

Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan

Taylor County School District

2019-2020

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).

Taylor County School District will focus on delivering evidence-based mental health services within the school setting and community. Direct therapies in both individual and group modalities will be utilized, as well as consultation and collaboration with student services personnel, administration, teachers, and parents within each school in Taylor County. Problem solving teams at each school will select interventions that has evidence supporting its use and will select appropriate strategies based on the unique presenting problem. Given that mental health issues are often complex, it is often appropriate to select multiple interventions when needed. A three-tiered approach will be used similar to tiers already in use for academics and behavioral supports. A school mental health expert will attend these meetings as requested to guide teams in appropriate level(s) of support. This could include outside agencies that already work or could potentially provide mental health supports to students.

The following supports will be implemented within the school district to address mental health needs including assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, and recovery...

- Continued provision of a Licensed Mental Health Counselor that will serve as a coordinator for the Mental Health program as well as a full time school psychologist.
- Summer Availability of School Counseling Services – School Counselors will schedule office hours during the month of July. This time will be spent offering individualized and group counseling with students in need of services as well as referral to appropriate providers if necessary.
- Awareness efforts will be coordinated on professional development days with the employees of the Taylor County School District. Awareness efforts could include Mental Health First Aid, Restorative Practices, Trauma Informed Care, and Behavioral Deescalation. These efforts are included in Tier One supports as they will benefit all students.
- Tier One preventative services will be available to ALL students through Tier One Behavioral Supports, such as CHAMPS, Character Education

Activities, Jason Foundation Suicide Prevention Curriculum for Middle and High School, and Character Education at Elementary Level. BASE Social-Emotional Software Courses will be assigned to students as needed at the high school level.

- The Virginia Model threat assessment structure as well as structural interviews will be completed by qualified personnel as needed to measure the threat level (Low, Middle, or High) of a student who the district suspects may be a harm to themselves or others. Interventions will be determined by the School-Based MTSS team, which will include the Mental Health Coordinator.

Tier 2 Interventions that will be available include the following –

- Small Group Counseling targeting specific coping strategies or relevant topics, Small Group Targeted Social Skills Training using Skill Streaming, BASE Software Lessons will be assigned to a targeted group

Tier 3 Interventions that will be provided includes the following –

Individualized mental health counseling based on student need, individualized social skills training, individualized behavior planning and assessment, referral to CAT team.

The following mental health services for students will be provided for one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and students at risk of such diagnoses...

- The Mental Health Support Coordinator will be responsible for identification of students with co-occurring diagnoses and for students at risk.
- The Coordinator, in collaboration with the School Counselor at the student's school will meet with the School Based Intervention Team to determine the following...
 - What current interventions or treatment plans are in effect for the student?
 - What community based agencies and/or school based programs are responsible for the intervention/treatment plans?
 - Is current treatment or intervention effective or does plan need to be revised?
 - What additional referrals or services should be completed at this time?
- Meetings should occur at least quarterly for monitoring. Primary Care Providers will be invited to participate as necessary. Meetings can take

place more often in the case of a return from in patient hospitalization, an escalation in symptoms, or at a parent or teacher request.

- Individualized counseling and consultative services will be provided for the student. Families will be involved in treatment and intervention planning and invited to every meeting. A social worker with an extensive background in substance abuse counseling will be provided by Community Wellness Counseling and Support Services to eligible students.

The school district will contract with a licensed mental health counselor with expertise in working with children and adolescents to fulfill the role of coordinator. This counselor will provide direct individualized and group mental health therapy to students across grade levels/schools. This position will also be responsible for the coordination of mental health services and the referral process for mental health services. This person will also work along with other student services professionals in the district to develop a protocol to assess, diagnose, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and treatment plans. The coordinator will also monitor students that have had in-patient mental health services returning to school. This will assist in ensuring a continuity of support and services. This person will serve on all School Based Threat Assessment Teams. The school district will have a full time school psychologist who will assist in the district with assessment, diagnosis, and intervention/treatment planning for students.

These services are provided by district-employed mental health service providers and collaborative mental health service providers. We will establish school board policies and procedures for all schools that ensure students are referred for a mental health screening and are assessed within 15 days of referral; services are initiated within 15 days of identification; and assessment and community-based services for students are initiated within 30 days of referral. The district should incorporate 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. These might include the following:

- Provide ongoing, high quality, relevant, and job embedded professional development to all school and district staff, which may include Youth Mental Health First Aid, Crisis Management for School-based incidents, or Trauma Informed Care;
- Engage in practices to make stakeholders aware of available resources and how they are used in the district;
- Regularly examine school processes to improve student outcomes.

