

Mental Health Initiative Update



Metuchen School District

April 11, 2023

Presented by:

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Mental Health by the Numbers in Youth & Young Adults

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people ages 10-34

50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14

75% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 25

1 in 6 children (ages 2-8) have a diagnosed mental, behavioral or developmental disorder

1 in 10 Young Adults (ages 18-25) experienced a serious mental illness

1 in 6 youth (ages 6-17) experience a mental health disorder each year

3 million adolescents (ages 12-17) had serious thoughts of suicide

1 in 3 Young Adults (ages 18-25) experienced a mental illness

1 in 6 adolescents (ages 12-17) experienced a major depressive disorder

The overall suicide rate increased by 35% since 1999

31% increase in mental health related emergency department visits

<https://nami.org/mhstats>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmenlthealth/data.html>

Impact of the Pandemic on Youth and Adolescent Mental Health

1 in 5

Young people report that the pandemic had a significant negative impact on their mental health.

1 in 10

People under the age of 18 experienced a mental health condition following a COVID-19 diagnosis

15%

Of adolescents increased use of alcohol amongst those who drink

15%

Of adolescents increased use of drugs amongst those who use

50%

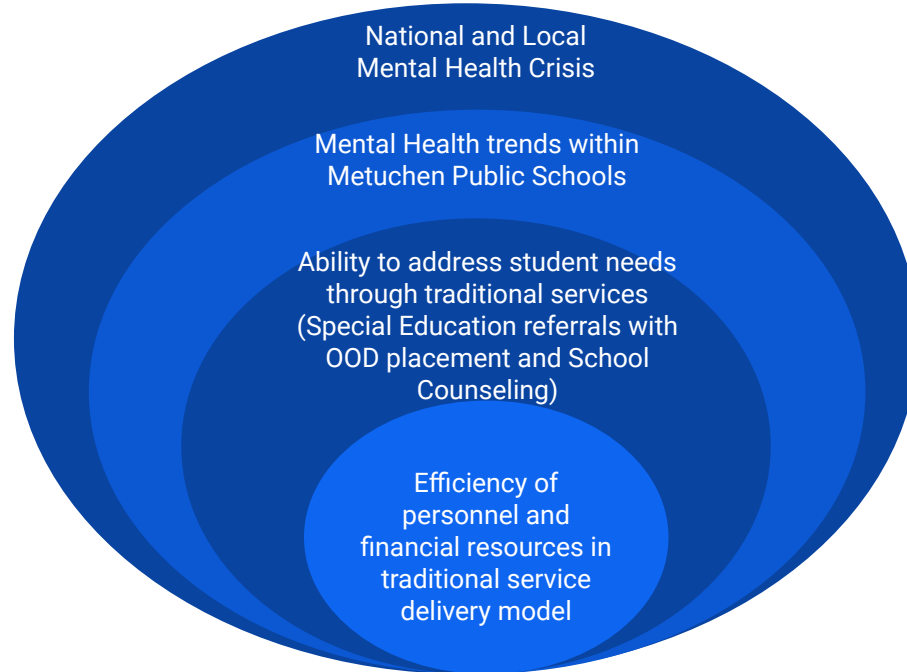
Of young people with mental health concerns report a significant negative impact of the pandemic

“Youth and young adults experienced a unique set of challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic- isolation from peers, adapting to virtual learning, and changes to sleep habits and other routines.

We must recognize the significant impact of these experiences on young people’s mental health- and the importance of providing the education, care and support they need ” -NAMI

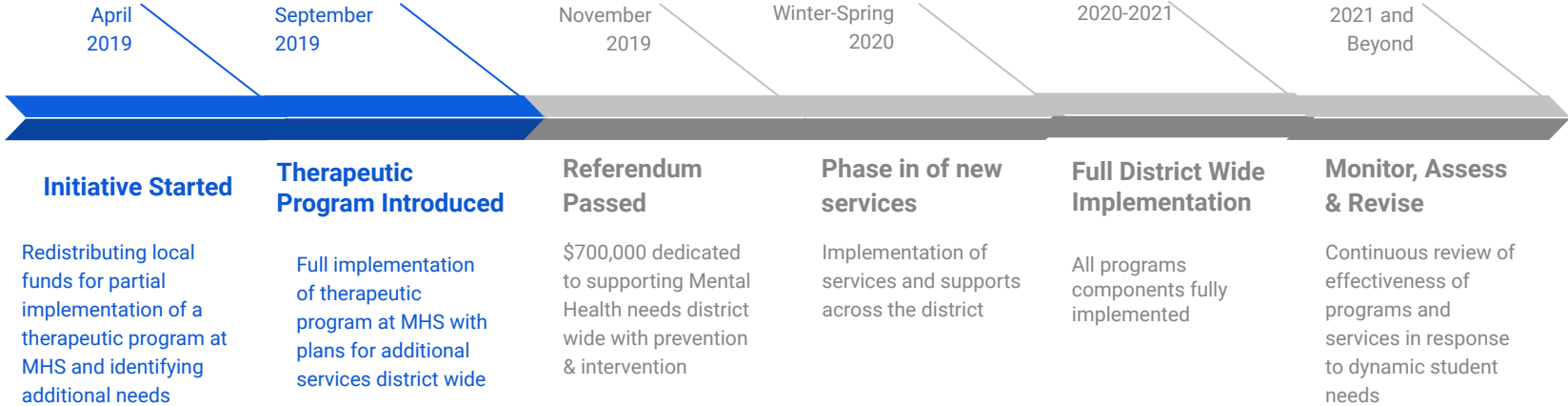
https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/NAMI_2020MH_ByTheNumbers_Youth-r.pdf

Identified Needs



Support staff advocated for the need for increased mental health services and a more targeted service delivery model to meet the needs of all students

Action Steps



Initiative Goals

Emotional Wellness → Academic Success

Prevention

- ❖ Identify and intervene early
- ❖ Assist parents and school personnel in developing and implementing comprehensive strategies
- ❖ Implement best practices across settings
- ❖ Foster resiliency, problem solving and coping skills

Education

- ❖ Developing awareness
- ❖ Promote acceptance
- ❖ Reduce mental health stigma
- ❖ Provide community resources
- ❖ Professional development
- ❖ Parent education
- ❖ Student education
- ❖ Building capacity of staff, students and parents
- ❖ Student skill development

