

**DUE TO MSDE: 8-23-2021**

**Local School System: Frederick County Public Schools**

**Chapter 55 of the Acts of 2021 (HB1372) requires local school systems to provide two reports on the System's actions to address trauma/behavioral health issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic through the implementation of specific Trauma/Behavioral Health Supports for students.**

**SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:**

- (a) (1) Each county board of education, including Baltimore City, shall use State and federal funds provided in for COVID–19 relief in the State budget for fiscal years 2021 and 2022 to address trauma and behavioral health issues exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic on students and their families and to identify and provide necessary supports and services for students.
- (2) On or before **September 1, 2021**, each county board of education, including Baltimore City, shall submit to the Accountability and Implementation Board, the Governor, and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the Legislative Policy Committee of the General Assembly a plan for spending the fiscal year 2022 funds under paragraph (1) of this subsection, including how the county board will:
- (i) provide behavioral health services to students;
  - (ii) ensure that services provided to students address the trauma and behavioral health issues due to the effects of exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic; and
  - (iii) monitor students experiencing more trauma and behavioral health issues than other students; and
  - (iv) develop key metrics and procedures, consistent with State and federal guidance, to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of behavioral health services provided to students under this section.
- (3) Funding may not be provided to a county board under paragraph (1) of this subsection for fiscal year 2022 until the county board submits a plan in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection.
- (b) To the extent practicable, county boards are encouraged to utilize school–based health centers to coordinate and deliver services to students.
- (c) Funds may be used under this section to train teachers and school staff to recognize signs of student trauma or behavioral health concerns.

The September 2021 Report template is included in the 9-1-2021 tab. The January Report template is included in the 1-1-2022 Tab

September 1, 2021 Report Certification

**Dr. Theresa Alban**

**Superintendent's Name**

Theresa R.  
Alban

Digitally signed by Theresa R.  
Alban  
Date: 2021.08.23 11:27:53  
-0400

**8/23/21**

**Superintendent's Signature**

**Date**

**NOTE: For the September 1 Report only, MSDE will transmit the reports to the AIB, the Governor, and the Legislative Policy Committee of the General Assembly. As such, reports are due to MSDE by August 23, 2021.**

LEA: Frederick County Public Schools

Trauma - Behavioral Health Report

The LEA's FY 2022 Trauma/Behavior Health Grant cannot be released until this report is submitted.

Please describe the LEA's plans to address trauma and behavioral health issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic on students and their families and to identify and provide necessary supports and services for students in each of the following sections.

**(i) How will the LEA provide behavioral health services to students?**

FCPS deploys comprehensive behavioral health service provision, serving its students through a three-tiered approach utilizing behavioral health staff (school counselors, schools psychologists, teacher and behavior support specialists for behavior support services, Community Agency Support Services (CASS) coordinators, therapists in specialized programs, and trauma therapy specialists). These positions will support students' successful transition back to in-person learning and a new school year utilizing universal social/emotional learning curricula (available pre-k through high school), small group interventions, parent involvement, and individual support and/or treatment when needed. Through this grant FCPS initially hired three school counselors and four Community Agency School Services (CASS) social workers to join multidisciplinary teams in the district that meet regularly to identify and support students struggling with the impacts of trauma and unaddressed behavioral health concerns. These staff began employment August, 2021 in preparation for the August 18, 2021 start date for students to return to in-person instruction in their schools. School counselors deliver instruction that proactively enhances awareness of mental health; promotes positive, healthy behaviors; and seeks to remove the stigma associated with mental health issues. Counselors connect with students, individually or in small groups, and with families to address issues impacting student success. When complex cases or significant barriers to accessing behavioral health treatment arise, CASS social workers engage with school staff, students, and especially parents/caregivers to facilitate service connections using a two-generation approach to address the factors that may have prohibited access to care. CASS coordinators also facilitate connections with the community behavioral services agencies providing in-school treatment to approximately 1500 students annually. With further grant funding, FCPS then added five additional school counselors, two school psychologists deployed to one elementary school each, and two trauma therapy specialists.

