Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan

(Senate Bill 7026)

Department of Mental Health Services

Senate Bill 7026 provides a Mental Health Assistance Allocation and was created to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care.

In order to fully implement Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan, the District will establish the Department of Mental Health Services. This department will be responsible for coordinating District and community resources in an effort to deliver evidence-based mental health care and treatment for M-DCPS students. Services will include provisions for mental health assessments, diagnosis, intervention, and recovery services. In order to accomplish this, the office will be responsible for the following:

- Coordinating services with primary care providers
- Establishing contract-based mental health services
- Developing a District Mental Health Response Team which will be responsible for screening, assessment, diagnosis, intervention, and recovery services
- Coordinating with the office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis in order to accurately capture data on all mental health services provided to M-DCPS students (screenings/assessments; number of students that are referred for services and how many receive services/assistance (school-based and community)
- Coordinating with the Office of Human Capital Management in order to ensure all Mental Health Service providers employed by the district are appropriately credentialed
- Ensuring all outside service providers hold the appropriate credentials
- Providing school-site training on the following:

    - District's Multi-Tiered System of Support MTSS (MTSS)
    - District's Progression of Mental Health Support
    - Mental Health Referral Procedures
    - Facilitating Mental Health Team Planning Meetings
    - Developing Mental Health Plans
    - Monitoring Intervention and Recovery Services
    - School Safety/Support Teams
    - Youth Mental Health Aid

Research-Based Multi-tiered System of Support

Miami-Dade County Public Schools provides students with a comprehensive and data rich Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to address the mental health concerns of all students within the District. M-DCPS' MTSS ensures successful educational outcomes for all students by using a data-based problem solving process to evaluate the effectiveness of all interventions being provided within each tier. Interventions focus on academic performance, social/emotional instruction and support, behavioral issues, as well as mental health. The District's MTSS is a three tiered approach that moves through a progression of support to meet the unique academic, behavioral and mental health concerns of all students.

Tier 1 Services and Support Model

Tier 1 provides school-wide programming that addresses the universal social/emotional needs of all learners. Each year all schools, through the School Improvement Plan (SIP) process are required to establish goals, strategies, and action steps to improve school culture. Using the framework of Effective School Culture, each school is required to identify opportunities for improvement within the areas of relationships, engaging learning environment, support, care, and connections, physical and emotional safety, and clearly defined expectations. In order to appropriately identify the goals, strategies, and action steps within the SIP, each school's leadership team attends a 3-day Summer Institute. During this development, leadership teams disaggregate data within the areas of academic performance, teacher/student climate survey results, teacher/student attendance, percent of students with disciplinary referrals, and the percent of students who have met 2+ Early Warning System (EWS) Indicators (absent 10% of school year, 1+ suspensions, failed ELA course, failed math course, ELA level 1, and math level 1).

M-DCPS offers a variety of Districtwide prevention programs and fosters partnerships that focus on mental wellness. Through the District's Values Matter Miami initiative, schools are provided a comprehensive, values based program aligned to the District's core values: Citizenship, Cooperation, Fairness, Honesty, Integrity, Kindness, Pursuit of Excellence, Respect, and Responsibility. Schools are provided with interactive, grade appropriate lessons to support the development of behaviors aligned to our District's values. Additionally, M-DCPS was the first district in the nation to enter into a formal partnership with *Sandy Hook Promise* in order to implement their *Know the Signs* programs. These programs train youth and adults to identify, intervene, and provide help for individuals before they cause harm to themselves or others. All M-DCPS high schools and middle schools have participated in Sandy Hook Promise's *Say Something* assembly program. This program directly addresses the need for students to speak up and get assistance for classmates who may be showing signs of depression, suicide, or other mental health issues. All secondary schools and K-8 Centers have also participated in Sandy Hook Promise's *Start with Hello* assembly program, which teaches students the importance of eliminating social exclusion and creating a more connected school environment.

Tier 2 Services and Support Model

Tier 2 provides targeted interventions for identified students that address specific academic performance, social/emotional development, behavioral issues, as well as mental health concerns. Principals are provided with live data dashboards that allow them to identify students who are in need of tier 2 services. Data includes: attendance, Early Warning Signs (EWS), academic performance, and percent of students with disciplinary referrals. The services provided during Tier 2 include: academic advisement, individual/group counseling, Restorative Justice Practices, peer mentorship, partnerships with community based agencies, as well as ongoing progress monitoring. Mental health professionals within schools are provided ongoing training from the Division of Student Services and Division of Exceptional Student Education in order to provide students with comprehensive Tier 2 support that addresses mental wellness. These trainings include building skills in the areas of mental health assessment, intervention, and support for students; especially those who have been exposed to trauma or those who have acute mental health needs.