Support

- ❖ Students, families and staff
- ❖ Mental health services to students who wouldn't otherwise have access
- ❖ Counseling and behavioral services in an accessible, authentic setting
- ❖ Academic Interventions
- ❖ Facilitating transitions across settings
- ❖ Addressing targeted student needs

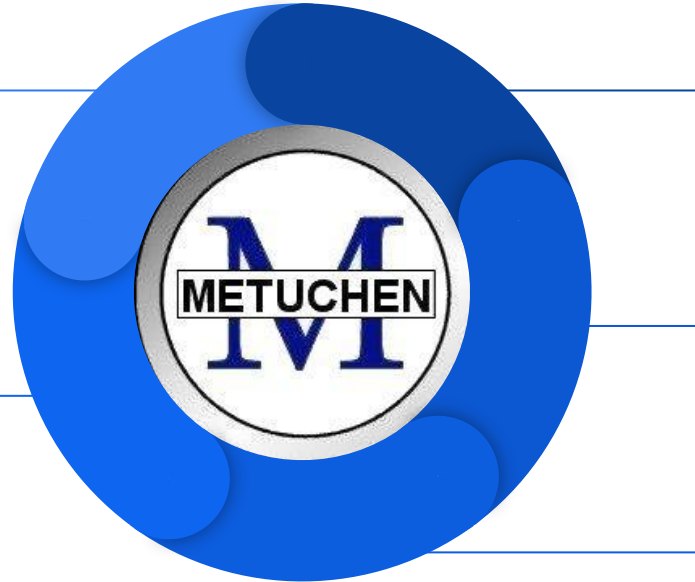
Mental Health Referendum Components

School Psychologists

Services expanded at all schools with two new positions

Behavioral Support

Increased support from Board Certified Behavior Analysts district wide



Therapeutic Programs

Clinicians added at Campbell & Edgar and continued at MHS

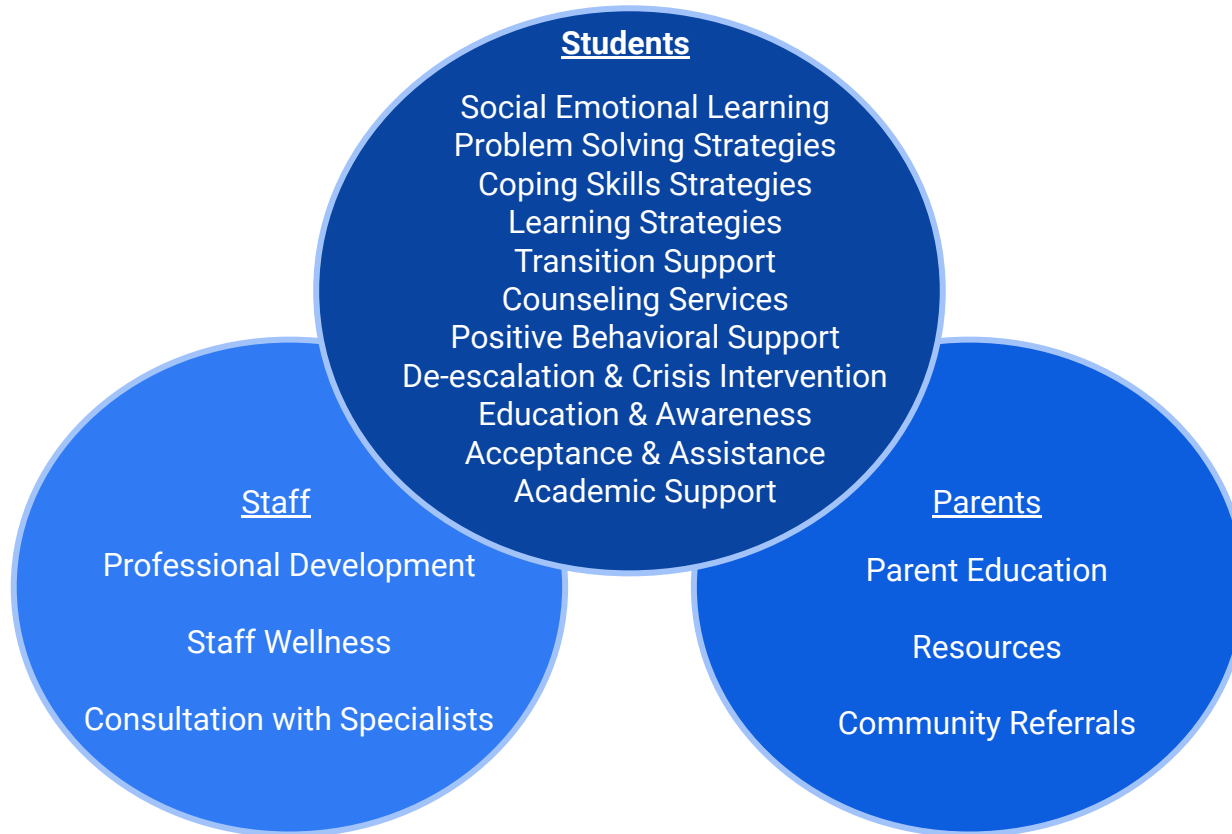
Academic Interventions

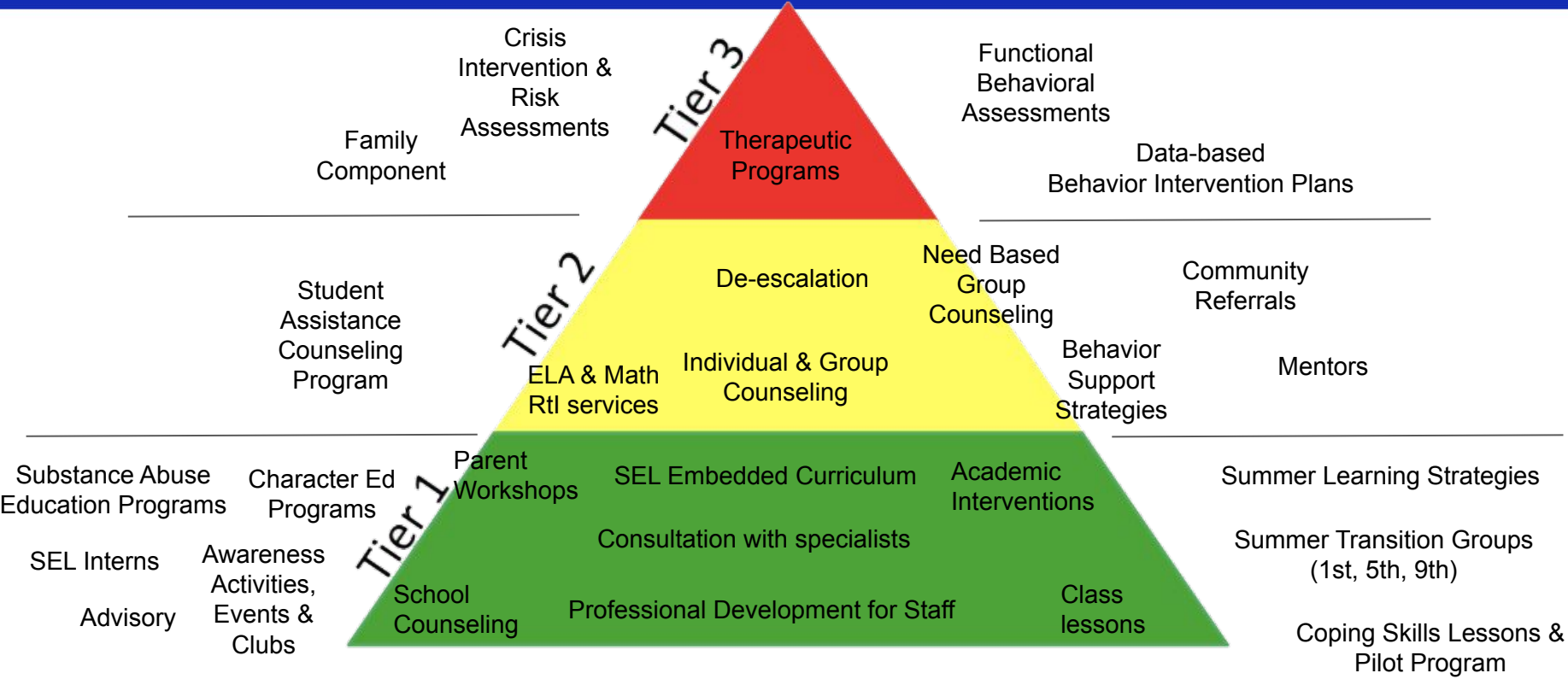
Reading Specialist
Math Intervention Teacher
Increased Response to Intervention services
Individualized intervention plans
Learning Strategies programs

Clerical Support

Part time secretary added to increase efficiency and availability of support staff for direct services

