous summer bridge program and students who attend summer bridge will continue to present with mental health needs during that time. Principals often report needing assistance during summer bridge that has not been readily available. For this reason, we will fund counselors to address the student's mental health concerns throughout the summer.

Student Services has its own data management system, Student Services Wide Information Management System (SSWIMS), that identifies assessments and services provided to students across a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). SSWIMS identifies the number of students and services provided as well as the credentials of mental health service providers. Student related outcomes and the impact on learning will be evaluated utilizing data from SSWIMS and early warning systems. The district has plans to include such data in our Advanced Ed climate survey.

### **Strengthen Community Partnerships (Day Treatment):**

Partnering with community mental health, substance abuse and social service agencies for collaboration with provision of services in the community and in schools is a priority for Pinellas County Schools. For decades the district has enjoyed excellent working relationships with a variety of community partners. The established processes that include obtaining parent consent for sharing of student information, and referrals to community providers and primary caregivers, including Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, has proven to be an effective intervention for many families. In several school locations where access to these services can be difficult, there are providers on campus to reduce the barrier. Pinellas County Schools will continue to expand these

partnerships and the services they provide to students. In particular, we will continue partnerships with Directions for Living and a program called Treatment Works. Treatment Works is an intensive therapy services program model to all students served by the Pinellas County School System who have been identified via the Pinellas County School Systems District Threat Assessment Team to be in need of intensive services. Services will principally be provided in the family home and, when appropriate to strengthen and assist the family, in other natural environments such as schools, family friendly parks, home of support system (family and friends), neighborhood community centers, and places of worship. Services include case management and counseling that can occur every day when needed. Each family participates in an interdisciplinary team staffing meeting every 15 days during their participation in the program at which PCS staff are in attendance. We have contracted with Suncoast Center for Community Mental Health to have Licensed Mental Health Therapists on school campuses. These services target emotional and behavioral issues, whether Individual, family, or system related, which impede the youth's emotional availability for learning. Therapy seeks to resolve issues and to build upon successful coping skills to support school success and social success for the youth and their families including trauma informed treatment. Personal Enrichment Through Mental Health Services (PEMHS) is another community partner that we will continue to contract with for System Navigators. In addition, working with the Family to strengthen developed education partnerships with the school for consistent and improved collaborations between home and school; behavioral plans, medication when indicated, parent conference attendance, and reinforced in-school interventions. Navigators will strengthen the bridge between school and home for both the family and the school personnel. The navigator will work to alleviate basic domains of needs when indicated housing, transportation, child care, food, employment, etc.

### **Refine Threat Assessment Procedures:**

Pinellas County Schools has adopted threat assessment procedures developed by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service in a collaborative effort to help schools reduce violence and create safe climates. A Threat Assessment Coordinator will be hired to coordinate these efforts and to case-manage the students, particularly those that rise to the level of a district threat assessment team. Most of these students demonstrate intense mental health needs and this Threat Assessment Coordinator will be a clinically-trained social worker who will ensure the students receive mental health services in the school setting. In addition, this individual will refer, coordinate and follow up on the students' mental health services in the community. This threat assessment process is an appraisal of the student's behavior in a given situation, rather than solely on stated threats or individual traits. The assessment focuses on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest that a *student poses a threat of targeted violence. Targeted violence is differentiated from other violent acts by the distinct presence of a target or targets. The student who poses a threat intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that attack.*

The process of conducting a threat assessment is as follows:

1. Student of Concern identified
2. School Administrator is notified
3. Administrator determines if threat assessment is needed or not needed

#### **IF NOT NEEDED:**

4. Close as Not Credible/Refer to Student Services, as needed

#### **OR, IF NEEDED:**

5. **INQUIRY PHASE BEGINS:**

- Notify Area Superintendent, School-Based Threat Assessment Team and parent
6. Threat Assessment Team proceeds with interviews
  7. School-Based Threat Assessment Team meets to review the case

**IF STUDENT DOES NOT POSE A THREAT:**

8. Close as Unfounded/Develop Support Plan

**OR, IF STUDENT DOES POSE A THREAT:**

**9. INVESTIGATION PHASE BEGINS:**

10. School-Based Threat Assessment Team meets to develop a management plan.

**OR, IF THE SCHOOL-BASED TEAM CANNOT RESOLVE THE ISSUE:**

11. Area Superintendents will notify the District Threat Assessment Team for assistance.

The District Threat Assessment Team will be comprised of:

- Threat Assessment Administrator
- Student Services Staff
- School Based Administrators
- Law Enforcement Officers (SRO)

The District Threat Assessment Team will develop a management plan which will include the following:

- a) A summary of disciplinary action
- b) Identification of where the student will attend school during the interim
- c) What supervision methods will be employed both at home and school
- d) Who will implement the services
- e) If the student is ESE, an IEP meeting will be scheduled
- f) If the student has a 504 plan, a review will be considered

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** When a Pinellas County School student has had previous threat assessments or significant discipline issues on record and has left the district to attend another out-of-county or state school, a Department of Juvenile Justice commitment program, a specific behavioral health treatment facility, or other reasons, the District Threat Assessment Team will meet prior to the student's re-entry to PCS to make recommendations for appropriate interventions, supports, and placement.

Or, if a newly enrolled Pinellas County School student has a discipline record from a previous school district that has significant cause for concern, then Section 11 (above) will be followed; as this will supersede the need for a School-Based Threat Assessment Team meeting.

**Screening and Assessment:**

In an effort to improve screening for students that currently have not been identified, yet are in fact, struggling with mental health and trauma related issues, Student Services leadership will explore possible evidence-based screening tools for this purpose in addition to utilizing early warning data. We will develop processes that will ensure students who are referred to a school-based or community-based mental health service provider for mental health screening for the identification of mental health concerns or the assessment of students at risk for mental health disorders occurs within 15 days of referral. School-based mental health services will be initiated within 15 days after identification and assessment, and support by community-based mental health services providers for students who are referred for community based mental health services must be initiated within 30 days after the school makes a referral.

In order to support all of these efforts, we will hire support coordination staff. This staff will allow

clinical staff to remain focused on serving students by pulling data, scoring screening instruments, maintain early warning systems and databases, collecting and analyzing surveys and other supports.

Estimated total allocation of funds: \$ 2,473,838

### Mental Health Assistance Allocation 2019/20

Description	2019-20 Funding
Mental Health Assistance - FEFP	\$2,473,838
<b>ESTIMATED REVENUE</b>	
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,473,838</b>
<b>APPROPRIATIONS</b>	
DOE Certified Psychologists (8 additional units)	\$576,322
DOE Certified Social Workers (14 additional units)	\$891,300
DOE Certified Counselors Summer Bridge	\$112,000
DOE Certified School Counselor (1unit)	\$ 70,000
Support Coordination Staff (1.25 units)	\$ 45,803
Threat Assessment Administrator assessing for MH services	\$ 25,000
Community Partnerships	\$644,174
Resources for Screening and Assessment of students	\$ 97,093
Charter Allocation 1 school opting out	\$ 2,146
Resources/Supplies	\$ 10,000
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>	<b>\$2,473,838</b>

An amount of \$75,000,000 was appropriated statewide for mental health assistance for the 2019-20 fiscal year. This allocation provides funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care. Each district receives a minimum of \$100,000 with the remaining balance allocated on each district's share of unweighted full-time equivalent student enrollment. Prior to receiving funds, plans outlining the local program and planned expenditures must be approved by district school boards to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education by August 1st of each fiscal year. At least 90% of the district's allocation must be expended on providing mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery services to students with one or more mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses, and coordination of such services with a student's primary care provider and with other mental health providers involved in the student's care.

NOTE: Funding totals are approximate, and funds may be adjusted between the above earmarked categories as determined.

The 2019-2020 Annual Mental Health Allocation plan is hereby approved by the School Board of Pinellas County.

Dated the 30<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2019

Attest:

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Michael A. Grego, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Approved as to Form:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Heather J. Wallace  
Assistant School Board Attorney