Tier 3 Services and Support Model

Tier 3 provides intensive support that is individually designed to address the specific needs of student's academic performance, social/emotional development, behavioral issues, as well as mental health concerns. In order to address the needs of students requiring Tier 3 support, the school will convene a Student Support Team (SST) meeting. Participants of these SST meetings include: principal, school counselor, teacher(s), ESE Staff, licensed social worker and/or licensed psychologist, as well as the parent/guardian, and student. The intent of this meeting is to assess the most appropriate intervention(s) for the impacted student. Services include: referral to an alternative location, referral for a mental health evaluation, development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), and/or initiate a Functional Assessment of Behavior (FAB). If it is determined that a mental health evaluation is required, a follow up Mental Health Team meeting will be scheduled. During this meeting, the diagnosis will be reviewed and a mental health support plan will be developed, implemented, and monitored.

Coordination of Mental Health Services

The Department of Mental Health Services will coordinate mental health services and establish partnerships with mental health providers. In collaboration with The Children's Trust of Miami, current partnerships include:

- Community Health of South Florida
- Nicklaus Children's Hospital
- Citrus Health Network
- Borinquen Medical Center
- Jessie Trice Community Health Center
- University of Miami

The Children's Trust, in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Miami-Dade County Health Department, developed this initiative to bring comprehensive health services to schools in Miami-Dade to improve access to high-quality health care. Social workers and other mental health professionals provide services such as screening, assessment for developmental, social, emotional and behavioral well-being or early identification and primary prevention of challenges. Also services are provided for a timely responsive assessment or intervention services needs for at-risk students. They also provide follow-up referral or assessment services based upon screening results.

Schools are staffed with a team of professionals including a nurse or nurse practitioner and a licensed clinical social worker. Schools with high enrollment have the option to augment staffing coverage with additional support from a licensed practical nurse.

In addition, M-DCPS works in partnership with the following providers/agencies as a referral option for students in need of mental health assistance:

- Citrus Health Network
- Jackson Behavioral Health Hospital
- Center for Family & Child Enrichment
- Institute for Child and Family Health
- JCS Behavioral Health Services
- PsychSolutions Inc.
- Banyan Health Systems
- New Horizons Community Mental Health Center

Providers are required to provide descriptions of the evidence-based practices. Any new providers that are selected to work with M-DCPS through the Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan will be required to describe, in detail, their evidence-based practices.

These noted providers, in addition to an expansion of providers and agencies such as Florida International University's Center for Children and Families will serve as vehicles to further support the mental health needs of students. These contracts allow for the coordination of mental health treatment services and the expansion will further meet the needs of students.

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Designated M-DCPS staff will participate in the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training pursuant to SB 7026. The Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) evidenced based training is designed to facilitate mental health literacy and give adults the necessary skills to interact with youth who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. YMHFA is operated by the National Council for Behavioral

Health and is a national authority on training and certification in youth mental health awareness and assistance.

SEDNET (The Network for Severely Emotionally Disabled Students)

Designated M-DCPS staff will participate in the Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET) training that will be facilitated by the Florida Department of Education. SEDNET focuses on supporting and representing the needs of students and improving the coordination of services for children with or at risk of emotional or behavioral disabilities and their families. The Division of Exceptional Student Education will assist with the “train the trainer” model for Youth First Aid Mental Health implementation as required by SB 7026.

Mental Health Screening and Assessment Procedures

Students who have not experienced successful outcomes as a result of the interventions of the MTSS, will require a convening of the Student Support Team. The intent of this meeting is to review all interventions that have been provided to the student and review academic as well as behavioral progress, IEP (if applicable), and determine if the appropriate course of action is to refer the student for a Mental Health Screening/Assessment. Participants of this meeting will include administration, school counselor, ESE staff, teacher(s), parent/guardian, student, and licensed psychologist/licensed social worker.

Mental Health Team Meeting/Mental Health Plan

Following a referral for a Mental Health Screening Assessment, a Mental Health Planning meeting will take place in order to review outcomes/diagnosis and develop the Mental Health Plan. The purpose of this meeting is to coordinate mental health support services as well as progress monitoring procedures. Participants of this meeting will include administration, school counselor, ESE Staff, teacher(s), parent guardian, student, licensed psychologist/licensed social worker who conducted the Mental Health Screening/Assessment, primary care provider, a member of the Mental Health Response Team and/or the outside mental health provider. This collaboration will allow all parties to be informed to assist with the appropriate treatment and follow-up for students.