Mental Health Initiative Focus Areas





District Wide Tiered Mental Health Supports



Role of Therapeutic Programs

Students

- ❖ Counseling Services (individual and group)
- ❖ Coping skill class lessons
- ❖ Coping skills, Emotional Wellness and Executive functioning tips
- ❖ Academic support
- ❖ Learning Strategies and Executive Functioning support
- ❖ Summer therapeutic support and transition groups
- ❖ Transition support
- ❖ On-site risk assessments by licensed mental health professionals
- ❖ Fostering awareness and acceptance

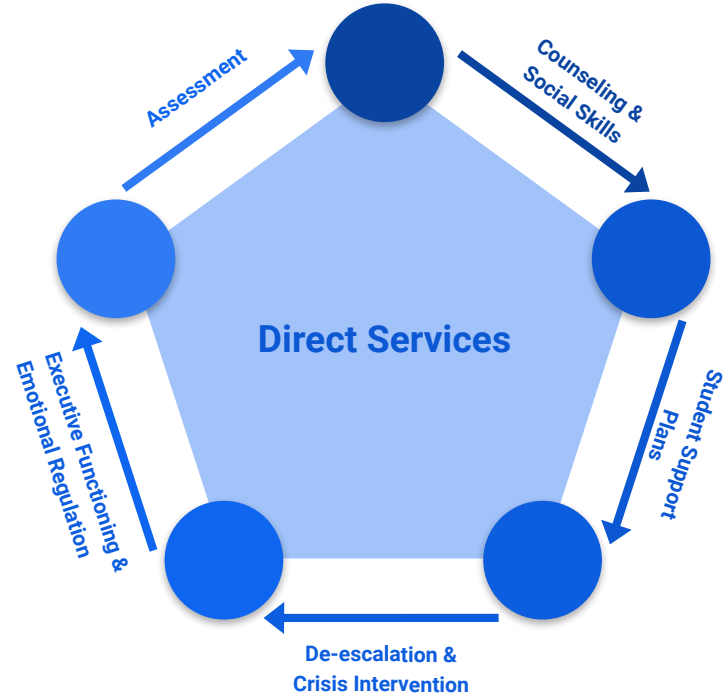
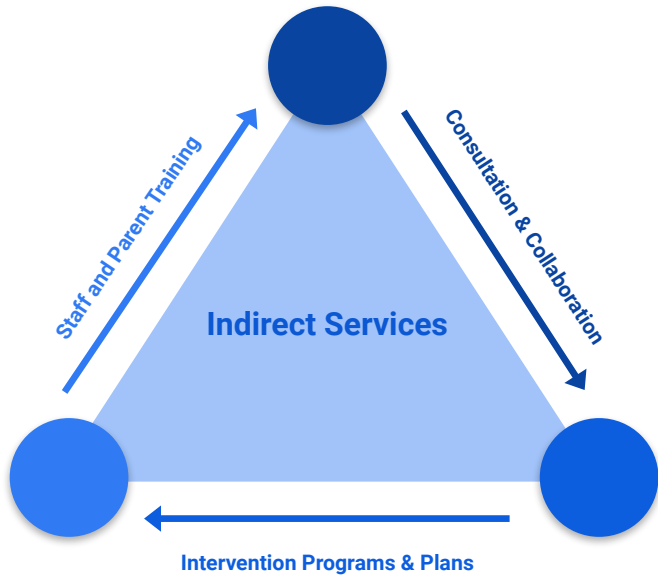
Staff

- ❖ Structured collaboration with School Counselors, CST and Administrators Staff wellness
- ❖ Professional development on a variety of topics
- ❖ Teacher consultation
- ❖ Collaboration to transition students across schools
- ❖ Articulations across providers and buildings to support student transitions
- ❖ Staff wellness support

