

Mental Health Initiative Update



Metuchen School District

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Presented by:

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Youth Mental Health

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people ages 10-14

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

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

20% of US High School students had serious thoughts of suicide

40% of High School students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year

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/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>



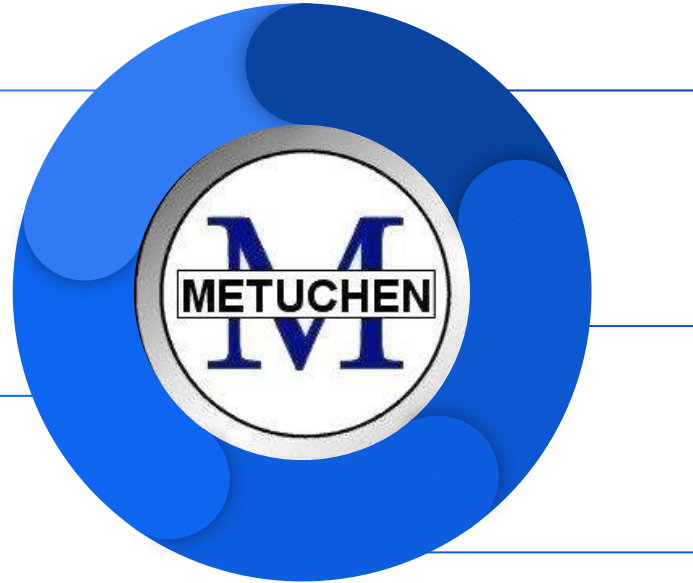
Mental Health Referendum Components

School Psychologists

Services expanded at all schools with two additional 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 services
Increased Intervention services
Individualized intervention plans
Summer Institute programs

Clerical Support

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

2019 and beyond



Initiative Goals

Emotional Wellness → Academic Success

Prevention

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

Education

- Develop 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 and between service providers
- Addressing targeted student needs

Elements of the Mental Health Initiative

Tiered Interventions
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Embedded Curriculum
Character Education Core Skills
Explicit Instruction
Practice and Application
Staff Professional Development
High Quality Resources
Leadership Support
Family and Community Engagement and Partnership
Multidisciplinary Collaboration
Student Leadership and Peer Mentoring
Comprehensive Suicide Awareness Program