Threat Assessment Teams

Threat Assessment Teams have been established at each M-DCPS school site whose duties include the coordination of resources, assessment and intervention with

individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students. The M-DCPS Threat Assessment Team may include the current School Safety Team and serves as part of critical incident management and threat assessment teams. The School Safety Teams are in accordance with Florida Statute, and are minimally comprised of personnel who have experience in counseling, instruction, school administration and law enforcement. These teams have been trained by Sandy Hook Promise on the process and have been provided resources to conduct threat assessments. This model is based on the Virginia model which is considered a best practice in this area of school safety.

Additionally, the threat assessment protocols will evolve in the future based on the model threat assessment policies that will be developed by the State of Florida Department of Education's (FLDOE) Office of Safe Schools. The protocols will include referrals to mental health services identified by MDCPS; the following represents those currently identified MDCPS mental health services:

- Baker Act
- ESE
- Counseling
- Health Connect
- Outside Agency (non-Health Connect)
- Police

Threat Assessment Process

When a preliminary determination is made that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to him/herself or others is known, the Threat Assessment Team shall be notified to determine the best course of action to take. Upon the team's preliminary determination that student poses a threat to him/herself or others or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for assistance, the team may obtain criminal history record information and information that is considered exempt from disclosure under chapter 119 FS to ensure the safety of others. Entities that may provide such information include, but are not limited to, school districts, school personnel, state and local law enforcement, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, Agency for Health Care Administration, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Education, statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office, and any such service or support provider contracting with the aforementioned agencies. When an immediate mental health or substance abuse crisis is suspected, school personnel shall follow current policies and practices established by M-DCPS to engage behavioral health crisis resources. For incidents taking place outside of normal school hours, the

School Safety Teams shall convene to coordinate resources, assessment and intervention with the individuals whose behavior may have posed a threat to the safety of school staff or students.

Deliverables/Outcomes

As part of the statutory requirement, every threat assessment conduced at the school site shall report quantitative data on its activities to the FLDOE Office of Safe Schools in accordance to procedures established by the FLDOE Office of Safe Schools as required by law. Moreover, the results of the threat assessments will be stored on a secured site to provide for compliance with this statutory requirement. This will coincide with requirements of the new mental health plan regarding quantitative data that also must be collected and reported to FLDOE. The following information will be captured and reported:

- Number of students who received screenings or assessments
- Number of students who were referred for services or assistance
- Number of students who received service or assistance
- Number of direct employment service providers employed by the school district

Planned Expenditures

Allocated funds will be utilized to further enhance and support the implementation of mental health services, collaboration of services and oversight of these services to ensure all mental health related matters are addressed following guidelines and ensuring the follow up process for each student referred is supported through its entirety:

Requested Positions/Services	Salary/Benefits
Establishment of Department of Mental Health Services	
• Personnel	$3,499,000.00
• Outsourcing of Mental Health Services/Providers	$2,000,000.00
• Contracted Services	$200,000.00
• Professional Development/Training	$500,000.00
Total Estimated Allocation	$6,200,000.00

The establishment of the Department of Mental Health Services (Administrative positions and Program Specialists) will be responsible for the coordination and monitoring of student mental health referrals, District and community resources, and to deliver evidence-based mental health care and treatment for M-DCPS students. This Department will ensure referred students are accessing services and will assist in removing barriers that may hinder treatment.

Additionally, external services will be contracted to help develop programs that support efforts to identify, report and prevent bullying; provide sensitivity training in the areas of race, gender, social economic status, linguistic differences, and disability; and promote a culture of respect. Further, an external reviewer will assess the overall implementation of these initiatives.

The addition of the Mental Health Care/Coordinator positions will expand support in all schools including elementary, middle and senior high and provide greater flexibility to address serious concerns as they arise. These employees will assist and support students and families with social, emotional, and physical development needs to enhance and maximize student success. Additionally they will provide evidence based practices including risk assessments and threat assessments as needed, will identify and assess accordingly the need for further diagnosis and provide training and leadership for School Safety Teams. These employees will support a more rapid identification of students in need of mental health and psychiatric evaluations. Priority for evaluation will be given to students referred by threat assessments teams.

Professional development and training will include temporary instructors, registration costs for related workshops, training and technical assistance and other associated costs. There are several requirements for Professional Development training including threat assessment, risk assessment and crisis response training for school based staff. Furthermore, these trainings are required for School Safety Team members, mental health awareness and assistance and training of the use and implementation of evidence based programs.

The outsourcing of mental health services as related to the referral process is critical to ensure a stronger collaboration between the school, community and agency to provide a full continuum of mental health services to students. This outsourcing of referrals will allow for a fully operational system where there is two-way communication occurring within the system. Data will be collected which will align with the new statute for reporting purposes. This requirement will also allow services to be coordinated in a more precise manner and allow the opportunity to provide progress monitoring from the school's perspective and to share with the primary care provider.