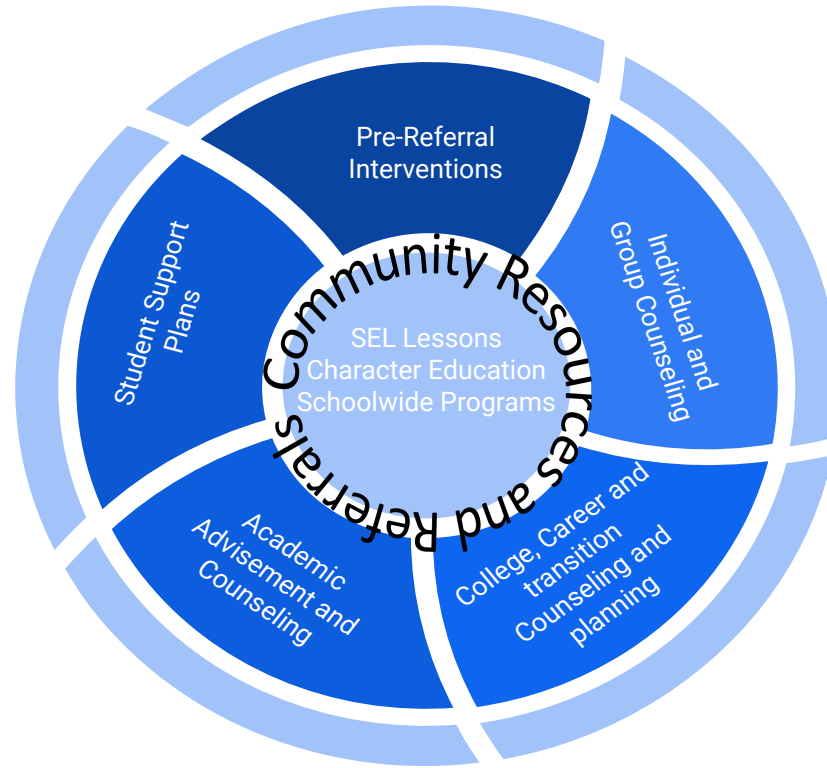
Parents

- ❖ Presentations
- ❖ Psycho-educational materials
- ❖ Family Counseling
- ❖ Support Groups
- ❖ Referrals & Resources

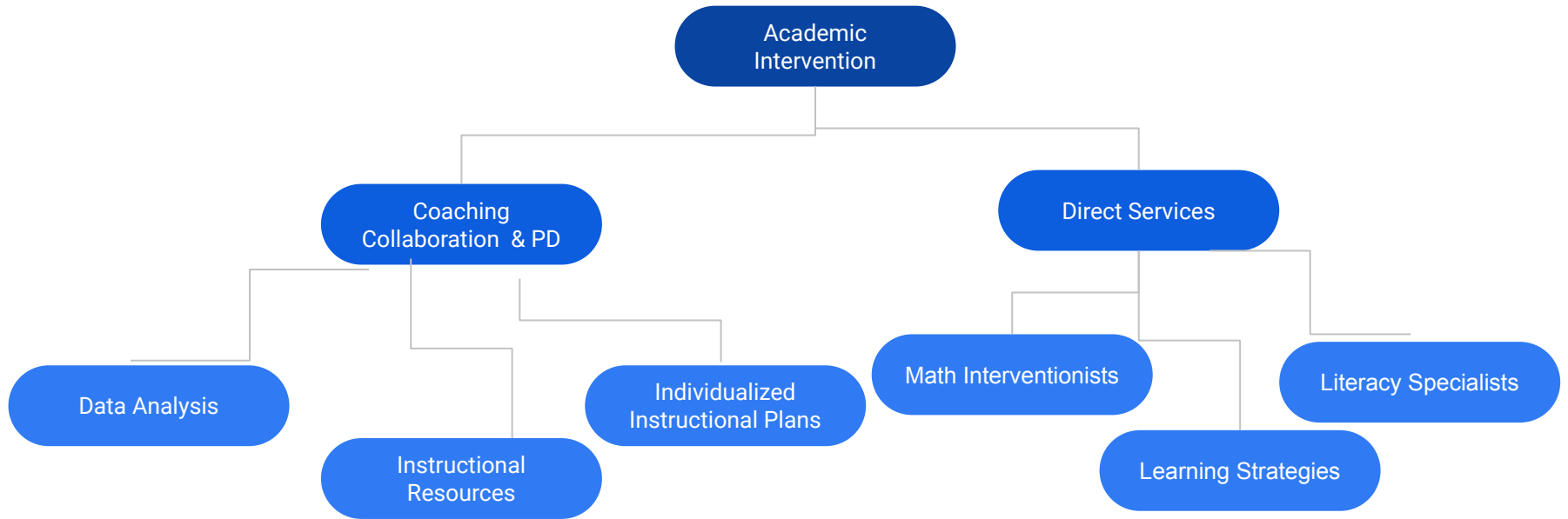
School Psychologists and Behavior Analysts Supporting Mental Health, Wellness and Positive Behavior