Tiered Interventions

Tier 1- UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

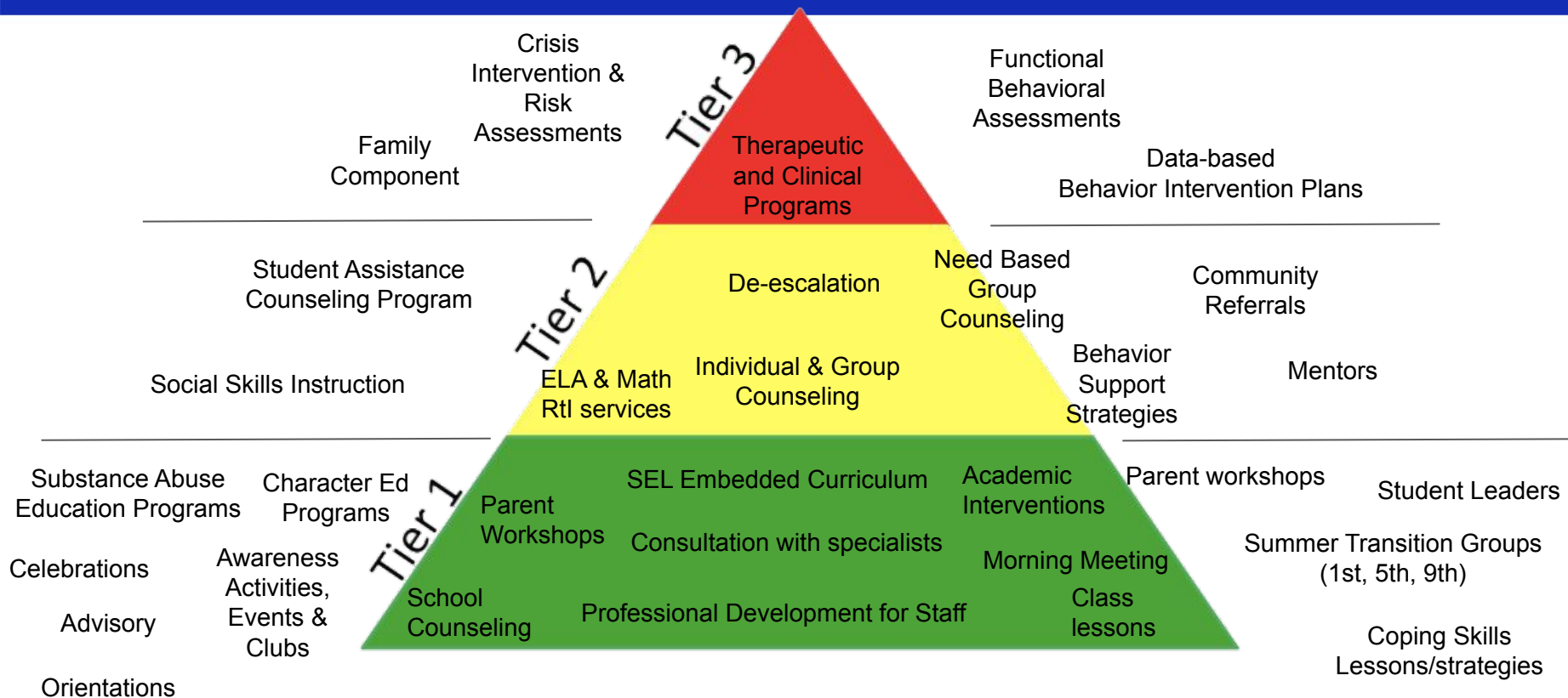
Research based core curriculum, programs and instructional strategies
Explicit instruction with practice and feedback
Differentiation and enrichment
Positive behavioral supports
Culturally responsive practices
Student support services

Tier 2- TARGETED, SMALL GROUP INTERVENTIONS (approx 10-15% of student population)

Research based interventions, supplemental programs and specific strategies

Tier 3- INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS (approx 5% of student population)

Increased frequency, duration and intensity of interventions and services
Highly specialized and targeted
Individualized and data driven



District Wide Tiered Interventions and Supports: Beyond Academics

SEL Embedded into Curriculum

- Aligned with NJDOE and Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) definitions, competencies, and sub competencies
- Written into Curriculum Guides
- 3 Instructional Approaches:
 - Explicit Lessons in target competencies
 - Integrate with Academic Content
 - Embedded in pedagogical practices and routines
- Common Problem Solving Framework, for Inquiry Based Research and social problem solving, aligned to action research steps
 - Select a Focus, Gather Information, Brainstorm and Plan, Act and Observe, Reflect
- Sustainability
 - Supported through New Teacher Orientation, New Teacher Academy (3 year series), In Service Days, Department meetings, Faculty meetings, Professional Development opportunities and District Goals

Character Ed Core Skills

- SEL Competencies
 - Responsible Decision making
 - Social Awareness
 - Relationship Skills
 - Self Awareness
 - Self Management
- Monthly Character Traits and SEL Focus
- Monthly Wellness Focus (physical, psychological, nutritional, environmental, intellectual, etc.)
- Schoolwide touchstone: PRIDE (Purpose, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, Empathy)

Explicit Instruction

- Assemblies, guest speakers & whole school launches
- Schoolwide Class Meetings
- Morning Meeting lessons
- Advisory lessons
- Class lessons & presentations
- Daily announcements to educate, inspire & challenge
- Daily Words of Wisdom with calls to action

