

DUE TO MSDE: 8-23-2021

Local School System: **St. Mary's 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. J. Scott Smith

Superintendent's Name

Superintendent's Signature

8/11/21

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: St. Mary's 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?

To support students as we are recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Mary's County Public Schools will expand our capacity to provide sufficient mental health, social-emotional and supportive counseling services to address the needs of students and families. This includes prevention, intervention/treatment, and case management services and supports. Data from the Mental Health America Report - 2021 The State of Mental Health in America report shows that levels of suicidal ideation are at the highest level ever recorded. State and local areas are reporting increased rates in domestic violence, substance use, abuse/neglect and mental health concerns in both students and their families. It is anticipated that our students will require support and services of varying degrees with some students requiring more intensive strategies to address higher levels of mental health needs or heightened responses to trauma. School social workers provide such services to enhance the emotional well-being of students and improve their academic performance. St. Mary's County Public Schools will continue to implement a tiered system of support to address the mental health and social emotional needs of students. To support students as we are recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ARP funding will be used by St. Mary's County Public Schools to expand our capacity to provide sufficient mental health, social-emotional and supportive counseling services to the elementary level. Early intervention to identify problems and connect students to needed services and supports is critical. These additional positions will be managed under the direction of the Mental Health Coordinator, as supported by the Blueprint bill initiatives.

(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?

St. Mary's County Schools will work internally with the school counselors, school psychologists, pupil personnel workers, teachers, resource officers (St. Mary's County Sheriff Office) and administration on identifying students appropriate for referral. Behavioral Health professionals will utilize various assessment tools such as anxiety and depression scales, ACE's surveys, SBIRT, evidenced-based Life Skills, etc. They will also work with various community partners such as Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), Department of Social Services (DSS) and the LBHA. Potential referrals from DJS could identify students that are impacted by family or their own involvement in the legal system, admission to emergency departments for mental or behavioral health crises, or individuals who are in need of further intervention. Potential referrals from DSS would include students who are at risk for out of home placement or who are already in the foster care system. St. Mary's County Schools will also collaborate with local emergency departments to help disseminate program information to children, adolescents and their families who have been admitted due to behavioral, suicidal, psychiatric or substance use issues. In addition, SMCPs collaborates with DSS to work with students who have an experience with either the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office and/or Child Protective Services.

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

As students are identified as needing additional support, they will be referred to a case management and intervention program. A needs assessment will be conducted, a treatment plan will be developed, and individualized intervention based on parent consent will be provided. Pre and post intervention assessments will be conducted to ensure students are receiving the appropriate level of services to match their needs and to monitor outcomes. This data will be collected and housed centrally.

(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.

The proposed program directly correlates to several behavioral health objectives outlined to support our regional strategies. Behavioral health objectives supported are as follows:

- 1) Reduce the rate of emergency department visits related to behavioral health conditions by increasing the number of licensed behavioral health providers in the local school system to support our students;
- 2) Decrease the suicide rate by increasing coordination across organizations to promote easier access to mental health professionals for individuals at risk;

- 3) Reduce the percentage of students that seriously considering attempting suicide by supporting the implementation of targeted outreach and support to high risk children and youth;
- 4) Decrease anxiety, depression, and substance use symptoms in children and youth by increasing the number of students participating in evidence-based school mental and behavioral health services
- 5) Increase coping skills, self-esteem, and connection to school in children and youth by increasing the number of students participating in evidenced-based school mental and behavioral health services;
- 6) Increase mental health and wellness of students by supporting the home-school-community connection through family engagement and referral to appropriate community-based supports.

The behavioral health professionals will utilize pre and post assessments to evaluate individual student progress and overall program effectiveness. Data will also be collected to assess the impact of services on overall program attendance rates, discipline referrals, and emergency department visits/hospitalizations.

Progress/benchmark data will be collected quarterly to ensure intervention is on target to meet goals.

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

In addition to the Mental Health Coordinator, funding via the Blueprint grant, St. Mary's County Public Schools partnered with the county's Health Department for nine Behavioral Health Professionals (Social Workers) in 2020. This funding, in the amount of \$826,551, continues into FY22, to provide critical support to students identified as being at risk. Additionally, the FY22 American Rescue Plan funds will provide up to an additional three contracted social workers for the school year, as well as during the 2022 summer school.