



Committee: Joint
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Craig Howard, Deputy Director
Purpose: Final action – vote expected
Keywords: MCPS

AGENDA ITEM #2E
July 28, 2020
Action

SUBJECT

Special Appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Public Schools, \$250,000 for the Mental Health Program to Support Schools (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves)

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- **The joint Education & Culture (E&C) and Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to amend the special appropriation as introduced by providing the funding to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) instead of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).**
- Given MCPS' July 21 announcement that virtual learning will remain in place at least through the end of the first semester, the Committee agreed that the need for this funding is urgent and that switching the funding to DHHS would allow the additional mental health services to be provided expeditiously through DHHS' existing programs and services.
- DHHS staff and MCPS staff should work collaboratively to ensure students are identified and able to receive services with this additional funding.
- The Joint Committee agreed to return to this issue in the Fall to discuss whether additional in-school mental health supports for students are needed when school buildings reopen.
- The Joint Committee also agreed to have a follow-up discussion on building a pipeline of linguistic and culturally proficient behavioral/mental health providers, including reviewing innovative approaches used by other jurisdictions to address this issue.
- Shifting this additional funding to DHHS does not impact MCPS' plan to start a pilot program for providing mental health services as part of its previously approved FY21 budget allocation.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The County Council will consider action on an FY21 special appropriation of \$250,000 to provide additional mental health services to students as amended by the Joint E&C/HHS Committee. The source of funds is General Fund Reserves.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Board of Education requested this appropriation on June 29. The Council introduced this appropriation on July 14, and held a public hearing on July 21.

- On June 18, Councilmembers Rice and Albornoz sent a letter to the Superintendent of Schools requesting that MCPS examine funding and programmatic options to increase mental health services to students as it works on the 2020-21 school year recovery plan.
- As part its approved FY21 budget, MCPS plans to implement a pilot program to provide mental health services to identified students. MCPS is planning a service model in which school-based staff members, including the school counselor and psychologist, may refer students who require additional mental health services to a community agency with which MCPS has an established partnership and agreement. MCPS anticipates providing these services at no cost to students.

This report contains:

Draft Special Appropriation Resolution as Amended (marked-up copy)	©1-2
Draft Special Appropriation Resolution as Amended (clean copy)	©3-4
E&C/HHS Staff Report (July 23, 2020)	©5-8
Draft Special Appropriation Resolution as Introduced	©9-10
Board of Education Request (June 29, 2020)	©11-13
Letter from Councilmembers Rice and Albornoz (June 18, 2020)	©14

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Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Department of Health and Human Services
Child & Adolescent School & Community-Based Services
Mental Health Program to Support Schools, \$250,000
Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves

Background

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. On June 29, 2020, the Board of Education requested a special appropriation of \$250,000 for the Montgomery County Public Schools' FY21 Operating Budget to expand a Mental Health Program to Support Schools.

<u>Personnel</u> <u>Services</u>	<u>Operating</u> <u>Expenses</u>	<u>Capital</u> <u>Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source</u> <u>of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund

3. On July 21, 2020, the Superintendent of Schools announce that MCPS would continue remote learning through the entire first semester due to the COVID-19 global health pandemic, based on the advice of the County Health Officer.
4. Given MCPS' decision to continue remote learning, providing these funds to the Department of Health and Human Services will allow for provision of mental health services to students expeditiously through existing programs and structures.
5. This appropriation is needed to provide additional mental health support to students.