Research shows that Prevention and Early Intervention is effective, but is challenging to continue due to lack of funding resources. . We must implement strategies to identify ways to provide services beyond certain thresholds like poverty or disability. Help is usually given when

something has already gone wrong instead helping to prevent something going wrong. Strategies to support early intervention and assisting students to deal with violence are:

- Provide professional development for staff on First Aid Mental Health and Trauma Informed Care to assist them in identifying signs of social, emotional or behavioral problems, or substance abuse disorders;
- Reduce risk factors in students by being more involved with families to become more aware of trauma in their lives beyond school. These adverse childhood experiences include physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, incarcerated family members, living with a family member who is diagnosed with a mental illness or is a substance abuser, exposure to violence in the family, and the absence of one parent through divorce, separation or other;
- Identify students who are in homeless situations who are exposed to many other factors that impact both their short- and long-term mental health;
- Engage family supports for students who are exposed to different types of people and events in the home;
- Provide students with the tools to be mentally well by effective prevention programs in classrooms through Social Emotional Learning;

The mental health coordinator will facilitate the exchange of information between mental health providers within the school and community settings. This will be done by securing a permission for exchange of information between therapists with the parent or guardian of the student.

There are no charter schools in Taylor County.

Collaborative partnerships include the following community partners...

Florida Therapy- This agency will provide three mental health professionals that can provide individual and/or group counseling for students onsite at schools and can coordinate with students and their families their mental health medication needs.

Partnership For Strong Families-This agency will provide one mental health professional that can provide individual and/or group counseling for students onsite at schools and can coordinate with students and their families their mental health medication needs.

Vera Matejic, LCSW- Ms. Matejic will provide individual and/or group counseling for students and their families onsite at schools and can coordinate with students and their families their mental health medication needs.

Community Wellness Counseling and Support Services – This agency will provide two Licensed Clinical Social Workers at the Master’s level to provide counseling services, substance abuse counseling as well as medication management through telemedicine services by a Board-Certified Psychiatrist. This service will be onsite at schools daily. Taylor County School District will assure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) via the use of a secure internet portal and securing parental permission for any exchange of information.

Capital City Youth Services – A social worker will be made available for counseling support within the schools including group and individual counseling.

A New Dawn, A New Day – A social worker will be made available for counseling support within the schools including group and individual counseling.

DISC Village - Mental Health professionals will be made available for counseling support within the Middle School and High School settings.

Expenditures

Two full time clinicians are directly funded by this allocation...

- One Licensed Mental Health Counselor (Masters Level) – \$95,000
- One School Psychologist (Florida DOE Certified School Psychologist) 60% of salary – \$50,000

BASE software is purchased through this allocation to provide direct mental health supports to targeted students at the high school level. \$7500

Summer hours for school counselors - \$7000

Travel - \$1621

All community based care services are provided free of charge to the district based on Medicaid billing and separate grants that the community based programs receive.

Expenditure Assurances

100% of the mental health allocation funds are used to expand school based mental health care, train educators in responding to mental health issues, and connect children, youth and families with appropriate behavioral health services. The mental health coordinator position that is fully funded by this allocation trains school staff in best practices within classrooms through Mental Health First Aid and consultation. This allocation does not supplant other funding sources, increase salaries, or provide staff bonuses.

Taylor County District will be billing for Medicaid reimbursement for services by our licensed mental health counselor and our school psychologist for behavioral services. The district is collaborating with community agencies that is grant funded and can serve all students within the district free of charge.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

- (1) School psychologist certified by the Department of Education in School Psychology
- (1) Mental Health Counselor licensed by the State of Florida
- (3) Guidance counselors certified by the Florida Department of Education in Guidance and Counseling
- (2) Social Workers licensed by the State of Florida

During the 2018-2019 school year, we used a spreadsheet to track the number of students who are:

- at high risk for mental health or co-occurring substance abuse disorders who received mental health screenings or assessments;
- referred to school-based mental health services providers;
- referred to community-based mental health services providers;
- received school-based interventions, services or assistance;
- received community-based interventions, services or assistance.

During the 2019-2020 school year, we will continue to use the spreadsheet.