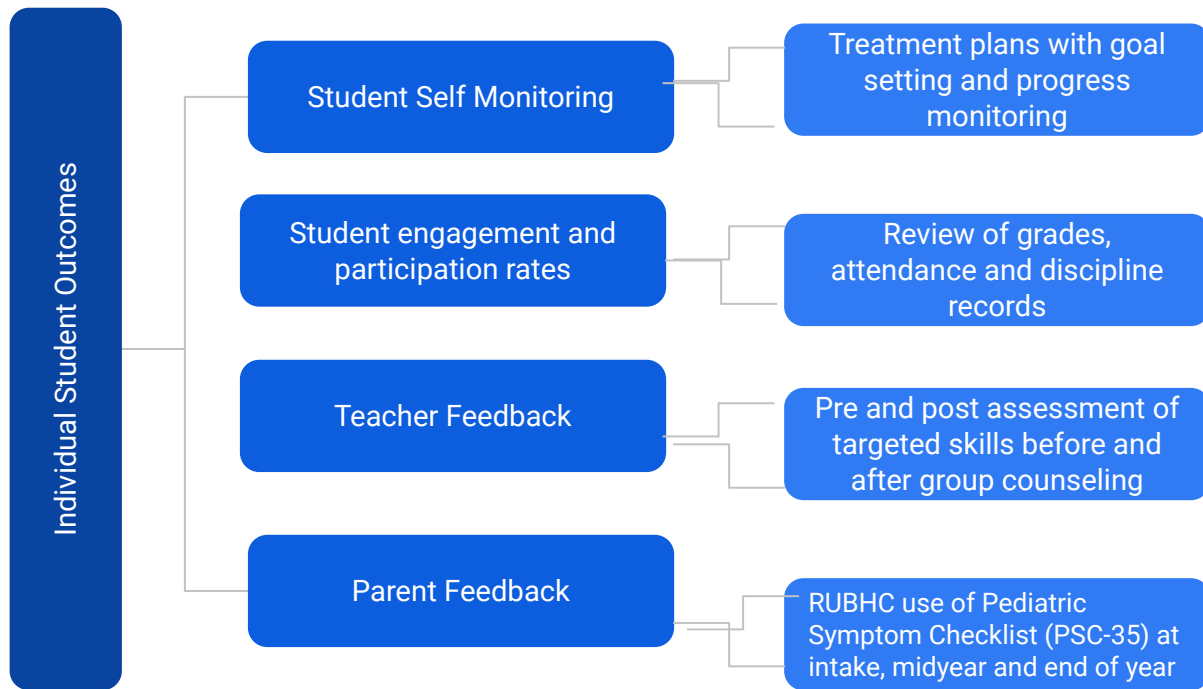
School Counseling Services



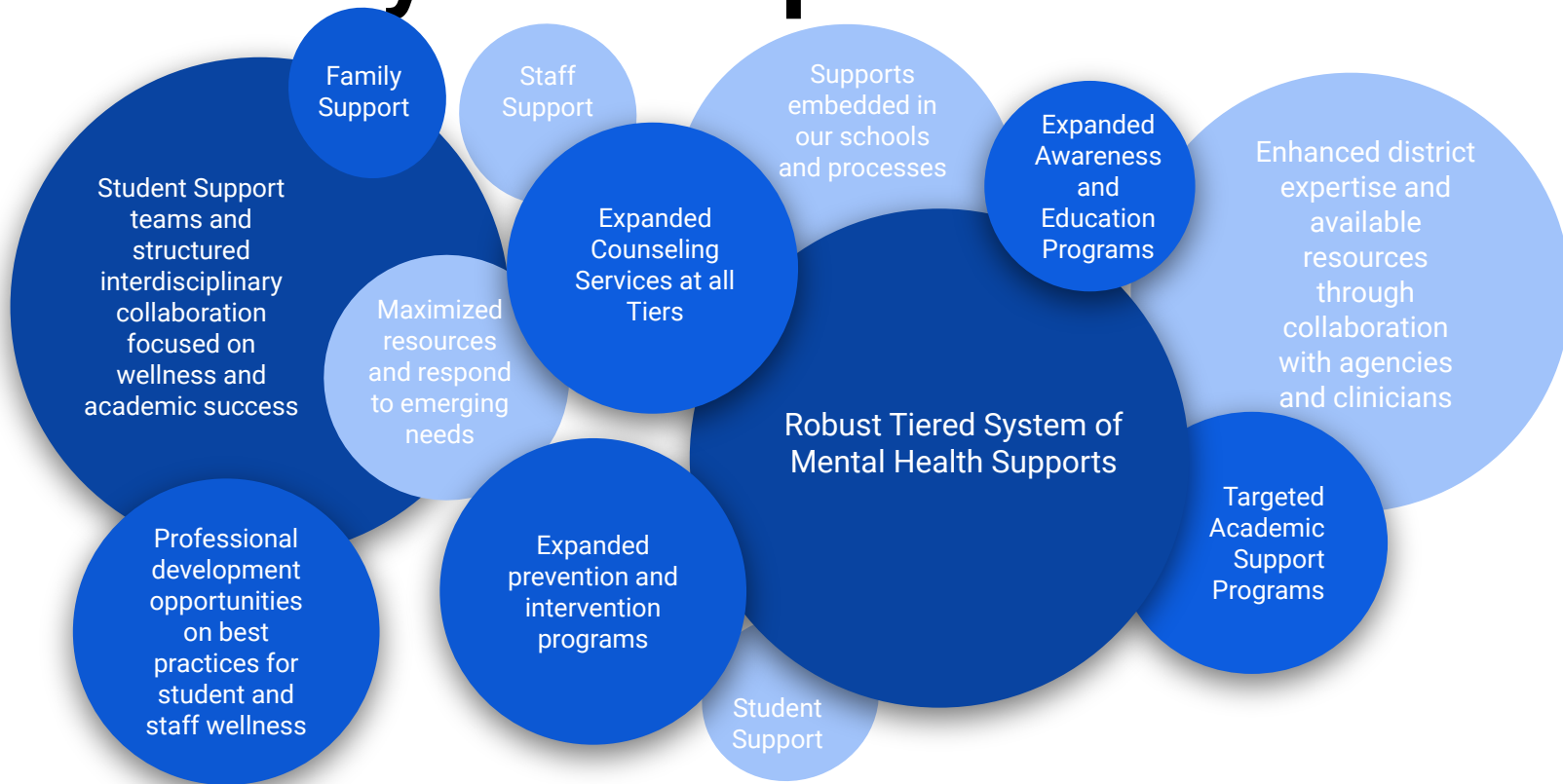
Academic Success \Rightarrow Emotional Wellness



Assessing Individual Student Outcomes



Key Accomplishments



Student Assistance Program in Partnership with Wellspring

Student Services

- Licensed Clinicians
- Check ins
- Drop in counseling
- Short-term counseling
- Group counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Referrals & Resources

Education & Prevention

Wellness & Coping

Awareness & Acceptance

Outreach

- Interactive bulletin boards
- Lunchtime engagement events
- Inspirational giveaways
- Announcements
- Social media presence
- Collaboration with student clubs
- Schoolwide events
- Staff presentations

Student Assistance Program in Partnership with Wellspring

Mental Health Topics



- Suicide Prevention
- Bullying Prevention
- Gratitude and Kindness
- Stress and Anxiety
- Mental Wellness
- Self Esteem
- Teen Dating
- Self Harm
- See Something Say Something
- LGBTQ+ Pride

Substance Abuse Topics



- Recovery
- Smoke out
- Impaired Driving
- Drug Facts
- Alcohol Awareness
- Pre-prom & Pre-graduation
- Substance Abuse

Topics are presented in a variety of ways throughout the year, including formal presentations, informational displays, lunch activities, and collaboration with student clubs.

Student Assistance Program in Partnership with Wellspring Engagement with Students and Staff

MHS Students

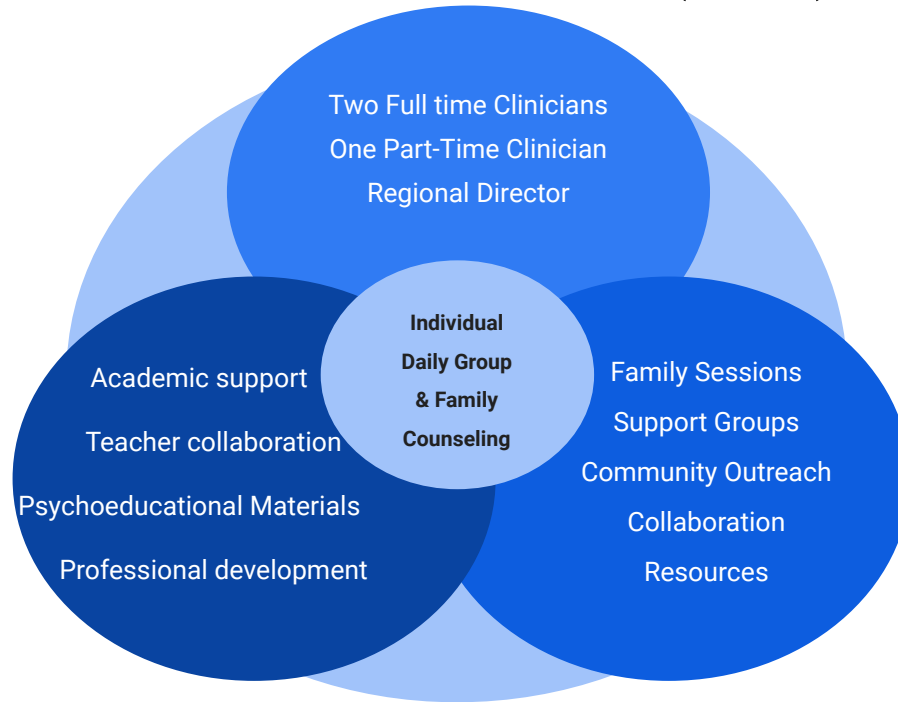
- ❖ Counseling Services for an additional 39 students
- ❖ Student Outreach through monthly bulletin boards - Suicide Prevention, We Are One Metuchen (Bullying Prevention), 30 Days of Gratitude, How to Beat the Winter Blues (focus on stress and anxiety management), Resolutin Solution (positive outcomes for the new year), Trusted Adults At MHS
- ❖ Created and distributed Back to School Survival Kits and Kindness Bags to students
- ❖ Regular collaboration with Bring Change to Mind and GSA Student Organizations
- ❖ Monthly Lunch Presentations: Bullying Prevention Month/Anti-Bullying Pledge, World Kindness Day, Teen Dating Violence Awareness, International Boost Self Esteem Month
- ❖ Students and staff participate in activities

MHS Staff

- ❖ Observed National Stress Awareness Month by discussing the importance of self-care with staff.
- ❖ Wellness event for teachers and staff - provided lunch, stress reducing giveaways and massages through local resources.
- ❖ Presentation to MHS staff: Tips & Strategies for Talking to Students About Mental Health



Therapeutic Program in partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS) at MHS



Services by referral only at MHS

Effective School Solutions

Engagement with Students, Staff, Parents and Families

Direct Services

- ❖ 28 students utilized ESS this year
- ❖ Intensive therapeutic program: daily counseling, family component, collaboration with outside providers
- ❖ Academic monitoring and support
- ❖ Alternative lunch program
- ❖ Transition assistance for students returning to MHS from OOD placements
- ❖ Support plans for chronically absent students
- ❖ Crisis intervention and assessment

Support

- ❖ Collaboration on revising Life Skills course curriculum for credit towards graduation and implementation of independent study work plans
- ❖ Provide support to staff with individual student plans
- ❖ Parental reports noting improvement and a high level of satisfaction with services
- ❖ Referrals and resources

Training and Professional Development

Parent Workshops:

- ❖ Introduction to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)
- ❖ Having Hope: Suicide Prevention for Parents
- ❖ How to Talk to Your Kids and Survive

Staff Workshops:

- ❖ Trauma Attuned Models
- ❖ Navigating Student Mental Health for Paraprofessionals

Therapeutic Program in partnership with Rutgers UBHC at Campbell and Edgar

Clinical Services:

- ★ Licensed Clinicians at Campbell & Edgar
- ★ Doctoral level Supervisor
- ★ Direct Services
- ★ Consultation
- ★ Parent Education
- ★ Professional Dev for staff
- ★ Shared resources



Prevention:

- ★ Class lessons
- ★ Coping & calming strategies
- ★ Executive Functioning strategies
- ★ Summer transition programs
- ★ Collaboration/consultation
- ★ Staff wellness support



Intervention:

- ★ Individual therapy
- ★ Psycho-education counseling groups
- ★ Community outreach, referrals & resources
- ★ Crisis intervention & assessment
- ★ Case Management & Referral Services
- ★ Treatment plans and support strategies
- ★ Targeted trainings on student support

Engagement Data for Rutgers UBHC

Campbell Elementary School

- ❖ 12 Students received individual therapy ranging from 1 to 3 times per week; Weekly parent contact ranging from check ins to family therapy sessions.
- ❖ 4 students received support services
- ❖ 10 students participating in Anxiety and Coping counseling groups
- ❖ 62 students participated in the First Grade transition
- ❖ Faculty training on Selective Mutism
- ❖ Class lessons on coping, problem solving, communication and friendship skills
- ❖ Shared lesson material to include in Morning Meeting

Edgar Middle School

- ❖ 14 Students received individual therapy ranging from 1 to 3 times per week; Weekly parent contact ranging from check ins to family therapy sessions.
- ❖ 7 students received support services to assist with keeping them connected in school. These services can range from daily check ins to once per week support.
- ❖ 33 students participated in counseling Groups (Finding Your Focus and Grief Groups)
- ❖ 70 students participated in Fifth Grade Summer Transition
- ❖ 20 Students participated in Freshman Summer Transition
- ❖ No Place for Hate lessons

Expansion of Services through Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds

Students

- ❖ Tutoring for identified subgroups (Special Education, Black, Hispanic)
- ❖ Increased Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) services district wide
- ❖ Increased counseling services through Wellspring at MHS
 - Drop in Counseling, Weekly Counseling and Groups with licensed Clinician
 - Events to increase Awareness/Acceptance, Education and Prevention
- ❖ Learning Strategies Summer Programs
- ❖ Tutoring through FDU teacher practicum
- ❖ Mentoring

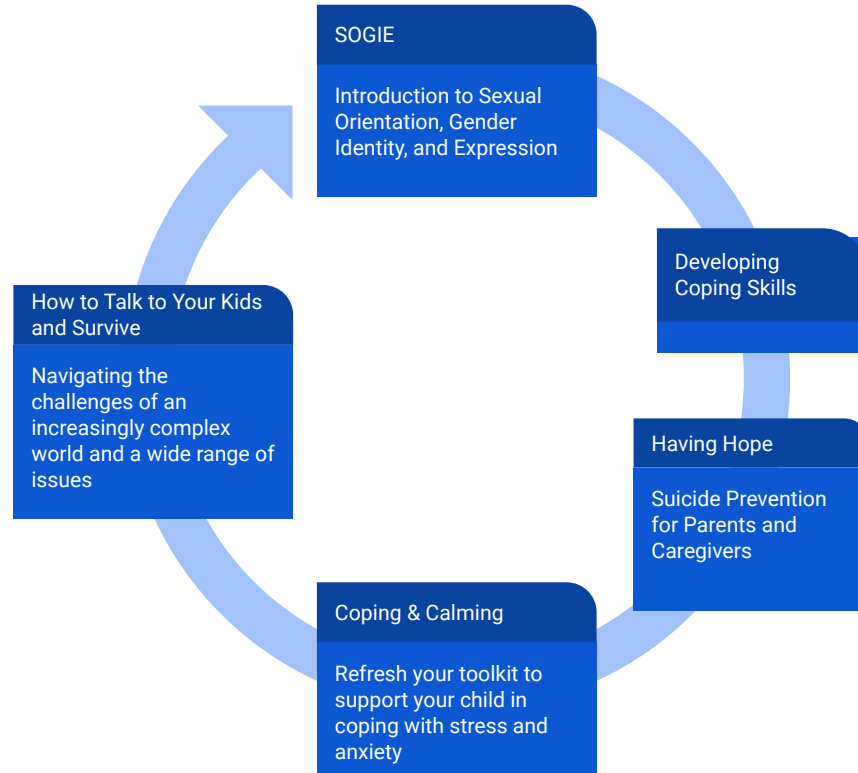
Staff

- ❖ Year 3 of Coping Skills Pilot
 - Teacher Training P-12 with Turnkey Team
 - Embedding coping skills into instruction and daily routines
- ❖ Academic Intervention resources for phonics and writing
- ❖ Certification in Orton Gillingham reading intervention methodology through FDU for 8 general education teachers