6. Notice of public hearing was given and the public hearing was held.
7. The County Council declares this request is in the public interest to be acted upon without delay as provided for under special appropriation requirements described in Article 3, Section 308 of the Montgomery County Charter.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services, Child & Adolescent School & Community-Based Services, is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget
[Montgomery County Public Schools] Montgomery County Government
Department of Health and Human Services
Child & Adolescent School & Community-Based Services
Mental Health Program to Support Schools, \$250,000
Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves

Background

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. On June 29, 2020, The Board of Education [has] requested a special appropriation of \$250,000 for the Montgomery County Public Schools' FY21 Operating Budget for a Mental Health Program to Support Schools:

<u>Personnel</u> <u>Services</u>	<u>Operating</u> <u>Expenses</u>	<u>Capital</u> <u>Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source</u> <u>of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund

3. On July 21, 2020, the Superintendent of Schools announce that MCPS would continue remote learning through the entire first semester due to the COVID-19 global health pandemic, based on the advice of the County Health Officer.
4. Given MCPS' decision to continue remote learning, providing these funds to the Department of Health and Human Services will allow for provision of mental health services to students expeditiously through existing programs and structures.
- [3] 5. This appropriation is needed to provide additional mental health support to students during the 2020-21 School Year.

- [4] 6. Notice of public hearing was given and the public hearing was held.
- [5] 7. The County Council declares this request is in the public interest to be acted upon without delay as provided for under special appropriation requirements described in Article 3, Section 308 of the Montgomery County Charter.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the [Montgomery County Public Schools] Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services, Child & Adolescent School & Community-Based Services, is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council

M E M O R A N D U M

June 20, 2020

TO: Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee
Education & Culture (E&C) Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst
Craig Howard, Deputy Staff Director

SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation to MCPS' FY21 Operating Budget, \$250,000 for the
Mental Health Program to Support Schools

PURPOSE: Review and make recommendation on the proposed supplemental appropriation.

Those expected to participate in the worksession include:

- Ruschelle Reuben, Associate Superintendent, Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- Dr. Elizabeth Rathbone, Coordinator, Student Health and Wellness, MCPS
- JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children Youth and Family Services, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Monica Martin, Administrator, Child and Adolescent School and Community-Based Services, DHHS

The Board of Education requested this \$250,000 supplemental appropriation to the FY21 MCPS Operating Budget on June 29. The Council introduced the appropriation (©1-2) and a public hearing was held on July 14. Council action is scheduled for July 28. The appropriation will provide additional resources to support a pilot program to provide school-based mental health services.

Background

In recent months, our youth have faced unprecedented upheaval as a result of the COVID-19 public health crisis, restrictions intended to slow the spread of disease, and social unrest in response to incidents of systemic racism and violence. Families have been challenged with unemployment or significantly reduced work and income and difficulty meeting basic needs, such as food and housing. Having families in close quarters has exacerbated family tensions and feelings of alienation and isolation for our youth. Consequently, Councilmembers Rice and Alborno in their June 18 letter to the MCPS Superintendent (©6) requested that the

school system examine funding and programmatic options to increase mental health services to students as it works on the 2020 school year recovery plan.

Proposal

As part of its approved FY21 budget, MCPS plans to implement a pilot program, similar to one implemented in Howard County, to provide mental health services to identified students by contracting with a community provider to deliver school-based services. This appropriation will be used to expand the planned pilot program by doubling its funding.

The following summarizes key aspects of the MCPS proposal:

- **Timeline:** The Request for Proposal process for selecting the community provider is anticipated to culminate in Board approval of contracts by the end of October and the beginning of services at the beginning of 2021.
- **Target Schools:** Schools to be considered for the pilot are ones that do not currently have additional supports like Linkages to Learning or School and Community Youth Services. Services Schools will be identified based on criteria, including (1) the percentage of students participating in the Free and Reduced-priced Meals Program (FARMS) and (2) student need as measured by office referrals, academic achievement, referrals to outside agencies, and request for central office consultations and supports. MCPS estimates that services could be provided at three to five schools and will consider Bel Pre, Cresthaven, Glen Haven, Roscoe Nix, and Twinbrook elementary schools.
- **Target Population:** The program will target uninsured or underinsured students who would otherwise not be able to afford mental health services. Students will be referred for intensive therapy only after documentation that universal and targeted supports have been provided and progress has not been made. Challenges appropriate for the pilot include symptoms of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and significant behavioral difficulties that affect the student's ability to participate fully in the academic program.
- **Services:** Providers must be trained in and prepared to offer intensive, short-term, goal-oriented, evidence-based therapeutic options, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or trauma-focused CBT, with an average length of treatment of five or 20 sessions. Therapists will be supervised by their parent organization and will have a point of contact at each school who will meet with their therapist on a biweekly basis to case manage and review progress. If a student exhibits such significant difficulties that pilot program services are either not appropriate or have been unsuccessful, then MCPS will continue to collaborate with county partner agencies, including the Local Care Team, to identify services that may be able to support the students.
- **Cost and Resources:** MCPS estimate a cost of \$800-\$1,100 per student based on an average treatment course of 13 therapeutic sessions. MCPS will not seek reimbursement for services through private insurance or Medical Assistance and will refer students with this coverage to other agencies that can meet their needs.

- **Outcomes:** Schools must document the nature of their concerns, the intervention implemented to date, and the progress the student has made with this level of support. The data, which may include grades, test scores, classwork vs. homework completion, attendance, and office referrals, can serve as baseline data against which therapeutic progress can be measured.
- **Maintenance of Efforts:** Council staff notes that the additional \$250,000 as requested by the Board of Education would increase the FY21 local appropriation for MCPS and therefore would be included as part of the County's maintenance of effort requirement.

Issues for Consideration

Council staff recommends approval of funding to support expanded school-based mental health services, as these services are in great demand at this time. However, before making a recommendation to the Council, the Joint Committee should evaluate pros and cons in having MCPS begin a new service delivery system to expand school-based mental health services independently from those currently managed by DHHS. The following issues should guide the Joint Committee's discussion:

- **Timing:** Which agency can have services begin more quickly? Can DHHS incorporate these expended services in existing contracts with community school providers? If so, how long would it take to move this through the County's procurement system?
- **Existing Community and School Based Providers:** If MCPS moves forward with the proposed model, could it expedite the provider selection process by bridging existing contracts that DHHS has with community-based providers that have already gone through a competitive public selection process for school-based mental health services?
- **Addressing Barriers to Service Access:**
 - What barriers are there to accessing existing County services for uninsured or underinsured students and families?
 - From MCPS' perspective, are there obstacles in the delivery of existing services, i.e., County public clinics, private non-profit clinics, school-based service (Linkages to Learning, High School Wellness Centers, Cluster Projects, School and Community Youth Services, DHHS Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services) that would be alleviated through this new model?
 - If funding is provided to DHHS to administer expanded services, are there modifications to the existing service options that would better meet the needs of the school system, e.g., flexibility in school assignments, etc.?
- **System Coordination and Service Consistency:** If MCPS moves forward with the pilot program, it would be important that all mental services being delivered in schools are comparable in terms of quality, cost, scheduling, convenience to students and families, data collection, family participation/treatment, etc. MCPS indicates that it has

participated on previous DHHS RFP procedures and will use lessons learned to inform the RFP process and that the DHHS process will serve as a model for the MCPS RFP process. However, **Council staff recommends that there be an ongoing mechanism for the two agencies to review services and processes and resolve inconsistencies.**

- **Service Overlap:**
 - What process would MCPS put in place to ensure that students being referred for service are not already receiving treatment through County clinics or primary care coalition providers?
 - How will MCPS manage crisis center referrals for students at the targeted schools that are not experiencing a psychiatric emergency? DHHS notes that Crisis Center referrals for MCPS students have risen significantly in recent years and the process has become a default for non-psychiatric emergencies. Would MCPS integrate this service as an alternative referral point for issues or behaviors that might not rise to the level of acuity that make the Crisis Center the preferred referral point?
 - Could changes to the delivery of services through County clinics or primary care coalition providers increase access to school-based services for students, e.g., telehealth, school access for providers, etc.?

- **Language Access:** Uninsured kids often in need of Spanish speaking providers who may already contract with LTL. Will there be sufficient Spanish speaking providers to cover the additional contracts? If the contracts do not specify the need for Spanish speaking services, will treatment include family treatment? Will case management services be provided?

- **MOE:** Does the Council want to increase MOE to support funding for a pilot program? The funding level would be required to be maintained even if services did not continue.

The packet contains the following attachments:

	<u>Circle #</u>
Draft Special Appropriation Resolution	©9-10
Board of Education Request (June 29, 2020)	©11-13
Letter from Councilmembers Rice and Albornoz (June 18, 2020)	©14
MCPS response to Council staff questions	©15-18

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Public Schools
Mental Health Program to Support Schools, \$250,000
Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves

Background

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. The Board of Education has requested a special appropriation of \$250,000 for the Montgomery County Public Schools' FY21 Operating Budget for a Mental Health Program to Support Schools:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund

3. This appropriation is needed to provide additional mental health support to students during the 2020-21 School Year.
4. Notice of public hearing was given and the public hearing was held.
5. The County Council declares this request is in the public interest to be acted upon without delay as provided for under special appropriation requirements described in Article 3, Section 308 of the Montgomery County Charter.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Public Schools is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

June 30, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive
The Honorable Sidney A. Katz, President,
Montgomery County Council

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Transmittal of Board of Education Agenda Item #9.16

Recommended Fiscal Year 2021 Supplemental Appropriation for the Mental Health Program to Support Schools

BOE Meeting Date:	June 29, 2020
Amount:	\$250,000
Type of Action:	Approval

JRS:MVN:RR:ear

Attachment

Copy to:


Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

June 29, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Recommended Fiscal Year 2021 Supplemental Appropriation for the Mental Health Program to Support Schools

Recommendation in Brief

Authorization is requested to receive and expend, subject to County Council approval, a Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 supplemental appropriation of \$250,000 for Montgomery County Schools to expand planned support for promoting and fostering mental health.

Background

MCPS recognizes the increasing need for additional and more intensive mental health supports for students in schools. The COVID-19 pandemic causing school closures has led to more than 164,000 Montgomery County students being isolated in their homes. The need for mental health services likely is to increase and the effects of the resulting trauma will be felt for years. MCPS acknowledges the need for greater access to mental health services for students and families who may not have the independent means to acquire such supports.

MCPS is proposing a model of service in which school-based staff members, including the school counselor and psychologist, may refer students who require additional mental health services to a community agency with which MCPS has an established partnership and agreement. Referrals to this agency will be based on objective, systematically collected baseline and progress data to ensure that students are appropriately referred. Referrals for service will be made after students receive MCPS Tier 1 and Tier 2 services, resources, and intervention with no significant effect on their progress. Based on specific, identified data points, school-based staff members may make an informed decision for Tier 3, or targeted interventions as such intensive supports cannot be provided by student services personnel or existing partner service agencies.

In collaboration with other local education agencies, staff in Office of Student Support and Family Support and Engagement is developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit bids from community agencies to provide mental health services to identified students, beginning fall 2020, for a specified contracted amount. Currently, OSFSE staff is considering use of a portion of the Contractual Services funds budgeted for FY 2021 in the amount of \$250,000 for the payment of these services, allowing

families to receive services at no cost to them or to supplement costs for families who do not have Medicaid or private insurance. In addition, some areas of the county continue to be underserved by community mental health providers and the need for support is compounded by the lack of public transportation. MCPS will begin with a pilot number of schools in various areas of the county, where students are in most need of additional services that may not be readily accessible to their families. Identified and contracted agencies would be assigned to a school, to reduce the impression or reality of competition amongst agencies for students as patients. Currently, MCPS is working through logistics, such as student privacy and coordination with special education services to ensure a comprehensive approach to providing the mental health services.

Use of Funds

Funds will be used for a pilot program to provide targeted mental health services to students. Based on the typical caseload of a therapist and the average number of sessions needed per student, it is estimated that the per student cost for therapy services is approximately \$750 to \$1100, allowing MCPS to provide an additional 270 students with much needed intensive mental health services with the supplemental appropriation of \$250,000. These additional funds from the Montgomery County Council would allow for additional schools to be partnered with a mental health agency and double the number of students served beyond the MCPS budgeted funds.

Recommended Resolution

WHEREAS, The need for increased mental health services is likely to rise as a result of COVID-19-related school closures; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools will be able to provide targeted mental health supports to approximately 270 additional students who would not otherwise be able to access such services; and

WHEREAS, An initiative has been developed to contract services with an approved, licensed mental health agency to provide mental health services to students in schools; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the superintendent of schools be authorized to receive and expend, subject to County Council approval, a supplemental appropriation of \$250,000 for the award of contracts for targeted mental health services for students; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the county executive and County Council; and be it further

Resolved, That the county executive be requested to recommend approval of this resolution to the County Council.

JRS:MVN:RR:ear



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

June 18, 2020

Dear Dr. Smith:

We know that over these last few months, our school system and our students have had a significant amount of change and upheaval thrust upon them in a very short time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we are in the midst of a very powerful and impactful time as we address the systemic issue of racism and the need for reform. Both can exacerbate feelings of anxiety, depression, anger, and isolation amongst our students.

We applaud MCPS for recognizing and enhancing its mental health services within our schools. Be Well 365 is an example of emphasizing the need for promoting and fostering mental health as well as physical health and the expansion of services. While tremendous strides have been made, we know more will be needed to adequately address the needs of our students.

To this end, we would like to work with you on this effort to enhance our mental health personnel in our schools. As MCPS works on its 2020 school year recovery plan, this seems a good time to address this need and increase our cohort of mental health professionals in our schools in order for our students to have the services they need to support their academic growth.

We look forward to hearing from you in regard to what MCPS feels is needed to increase our counselors and other mental health personnel in our schools for this Fall, and the funding that would be required.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Craig Rice in black ink.

Craig Rice
Councilmember, District 2

Handwritten signature of Gabe Albornoz in black ink.

Gabe Albornoz
Councilmember, At-Large

Questions from the County Council re: Supplemental Funding Request

1. **Timeline:** What is the anticipated timeline for selecting providers and having services in place? Is September 2020 still a realistic timeline, and if so, is the likely start date anticipated at the beginning or end of the month? When will the RFP be released?

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) timeline for drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) through obtaining Montgomery County Board of Education (BOE) approval for the resulting contract is as follows:

Complete RFP	July 31, 2020
RFP in public	August 3–September 4, 2020
Review proposals	September 7–11, 2020
Further interview with offerors	September 14–18, 2020
Prepare BOE packet	September 21–25, 2020
Develop Memorandum of Understanding	September 21–October 16, 2020
BOE approval of contract	Week of October 26, 2020

Based on the timeline, it is likely that services would start in schools at the beginning of 2021. Consideration also will be given to progress made towards reopening of schools and guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education and Dr. Travis Gayles, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

The resulting contract will outline specific requirements of the mental health providers, including quarterly progress reports and a final, end-of-year summary of services delivered and number of students served.

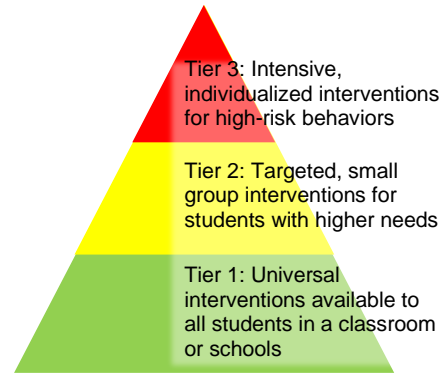
2. **Target Schools:** How many schools will receive services? Which schools will be served? If specific school have not yet been identified, how with MCPS go about selecting schools for services—what criteria will be considered? At what level (ES, MS, HS) will these services be targeted? How will space for services be identified, particularly for highly impacted schools that have limited space? How will practitioner time be apportioned?

Schools will be identified based on several criteria, including the percentage of students participating in the Free and Reduced-price Meals Program (FARMS) which serves as a proxy for assessing socio-economic status within a community. In addition, student need will be considered, as measured by office referrals, academic achievement, referrals to outside agencies, and requests for central office consultations and supports. Schools that will be considered to receive services include Bel Pre, Cresthaven, Glen Haven, Roscoe Nix, and Twinbrook elementary schools. These schools currently do not receive inhouse supports through Linkages to Learning or School Community-based Youth Services.

MCPS estimates that services could be provided at three to five schools, depending on referrals and need. To minimize on travel time, therapists will be assigned to a school for the full day. Therapists would require the use of an office in which confidential services may be provided. With the possibility that a school might receive services for one to two days a week, it is likely that an appropriate space can be identified for therapists to work with children individually or in small groups, if appropriate.

3. **Target Population:** What students will be targeted or prioritized for service? Will insurance or medical assistance status be a factor in determining service eligibility? What issues will be appropriate to address with these services? For students that have issues that are not ideally addressed through these services, how will MCPS link students with appropriate care? What efforts will be made to minimize service duplication?

Students will be referred for intensive therapy (Tier 3 interventions) with the contracted provider only after it has been documented that universal and targeted supports (i.e., Tier 1 and Tier 2 services, respectively) have been provided and progress has not been made. As a result, school teams will be required to collect data, develop and implement interventions, and monitor progress to demonstrate that the student's needs cannot be met through services, programs, and interventions that are offered in the school building. These data also will serve to inform therapists on the extent of the needs of the students and the results of previously employed interventions.



The goal of this program is to provide a needed service to students who otherwise would not be able to afford mental health services. It is expected that referred students would either be un- or underinsured so that this program will be the only means by which the student would have access to the intensive mental health support that would be needed to be successful in school. As such, the pilot phase of this project would not include insurance or Medical Assistance reimbursement. Students who did have insurance that covered mental health services or Medical Assistance would be referred to other agencies that could meet their needs.

The types of challenges that will be considered appropriate for the pilot project include symptoms anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and significant behavioral difficulties that affect the student's ability to participate fully in the academic program. The presence of symptoms will serve as the basis for referral as students may not necessarily carry a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, for example, if they have not had the opportunity to be seen by a mental health provider who can make such a diagnosis.

If a student exhibits such significant difficulties that a referral to the contracted provider is either not appropriate or has been unsuccessful, MCPS will continue to collaborate with county partner agencies, including the Local Care Team, to identify services that may be able to support the student.

To reduce the duplication of services, the schools that will be considered for this pilot program will be ones that currently do not have additional supports, such as Linkages to Learning or School Community-based Youth Services. The goal of the pilot is to provide children with access to mental health services that they otherwise will not be able to receive.

4. **Services:** What types of services will be offered? Will they be evidence-based? What is the anticipated average cost and length of service per child? How long would treatment be provided? What kind of supervision will practitioners receive? Who will provide it and how

frequently will it be provided? Who will monitor the contract with community-based providers? Will additional staffing be needed to handle these functions?

The RFP will specify that agencies must be trained in and prepared to offer evidence-based therapeutic options, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or, more desirably, trauma-focused CBT (TF-CBT). CBT is designed to be short-term and goal-oriented. This will be a factor when evaluating RFPs to receive the award. Therapy should be intensive and short-term. The average length of treatment when receiving CBT is five to 20 sessions. An estimate of 13 sessions per student was used to calculate costs. Research has shown that CBT was effective in producing significant improvements in young children in an average of eight sessions (Minde, Roy, Bezonski, and Hashemi, 2010). TF-CBT has been shown to be effective in significantly reducing symptoms of PTSD and other related mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and behavioral difficulties in 12 to 15 sessions (Cohen and Mannarino, 2015).

Based on the estimated number of sessions that can produce significant improvements in children's mental and emotional states, on average, students would receive 13 therapeutic sessions at an estimated cost of \$800–\$1,100 per student.

Licensed therapists will be supervised mainly by their parent organizations. In each school, a designated point of contact will be identified, most likely the school counselor or school psychologist. This person will be responsible for meeting with the therapists on a biweekly basis to case manage and review progress. The provision of services to students on school grounds during the school day also will facilitate ongoing communication and progress monitoring between school and provider. In addition, since the goal of the pilot project is to support the student's ability to function in school, authorization to exchange information will be sought so that information may be shared between school staff members and therapists. The school can provide information about student achievement, behavior, and attendance to inform goal-setting, interventions implemented in the past and their effect, and regular progress monitoring. The therapist can, in turn, provide the school with information related to progress made towards therapeutic goals and suggest strategies that the school can use to support the student in class. The contract with the community providers will be monitored by central office-based staff members who already are responsible for monitoring contracts with county partner agencies. As a result, additional staffing should not be required to supervise and monitor the delivery of therapeutic services to students.

5. **Resources:** Will the model seek to offset costs by seeking reimbursement for services through private insurance or medical assistance?

Services will be provided to un- or underinsured students who would not be able to access intensive mental health services without this pilot program. Initially, as a result, MCPS and the contracted provider will not seek reimbursement for services through private insurance or Medical Assistance.

6. **Outcomes:** How will the program measure the impact of services on students? What data will be collected toward this end?

In order to be referred to the mental health provider, schools must document the nature of their concerns, the interventions implemented to date, and the progress the student has made

with this level of support. These data can serve as baseline data against which therapeutic progress can be measured. Student data collected may include grades, test scores, classwork vs. homework completion, attendance, and office referrals. In addition, depending on the nature of the concern, additional data may be available to serve as baseline. For example, when a student exhibits behavioral difficulty, classroom data on frequency and intensity of the behavior will have been collected to develop a behavioral intervention plan. Those behaviors may continue to be monitored during and after the conclusion of therapy to document improvements.

The preference for seeking providers that can provide CBT, which is designed to be short-term and goal-oriented, will allow for the collection of data to support the efficacy of this program. Mental health providers will need to identify goals on which they will work with students and document progress. Goal identification may even be done in consultation with school staff members so that the student will be able to be more successful in school.

Collectively, school data and therapist data will be used to demonstrate the impact of the pilot program on students.

7. **System Coordination and Service Consistency:** What are the benefits in having MCPS manage the delivery of school-based mental health services independently from existing school-based mental health services managed by DHHS? How will the two agencies collaborate to ensure that all mental services being delivered in schools are comparable in terms of quality, cost, scheduling, convenience to students and families, etc.?

One of the exclusionary criteria for this pilot project will be the availability of other community-based services, such as Linkages to Learning or School Community-based Youth Services, on site. This means that services will not be duplicated and mental health services managed by DHHS will not be readily available to students. The additional benefit of having MCPS manage the delivery of school-based mental health services includes the ability of school-based staff members communicating directly with the mental health providers and mental health providers being accountable to document progress and provide such documentation to MCPS.

MCPS has participated on previous DHHS RFP procedures and will use lessons learned to inform this RFP process. It is likely that some of the agencies that submitted proposals to DHHS (e.g., for School Community-based Youth Services) will submit proposals in response to this RFP. The DHHS process will serve as a model for the MCPS RFP process to ensure that mental health services are comparable in terms of quality, cost, scheduling, and convenience to students and families.