



Kansas Legislative Research Department

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MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION TEAM PILOT PROGRAM

This memorandum provides an overview of the Mental Health Intervention Team Pilot Program created by the 2018 Legislature. The overview includes recent legislation, a program overview, fiscal information through FY 2023, and school district participation through school year 2022-2023.

2018 Legislation

In appropriations bills [Sub. for SB 423](#) and [House Sub. for SB 61](#), the 2018 Legislature created the Mental Health Intervention Team Pilot Program (Program) for FY 2019 “to improve social-emotional wellness and outcomes for students by increasing schools’ access to counselors, social workers, and psychologists statewide” (2018 Sub. for SB 423, Sec. 1(a)). The legislation required school districts and community mental health centers (CMHCs) to enter into partnerships through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to implement the Program. Additionally, the legislation required mental health intervention teams to consist of school liaisons employed by the participating school districts, as well as clinical therapists and case managers employed by the participating CMHCs. The legislation specified nine school districts that would participate in the Program.

The Legislature appropriated \$10.0 million from the State General Fund (SGF) to the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) to fund the Program. The appropriations included \$4.2 million to cover treatment costs for participating students. This amount included \$2.6 million in match for Medicaid costs and \$1.5 million for CMHCs. In addition, the appropriations included \$3.3 million to cover the costs associated with the school liaisons hired by participating school districts. Finally, \$2.5 million was included to create an online database to be used for the Program.

2019 Legislation

In appropriations bill [House Sub. for SB 25](#), the 2019 Legislature reauthorized the Program for FY 2020. The Legislature appropriated \$8.0 million SGF. The Legislature also made several adjustments to the Program, including reappropriating unused funds for the Program from FY 2019 to FY 2020, requiring a 25.0 percent local match for the school liaisons hired by participating school districts, and, finally, providing the State Board of Education (State Board) with the authority to expand the Program to additional school districts for FY 2020.

2020 Legislation

In appropriations bill [SB 66](#), the 2020 Legislature reauthorized the Program for FY 2021 by appropriating \$12.7 million SGF. No other adjustments were made.

2021 Legislation

In appropriations bill [HB 2134](#), the 2021 Legislature reauthorized the Program for FY 2022 by appropriating \$7.5 million SGF. The Legislature also made two adjustments to the Program, allowing KSDE to utilize up to \$3.9 million from federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds for the Program and requiring KSDE to collaborate with the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to create a Kansas foster children annual academic report card. The report card is required to include the number and percentage of students in foster care who participated in the Program or a similar mental health program in a Kansas school, among other data (KSA 72-9944).

2022 Legislation

In appropriations bill [Senate Sub. for HB 2567](#), the 2022 Legislature reauthorized the Program for FY 2023 by appropriating \$10.5 million SGF. The bill also made several adjustments to the Program. These adjustments included:

- Reappropriating unused funds for the Program from FY 2022 to FY 2023;
- Requiring expenditures by KSDE for mental health intervention school liaisons employed by the school districts participating in the Program;
- Requiring that salaries and wages for school liaisons be matched by participating school districts on a \$3 state funding to \$1 school district funding basis (3:1 ratio);
- Requiring that each FY 2022 participating school district continue to receive funding of at least the FY 2022 amount so long as the school district has a similar participation level in FY 2023;
- Requiring that unencumbered money first be used to expand the Program to school districts that had not previously participated in the Program, then be used for school districts which seek to expand existing programs;
- Requiring KSDE to contract with a third-party entity to conduct a study of the effectiveness of the Program; and
- Requiring KSDE to collaborate with the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) to provide a report concerning the effectiveness of the Program, including performance measures, on or before January 1, 2023, to the Director of the Budget and Director of Legislative Research.

2023 Legislation

In the 2023 Session, the House Committee on Appropriations introduced [HB 2444](#), which would codify the entirety of the Program in statute. The House Committee on K-12 Education Budget held a hearing on the bill on March 8, 2023. No further action was taken on the bill, and it remains in the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget.

In appropriations bill [SB 25](#), the 2023 Legislature reauthorized the Program for FY 2024 by appropriating \$13.5 million SGF. The 2023 provisos generally required that the entirety of the Program continue to operate in the same manner as under previous funding provisos, including reappropriating unused funds for the Program from the current fiscal year to the budget fiscal year. However, the Legislature did include a few adjustments to the Program, including:

- Capping the amount of funding through the Program's grants, with the maximum school liaison's salary at \$50,000;
- Establishing that school districts will receive an amount equal to 33 percent of the Program grant to pass through to the partnering CMHC;
- Specifying that only a CMHC can participate as a partnering mental health provider for the purpose of the Program;
- Requiring the school liaison to have a bachelor's degree in any field of study,;
- Removing language that required a 3:1 ratio funding match of state funding to local funding; and
- Removing language requiring KSDE to use new funding to expand programs to new school districts.

Program Overview

Scope of Program

As currently implemented by KSDE, the Program focuses on providing care to two groups of students, the alpha group and the beta group.

- The “alpha group” consists of youth who are children in need of care (CINC) and are in state custody. These students have experienced multiple placements and moved school districts multiple times throughout the school year; and
- The “beta group” consists of all other youth (non-CINC) who are in need of mental health support services.

Duties of Intervention Team Members

School Liaisons

The duties of school liaisons employed by participating school districts include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying appropriate referrals;
- Acting as a liaison between the school district and the CMHC;
- Helping the CMHC prioritize interventions for identified students;
- Facilitating connections between identified students' families and the CMHC staff;
- Communicating with child welfare contacts to ascertain the educational history of a student who has moved schools; and
- Gathering outcomes to monitor the effectiveness of the program.

Clinical Therapists

The duties of clinical therapists employed by participating CMHCs include, but are not limited to:

- