

# **Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education**

## **Mental Health Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, December 14th, 2021**

**2:00 – 4:00 pm**

Zoom Link:

<https://dadeschools.zoom.us/j/81199288139?pwd=OTlaZVRNSEdoRjNrendOQs3QnV0QT09>

Attendees: Alina Rodriguez (co-chair), Diane Adreon (co-chair). Georgina Mederos, Dr. Michelle Cumming, Beverly Heller, Maria Ratti, Daniel Ore

Agenda: Ms. Rodriguez welcomed the group and members introduced themselves.

The group reviewed the minutes from 10/26/21.

Ms. Rodriguez and Mr. Ore presented on the Role of School-Based Mental Health Service Provider. Various offices house the different roles of the School-based Mental Health Service Providers (S-BMHSP) These include: school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, E/BD Clinicians (Art Therapists), Success Coaches, Mental Health Coordinators, and TRUST specialists. All S-BMHSP can conduct risk assessments. All provide services to ESE students as well as GE. School counselors provide counseling to students in the school building. They also can advise about academics, provide bereavement counseling, and Tier 2 behavioral supports. School social workers All have a master's degree in social work, all certified in school social work K-12, and more. They work with Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3 interventions, risk-assessments, individual/group counseling & skill building groups, development & monitoring, and crisis response and

intervention, and implementation. As per Dan Ore, at the present time there are around 67 school social workers servicing schools. They address Tier 1 Response to Intervention supports, Positive Behavioral Supports, bullying prevention, substance abuse prevention, homelessness support, and much more. A Tier 2 Behavioral Toolbox Padlet was developed. A MTSS/RtI-B Matrix for Behavior is available in the MTSS Manual where Tier 1, Tier 2, & Tier 3 information on progress monitoring and data collection is provided. This matrix is embedded into various Padlets. All can provide counseling, risk-assessments, outside agency provider referrals, collaboration, other support services, and screenings.

The committee discussed whether there is way to look at issues with teacher buy-in and piloting universal screening (social/emotional) at specific schools. Alina Rodriguez and Dan Ore stated that the Mental Health Department is currently working in collaboration with other departments as well as theirs on a universal screening pilot. Ms. Heller stated that she heard that all first graders are being tested for gifted. She is wondering whether those students can also be provided with mental health screening. Ms. Rodriguez clarified that there will be a screener for gifted given in December to first graders and that information was provided via a Weekly Briefing to all schools.

Questions arose regarding how do the general teachers and teachers of specials know which students in their classes have special needs? Is there a method to ensure that all teachers are aware of children with special needs? Teachers teaching students with disabilities currently receive a copy of each student's IEP and the district provides guidance regarding the importance of this. It was raised that with school-based management perhaps principals need to be targeted regarding this issue. It was suggested that perhaps there is a need to target school culture & climate. Alina indicated that they have targeted 31 schools to look at school climate and culture.

Information on Data Request. Dr. Adreon reached out numerous times to obtain this information via email; however, did not receive a response. Dr. Adreon will reach out by phone in January.

A question was asked about the role of the Trust Counselor.

Mr. Ore indicated that a primary focus for Trust Counselors in schools was largely to combat substance abuse following a very specific curriculum. The number of trust counselor positions have been reduced. However, the TRUST Counselors provide more counseling than they were able to provide previously.

Mr. Ore indicated that the district would benefit from marketing more about the mental health services that are available in the district, because the district is losing students to charter & private schools as well. On the district website there is tremendous information on the mental health services available in the district. Ms. Ratti indicated that most parents are not aware of these services. Ms. Ratti pointed out that many parents are concerned about security when transferring to middle school. More information is needed for parents to help alleviate their concerns. Perhaps the committee can identify specific information to request that schools consider disseminating to parents.

Ms. Heller shared that a school board member met with her schools about mental health and that perhaps other school board members can also do this. Perhaps we can recommend this to the panel at large. The PTA is supposed to disseminate information to them about mental health services. She would like us to consider these as recommendations coming from the committee.

Dr. Cumming suggested that we contact Mr. Escallon about procedures related to making suggestions to school board members based on sub-committee recommendations. If it is only about procedures, we would not be violating any sunshine laws, correct? Dr. Adreon will reach out to him for clarification. It was raised that the committee might address how to build

buy-in with administrators. Every school has a threat assessment team. However, many parents do not know this. Is there a way to disseminate information about this to parent via the head of PTA? Is the committee permitted to do this or does it need to be a recommendation of the subcommittee that is brought to the panel? The district has many wonderful services. The question is how to spread awareness of these services, especially to parents.

The committee also discussed expanding the representation of community agencies as well as parents on the subcommittee. Ms. Rodriguez will inquire as to whether Thriving Minds can present at our next committee member.

The next committee meeting will be held on February 22, 2022 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Adreon. Ed.D.