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**(ii) How will the LEA ensure that services provided to students address the trauma and behavioral health issues due to the effects of exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Early intervention is critical for students disproportionately impacted by COVID, including low-income students, students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and migratory students. When students begin to get support early in their lives, they have a significantly higher chance of being successful in school and throughout life. Having the expertise of school counselors, CASS coordinators, school psychologists, and trauma therapists increases the opportunity for students and families to get consistent support and information to address any learning and social/emotional/behavioral needs. In addition to the services of school counselors and CASS coordinators mentioned above, the two school psychologists hired through this grant were placed in one elementary school each. These schools were chosen for their high number of students receiving free and reduced meals, high mobility rates, high numbers of students of color, and high numbers of suspensions. School psychologists assigned to a single school provide prevention strategies, and Tiers 2 and 3 services for students who need additional and intensive support for social emotional needs due to trauma from the pandemic, adverse childhood experiences, being in an historically marginalized group, and poverty. The trauma therapy specialists will be deployed through a multidisciplinary approach during case consultations with the Student Services team of teacher specialists for behavior support. The trauma therapists will provide clinical assessment, clinical case management and referrals, staff consultation, parent involvement, and direct therapy with students as clinically appropriate. In addition to direct services to students, these positions provide consultation and professional learning (PL) to parents and staff to help them support students' mental health, behavior and learning. This extends the positive impact to many more students and families. FCPS provides instruction to all staff on the impacts that exposure to adversity (ACEs) may have on student wellbeing. This occurs annually through mandated training. Content experts within the Student Services Department supervise and support the behavioral health staff serving students evidencing behavioral health issues, including those resulting from exposure to traumatic stress.

**(iii) How will the LEA monitor students experiencing more trauma and behavioral health issues than other students?**

Monitoring of students with significant trauma or behavioral health concerns as related to this grant will occur via: Counselor records of suicide, homicide, or self-harm assessments; student behavior report data; the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment **Mini (DESSA-mini)** which can be used as a universal screener for social emotional learning competencies for all students, to monitor progress for those students getting Tiers 2 and 3 SEL interventions from school psychologists, and post-tests to determine the acquisition of social emotional competencies for all students; student results on selected behavioral health assessments available through the Greenspace platform; and CASS coordinator service logs.

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**(iv) Identify the key metrics the LEA will use to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the behavioral health services provided to students. Please also identify the process used by the LEA to develop key metrics and procedures, consistent with State and federal guidance, to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of behavioral health services provided to students under this section.**

Adding Trauma Specialists, School Psychologists, CASS Coordinators and School Counselors will reduce the caseload across the system, allowing staff to focus their efforts on outreach to vulnerable students. Metrics will include:

- \*Increase in service linkages. With the increase in CASS coordinators serving FCPS students via funding from this grant, it can be reasonably assumed service linkages for students will also increase. CASS coordinators will keep service logs on excel spreadsheets for individual students as well as family groups they serve. Data will be de-identified and reported in the aggregate, tabulated by type of service.

- \*Decrease in the number of students who are emergency petitioned to inpatient hospitalization for acute behavioral health issues. This was an area of data identified as missing in FCPS records. Therefore, in 2021/22 the Student Services department will deploy a mechanism for gathering baseline data across the district utilizing already deployed suicide/homicide/self injury interview forms and initiate a process for behavioral health staff reports of emergency petitions of students.

- \*100% of students seeing a school counselor for suicide/homicide/self-injury concerns will receive information about crisis support resources.

- \*Improvement in behavioral health symptoms of students receiving services from trauma therapists. The decision to invest in an electronic platform making it possible to demonstrate clinically significant improvement in symptoms was reached in the summer of 2021. Training on the chosen platform will occur during the first semester of 2021/22. Data will be de-identified and reported in the aggregate. Tabulations will include progress as documented by valid and reliable behavioral health assessments and identification of vulnerable/potentially underserved categories, including special education, FARM, and McKinney-Vento status as well as race.

- \*Increase in the development of social/emotional skills in identified students served by psychologists assigned to one elementary school only (vs multiple schools served by a single psychologist). The decision to invest in school-wide assessments of social/emotional learning was reached in the summer of 2021. The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment **Mini (DESSA-mini)** was identified through Aperture and will be utilized by the above-mentioned school psychologists.

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**(v) How does the LEA's FY 2022 spending plan align with the components identified above.**

FCPS will obtain the electronic behavioral health assessment platform through Greenspace and the DESSA through Aperture using other grant funds. The positions identified in this grant proposal have been procured and are deployed. To recap, these are a total of 8 school counselors, 4 CASS coordinators, 2 school psychologists, and 2 trauma therapists.