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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
School District Finance Officers

FROM: Jacob Oliva, Chancellor
Division of Public Schools

Suzanne Pridgeon, Deputy Commissioner
Division of Finance and Operations

DATE: June 5, 2020

SUBJECT: 2020-2021 Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan Submission

Section 1011.62(16), Florida Statutes, states that the mental health assistance allocation was created to provide funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care; train educators and other school staff in detecting and responding to mental health issues; and connect children, youth and families who may experience behavioral health issues with appropriate services.

Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan

Each school district's Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan (MHAA Plan) must include all district schools, including charter schools, unless a charter school submits an MHAA Plan independent of the school district. Each MHAA Plan must include the following:

- A focus on a multi-tiered system of supports to deliver evidence-based mental health care assessment, diagnosis, intervention, treatment and recovery services to students with one or more co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses and to students at high risk of such diagnoses. The provision of these services must be coordinated with a student's primary mental health care provider and with other mental health providers involved in the student's care.
- Direct employment of school-based mental health services providers to expand and enhance school-based student services and to reduce the ratio of students to staff in order to better align with nationally recommended ratio models. These providers include, but are not limited to, certified school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and other licensed mental health professionals.

Contact Information:

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DPS: 2020-60

- Strategies to increase the amount of time that school-based student services personnel spend providing direct services to students, which may include the review and revision of district staffing resource allocations based on school or student mental health assistance needs.
- Contracts or interagency agreements with one or more local community behavioral health providers or providers of Community Action Team services to provide a behavioral health staff presence and services at district schools. Services may include, but are not limited to, mental health screenings and assessments, individual counseling, family counseling, group counseling, psychiatric or psychological services, trauma-informed care, mobile crisis services, and behavior modification. These behavioral health services may be provided on or off the school campus and may be supplemented by telehealth.
- Policies and procedures, including contracts with service providers, 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 and ensure that the assessment of students at risk for mental health disorders occurs within 15 days of referral. School-based mental health services must 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 or district makes a referral.
- Strategies or programs to reduce the likelihood of at-risk students developing social, emotional or behavioral health problems, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal tendencies or substance abuse disorders.
- Strategies to improve the early identification of social, emotional or behavioral problems or substance abuse disorders to improve the provision of early intervention to assist students in dealing with trauma and violence.

Charter schools have the option of participating in their district's plan or submitting an MHAA Plan separate from the school district. If the charter schools submit a plan separate from the district, the charter school is entitled to a proportionate share of district mental health assistance allocation funding. Each school district must work with its charter schools to ensure the school district submits all approved MHAA Plans to the Commissioner of Education by August 1.

The required MHAA Plan checklist, MHAA Plan certification form, and MHAA Plan outcome and expenditures report checklist are available at <http://fldoe.org/safe-schools/mental-health.stm>. Additional resources to assist school districts in creating the MHAA Plan can also be found at that link.

The MHAA Plan checklist, MHAA District Plan and MHAA Plan certification form should be submitted to Andrew Weatherill by August 1, 2020.

Expenditure Outcomes and Report

Each school district's annual program outcomes and expenditures report for the 2019-2020 MHAA Plan will be due September 30, 2020, to include, at a minimum, the number of each of the following:

- Students who receive screenings or assessments.
- Students who are referred to either school-based or community-based providers for services or assistance.
- Students who receive either school-based or community-based interventions, services or assistance.
- School-based and community-based mental health providers, including licensure type, paid for from funds provided through the allocation.
- Contract-based collaborative efforts or partnerships with community mental health programs, agencies or providers.

The school district annual program outcomes and expenditures should include all charter schools who participated in the district plan and charter schools that submitted their own plan. The annual report should be submitted to Andrew Weatherill by September 30, 2020.

For further information on best practices and to view your district's mental health assistance allocation funding, visit the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools web page at <http://fldoe.org/safe-schools/mental-health.stml>.

If you have questions about the allocation or expenditures, please contact Mark Eggers at Mark.Eggers@fldoe.org or 850-245-0405. If you have questions about the mental health contents of the MHAA Plan, please contact Andrew Weatherill at Andrew.Weatherill@fldoe.org or 850-245-7840.

JO/SP/aw

cc: School District Student Services Directors
School District School Safety Specialists
School District Charter School Contacts