Practice and Application

- Interactive bulletin boards
- Coping skills/strategies
- Morning meeting activities
- Lunchtime activities and events
- Restorative practices
- Bright bulldog certificates
- Paws up certificates
- PRIDE Faculty in Service and Heart (FISH) award
- PRIDE Student of the month
- Observances and celebrations focused on belonging, inclusion, acceptance, culture and joy

Staff Professional Development

- Lifelines Trilogy- Prevention, Intervention & Postvention
- Trusted Adult Program
- New Teacher Academy
- Threat Assessment Training
- BCBA staff trainings
- Clinicians led trainings for all staff
- Staff wellness activities

High Quality Resources

- Anti-Defamation League
- No Place for Hate
- Random Acts of Kindness Foundation
- Why Try: Teaching the Skills of Resiliency
- Lifelines Trilogy
- Special Olympics of NJ
- CASEL
- NJDOE
- Wingman Program
- Texts, Read-alouds and videos
- Evidence Based

Leadership Support

- Mental Health Leadership Team (District Administrators, Clinical Directors, Community Experts and Parent Reps)
 - Steering
 - Advisory
 - Collaboration
- School and District student support teams
- District goal alignment
- Whole Child alignment
- Identified district priority

Family & Community Engagement and Partnership

- Having Hope training
- Impact of Social Media
- Supporting Emotional Wellness
- Supports in Metuchen
- SEPAC Student Strategies for Success
- Community resources from Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care and NJ4S
- Metuchen Police Department Collaboration and training with district clinicians

Multidisciplinary Collaboration

- Hot Topic Forums for collaborative problem solving
- Partnerships with Mental Health Providers (RU-UBHC, Wellspring, ESS)
- SAC, CST, Counselors & Clinicians co-planning lessons
- Staff and student advisory
- Parent partnerships/advisory
- Intervention teams (Rtl, 504, I&RS)

Student Leadership and Peer Mentoring

- Bulldog Buddies
- Mental Health Ambassadors
- Wingman
- Peer Leadership
- Unified PE & Club
- Student orientation leaders
- Student Advisory Boards
- Captain's Council for Athletics
- Student outreach fundraising and advocacy
- Coaches and co-curricular club advisors promote kindness, inclusivity and empathy through student led actions

Comprehensive Suicide Awareness Program

- Core Team training on Lifelines Trilogy: Prevention, Intervention and Postvention
- Training for Health/PE teachers on Prevention curriculum
- Implementation of Lifelines Prevention Lessons in 6th, 9th and 11th grade health classes
 - Identify warning signs
 - Trusted adults
 - Seeking support for self and a friend
 - Problem solving skills
- Trusted Adult Campaign for secondary students
- Training for ALL staff on warning signs and strategies for support
- Parent training on *Lifelines* and *Having Hope*
- Revisions to Traumatic Event Plan to align with Lifelines best practices
- Memorialization Committee

Annual Highlights

- Enhanced Mental Health District Leadership Team by adding parent reps and community experts
- Implementation of Lifelines Trilogy as a comprehensive, robust suicide prevention program and curriculum
- Empowering students with tools to identify warning signs and seek assistance for themselves and/or peers
- Professional Development for I&RS Teams, 504 Teams, Child Study Teams, Counselors and Building Administrators on tiered interventions, beyond academics, using the NJTSS framework
- Built staff capacity (certified and non-certified staff at all 4 schools) focused on increased staff awareness of warning signs and risk factors to identify students in need of support
- Superintendent Forums to engage stakeholders on Topics of Mental and Behavioral Health with action steps
- Coaches and Club Advisors district wide focusing on acts of kindness

Next Steps

- Continuity and sustainability of services and programs
- Planning for realignment
- Strategies for supporting students in navigating sensitive topics
- Furthering NJTSS framework and implementation beyond academics
- Fostering kindness, empathy, develop coping and problem solving skills

**Sincere thanks and appreciation to all of those contributing to and supporting
this important initiative.**

It takes a Boro!

