

**Escambia County School District
Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan
2024-2025**

Describe the delivery of evidence-based mental health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery through a multi-tiered system of supports.

Escambia County Public Schools (ECPS) will utilize a team-based, multi-tiered framework for coordination of mental health services through awareness and facilitation of evidence-based mental health interventions. The delivery occurs within the framework of internal processes and external collaboration.

ECPS will use a combination of direct-hire and community contracted mental health providers to provide the delivery of targeted individual and group counseling. Tier I interventions will be provided by school staff and community partners.

Tier I Resources: Early Warning System, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), Trauma-Informed Care trainings and workshops, school-wide social-emotional programs and curricula, Satchel Pulse Social Skills Program. District Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Navigate 360 for PBIS and mental and emotional health curriculum, Bullying Prevention campaigns, Capturing Kids' Hearts, substance abuse, internet safety, and child human trafficking curriculum from the Monique-Burr Foundation offered by Gulf Coast Kid's House, Teen Dating Violence Prevention programs, Navigate 360 to increase prosocial skills for students facing removal, HOPE Squad, and a SEDNET manager who coordinates with community partners and connects identified students at community roundtable staffings to access local human services resources.

Tier II Resources: School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, mental health counselors, and Magellan Behavioral Health for Military and Department of Defense students.

Tier III Resources: School counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, mental health counselors, Children's Home Society (Community Partner Schools), Community Action Teams (CAT) - Lakeview, Lutheran Services, and Pace Center for Girls, Inc.

State how the plan will focus on evidence-based mental health services for students with one or more co-occurring mental health or substance abuse diagnoses and students at high risk of such diagnoses.

All of the above resources screen for, and are expected to develop evidence-based treatments for the dually diagnosed and those vulnerable to substance use and addictions. Furthermore, it is expected that all mental health providers, whether contracted or district employees, will diagnose and treat within the scope of their credentials and/or refer to other providers as necessary. Following the diagnosis, a treatment plan will be developed using evidence-based mental health strategies and interventions which may include but not be limited to, Eye Movement

Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions, and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy.

Describe the process for coordinating mental health services for students at charter schools that are part of the school district's plan.

The counseling needs of the students at the District's charter schools are met through access to many of the District's resources, internal and external as mentioned above. Charter school staff are trained on the ECPS mental health referral system housed in Focus, the district's student information system. Identification, referrals, and interventions at each of the tiered levels of support for students who attend charter schools follow the same process as outlined in Student Services procedures.

Include direct employment of school-based mental health services providers (i.e., school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors and other licensed mental health professionals) to reduce staff-student ratios and meet student mental health assistance needs).

ECPS employs eight (8) Licensed Mental Health Counselors, twelve (12) Mental Health counselors, one (1) Coordinator of Mental Health who is also a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, one (1) Confidential Mental Health Administrative Specialist, fifty-seven (57) certified school counselors, sixteen (16) school psychologists, and seven (7) school social workers. For the 24-25 school year, the Student Services Department will hire ten (10) additional mental health counselors.

Identify strategies to increase the amount of time student services personnel spend providing direct mental health services (e.g. review and revision of staffing allocations based on school or student).

- Addition of ten (10) direct-hire Licensed and non-licensed Mental Health Counselors
- Timely reporting of students in distress for face-to-face intervention to school-based staff when alerted by the District's Beacon Self-Harm Safety Monitoring software
- Utilization and continued improvement of the automated Mental Health referral system which saves time by reducing paperwork and increases time spent counseling students
- Utilization of the district's automated Early Warning System to identify needs and interventions at their earliest point
- Continued partnership with Children's Home Society to provide sixteen (16) social workers utilizing approved funding from Escambia County Children's Trust
- Continued directives to school administrators to look for ways to reduce non-student time for their school counselors

State how the plan will establish school board policies and procedures for all schools, including charter schools.

As a part of the enrollment and registration intake, parents/guardians are asked to indicate any mental health concerns or needs. A referral process is in place for those parents/guardians who

indicate a request or need for interventions. The Information Technology department will assist student services staff with access to data and reports in Focus, the student information system, for compliance. The Coordinator of Mental Health Services will ensure community partners and district and school staff understand the processes and procedures associated with initiating and receiving mental health and wellness services within our district.

1. Students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within fifteen (15) days of referral.

The Information Technology Department has developed a Focus report that monitors compliance to ensure students referred for a mental health screening are assessed within fifteen (15) days of referral. School counselors and administrators have access to this report.

2. School-based mental health services are initiated within fifteen (15) days of identification and assessment.

The Information Technology Department has developed a Focus report that monitors compliance to ensure school-based mental health services are initiated within fifteen (15) days of identification and assessment. School counselors and administrators have access to this report.

3. Community-based mental health services are initiated within thirty (30) days of referral.

The Information Technology Department has developed a Focus report that monitors compliance to ensure community-based mental health services are initiated within thirty (30) days of referral. School counselors and administrators have access to this report.

Describe the process for coordinating mental health services with a student's primary mental health care provider and other mental health providers involved in the student's care.

Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a Release of Information between their child's primary (and other) mental health providers and the District upon intake. Mental health providers (Direct-hired or Contracted) may then share information to coordinate treatment interventions for the student. Additionally, collaboration meetings with a community behavioral agency are held weekly to identify and staff those students in need of wrap-around services. Memoranda of Understanding and contract agreements are in place that allow for the coordination of treatment and the sharing of information that impact student and community safety. The information exchanged to support students' individual treatment plans follow HIPAA and FERPA requirements.

Identify 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.

ECPS advertises and promotes the availability of school-based counseling through its district website. School-based mental health counseling can be accessed through referrals initiated by the

concern of parents, teachers, friends, clinic staff, community doctors, residential or day treatment providers or the student themselves. Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan can be identified for counseling assessment as a possible related service at the discretion of the IEP or 504 committee. ECPS provides professional development in youth mental health awareness for school-based faculty and staff (i.e., trauma-informed care, restorative practices, compassion fatigue, mindfulness). HOPE Squad is a school-wide, peer-to-peer program with teacher sponsorship that addresses suicidality as well as overall school awareness of the importance of mental health. Hope Squad is currently fully implemented in one middle school. The Crisis Text Line is a resource that can be made available upon request from a school counselor. Each of our school counselors, mental health counselors, school psychologists and social workers are trained to identify and assess for suicidal ideation and self-harm in students. A partnership with Gulf Coast Kid's House provides Child Human Trafficking, Internet Safety, and Substance Abuse awareness for grades Kindergarten through five (5). ECPS utilizes online modules through Navigate360 to meet Florida's required instruction for grades 6-12 in Resiliency Education, Civic and Character Education, and Life Skills Education.

Identify strategies to improve the early identification of social emotional or behavioral problems or substance abuse disorders:

Each school utilizes the Early Warning System (EWS) built into Focus with automatic alerts that are a good indication of a student's overall well-being and functioning. The use of these at-risk indicators (assessment, course failure, absenteeism, in or out of school suspensions) by the MTSS team can result in a referral to school-based mental health professionals. In addition to teaching staff to identify signs through Youth Mental Health First Aid, school-based staff will use observations and parent/teacher conferences for early identification. The Fortify Florida app allows all students and teachers to report concerns. The Crisis Text Line is available to students to utilize to self-report and seek help at the student's convenience. Socio-emotional education curricula provide opportunities for students to learn about the warning signs of mental health concerns.

Identify strategies to improve the provision of early intervention services:

The Fortify Florida app allows all students and teachers to report concerns, counseling groups are offered to at-risk students, parent training is available to assist students, and home visits are conducted by social workers. Mental health counselors are available at each school and the intake on the parent registration form allows parents/guardians to disclose any mental health concerns. In addition to teaching staff to identify signs through Youth Mental Health First Aid, school-based staff will use observations and parent/teacher conferences for early identification. The Special Student Services (SSS) Focus enhancement product provides a comprehensive system that creates, maintains, and tracks student data to support students through early identification.

Identify strategies to assist students dealing with trauma and violence:

ECPS staff assists students dealing with trauma and violence by helping children recognize and regulate by noticing signs of student distress and how to intervene and/or refer the student to the school counselor. School-based staff teach and model effective coping strategies such as somatic quieting and verbalizing feelings. Students are taught and are encouraged to utilize grounding techniques to aid in self-regulation and task completion. Staff also teach constructive ways to resolve peer conflict through helping the student think of alternative perspectives and solutions. Additionally, school counselors assist in creating safety plans as needed for students experiencing substance use or a mental health challenge, as well as discover positive ways to think about themselves, others and the world around them through various modalities. Finally, staff focus on building and deepening sincere relationships with each student to form a vital connection for trust, learning and personal growth.

ECPS utilizes 7-Dippity, a mental health consulting firm to conduct a school-wide initiative to better understand, build capacity and practice trauma-sensitive classroom interventions.

Expenditures

Number and licensure/certification of school-based mental health providers funded by allocation. Number and licensure of community-based mental health providers funded by the allocation.

| | <u>Number of Counselors</u> | <u>Number Licensed</u> |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Direct-Hire Mental Health Counselor | 18 | 6 |

ECPS uses the allocation to fund six (6) Licensed Mental Health Counselors, two (2) Mental Health Counselors, one (1) Coordinator of Mental Health Services (LMHC), and one (1) School Psychologist. ECPS is adding an additional ten (10) Mental Health Counselor positions for the 24-25 school year that will be funded using the allocation.

School district expenditures for services provided by contract-based collaborative efforts or partnerships with community-based mental health program agencies or providers and other expenditures.

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| Mental Health Coordinator | Clinical supervision for district-hires, responds to district-wide crises, coordinates services for students and families, and offers district wide mental health training | \$93,743 |
| Eighteen (18) Licensed and/or non-licensed Mental Health Counselors | Provide mental health services for K-12 students in elementary, middle, high, charter, and alternative school settings | \$1,396,125 |

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| One (1) School Psychologist | Provide support in EWS, RtI and conduct psychoeducational assessments for identified students | \$115,593 |
| Registered Nurse | Train school staff, students, parents and community partners in detecting and responding to physical and mental health issues with appropriate support and providing support for health services clinics | \$83,933 |
| Confidential Administrative Specialist | Provides support for the Mental Health services staff and contracted agencies. Prepares and manages contracts, monitors compliance, and assists with student safety and training | \$58,244 |
| PACE Center for Girls, Inc. | Mental Health Allocation Assistance as PACE Center for Girls, Inc. did not opt into ECPS MHAA Plan | \$5,000 |
| Beacon (Core) | Software program to identify students at risk for suicide, mental health/substance abuse challenge/crisis | \$99,720 |
| Two (2) Substance Abuse Counselors (Contractors) | Provide substance abuse counseling to students in grades 6-12 | \$100,000 |
| Navigator | Provide supportive and helpful services for students, families, and educators of the assigned schools | \$56,361 |
| Navigate360 | Software used for Required Instruction: Child Human Trafficking, Substance Use, and Resiliency & Character Education | \$11,200 |
| Satchel Pulse | Screening and assessment tool used to gather data from students to drive improvement through intervention and targeted support and four (4) school sites | \$19,310 |
| 7-Dippity | Community resource asset mapping for Ferry Pass Elementary and McArthur Elementary School | \$5,200 |
| Interpreter Services | To assist with translating documents, student services staffings, and connecting with parents. | \$8,000 |
| Supplies for Mental Health Services | Supplies, equipment, ancillary items for thirty-four (34) mental health services staff | \$60,000 |
| Local travel | Local mileage for Mental Health services staff | \$6,500 |

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| Travel to Conferences | Travel for Student Services staff to attend mental health and school counseling conferences | \$8,500 |
| Workshop Pay | Extra pay for school-based personnel to attend professional development sessions and provide school-based counseling outside of contract | \$26,208 |
| Training and Continuing Education Fees | Professional Development and continuing education credits for Mental Health Services staff to maintain licensure | \$23,363 |
| Tier 1 Resources | Mental Health and Resiliency Awareness Materials for all ECPS schools | \$23,000 |
| Total Allocation | | \$2,200,000 |

Expenditure Assurances

State how one hundred (100) percent of funds are used to expand school-based mental health care; trained educators in responding to mental health issues; and connect children; youth and families with appropriate behavioral health services.

One hundred (100) percent of MHAA funds are being 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.

Provide a statement that ensures the Mental Health Assistance Allocation does not supplant other funding sources, increase salaries or provide staff bonuses.

All direct-hire employees and contracted services are in addition to previous mental health services provided by the District. MHAA funds do not supplant other funding sources, increase salaries, or provide staff bonuses.

Describe how the district will maximize the use of other sources of funding to provide school-based mental services (e.g. Medicaid, third-party payments and grants).

The contractual agreements and MOUs have provisions for ensuring that other funding sources will be utilized prior to billing ECPS. ECPS school psychologists and mental health counselors will seek Medicaid reimbursement for billable services provided. The Title IV, Part A Grant will be funding social emotional curriculum (Navigate360).

Program Implementation and Programs

Identify the number and ratio of Florida Department of Education-certified or licensed school-based mental health services providers employed by the district (i.e. school

psychologist, school social workers, school counselors and other mental health services providers by licensure type).

ECPS employs qualified student services personnel to best meet the needs of the total student population (35,723):

Eighteen (18) high school counselors serve a population of 9,768 high school students in seven (7) high schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the high school level to students is 1:543.

Fifteen (15) middle school counselors serve a population of 6,588 middle school students in eight (8) middle schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the middle school level to students is 1:439.

Twenty-four (24) elementary school counselors serve a population of 16,423 elementary school students in thirty-two (32) elementary schools. The ratio of certified school counselors at the elementary school level to students is 1:684.

Sixteen (16) school psychologists provide services to all students, including charter school students. The ratio of certified school psychologists to students is 1:2,232.

Seven (7) certified school social workers provide services to all students, including charter school students. The ratio of certified school social workers to students is 1:5,103.

Twenty-two (22) licensed mental health counselors and/or mental health counselors. The ratio of mental health counselors to students is 1:1,623.

Describe a system for tracking the number of students at high risk for mental health or co-occurring substance abuse disorders who received mental health screenings or assessments; the number of students referred to school-based mental health services providers; the number of students referred to community-based mental health services providers; the number of students who received community-based interventions, services or assistance.

Escambia County Public Schools will utilize Focus for tracking the number of students at high risk for mental health or co-occurring substance abuse disorders who received mental health screenings or assessments. Focus will also track the number of students referred to school-based mental health services providers; the number of students referred to community-based mental health providers; the number of students who received school-based interventions, services or assistance; and the number of students who received community-based interventions, services or assistance.