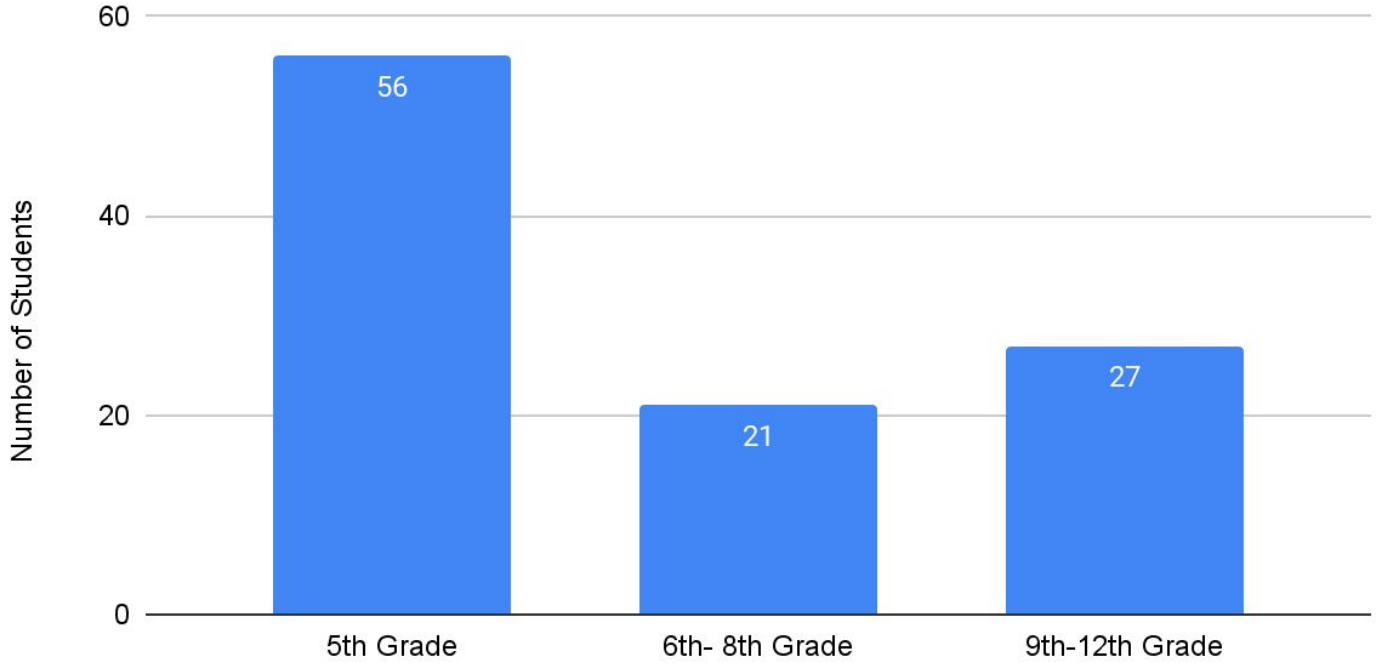
Parents

- ❖ Parent Academy Series on Coping Skills

Parent Academies

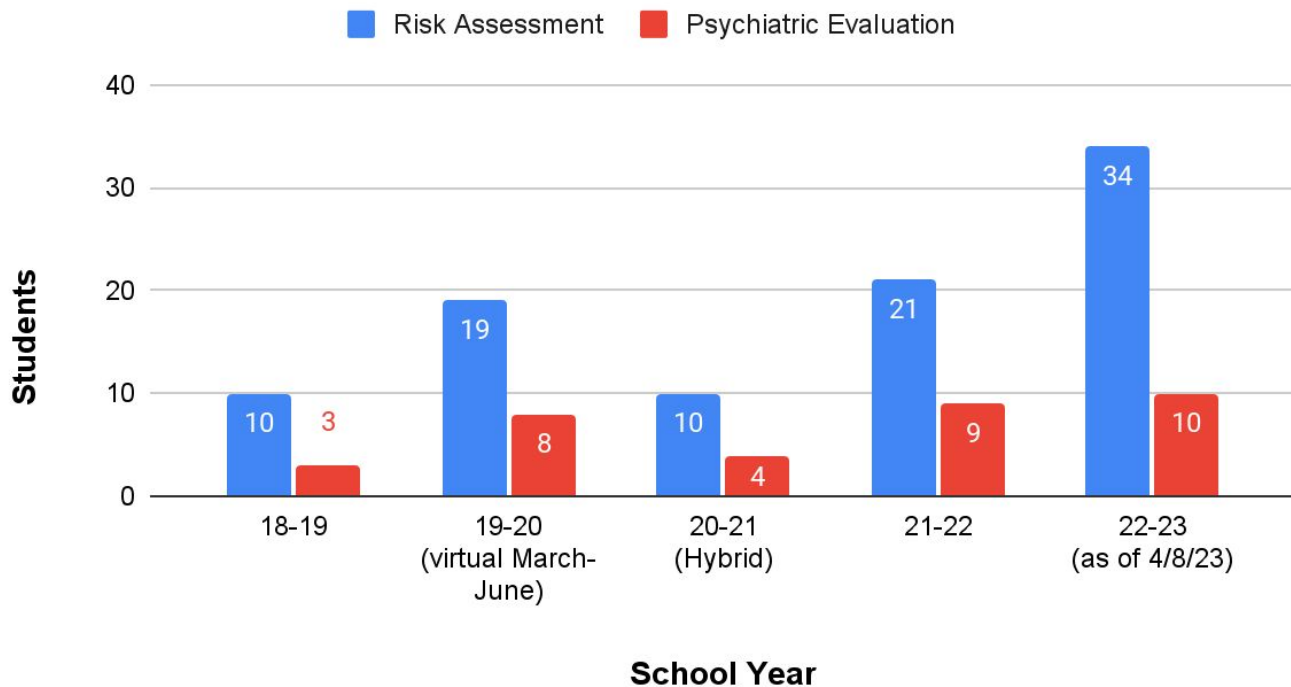


Number of Students Participating in Summer Institute Learning Strategies Classes in Summer 2022



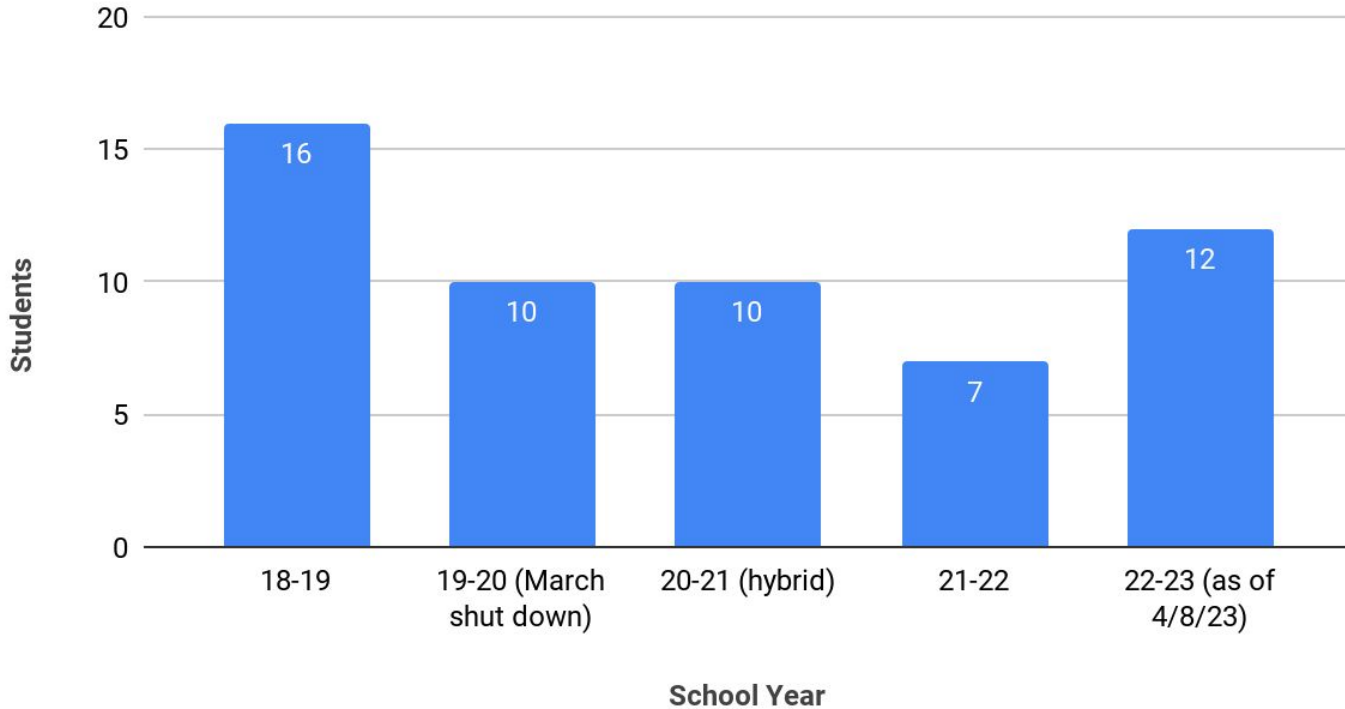
Summer Institute courses are offered at no cost for students in 5th-12th grade

Metuchen Students Referred for Risk Assessment



An increasing number of students indicate signs of crisis and an immediate need for intervention and support. Most students can now be screened by staff in the schools, rather than a hospital setting, and then referred to the appropriate services.

Home Instruction for Mental Health



Most students placed on Home Instruction due to mental health are either hospitalized or enrolled in a day program for intensive mental health services.

As we move forward...

Students:

- Review practices for identification of students in need of more support
- Continue to provide intensive intervention for identified students
- Explore suicide prevention programs and ways to enhance current components

Staff:

- Identify topics for professional development for staff
- Formalize protocols and processes to respond to threat assessments based on new state law
- Formalize annual training for staff and parents on recognizing signs of mental health concerns and suicide risk, as well as ways to access help and supportive strategies

Parents and Families:

- Continue Parent Academy series with timely topics and information
- Continue to provide support and resources

A special thanks
to all of those involved in the daily implementation of this initiative.
It takes a Boro!

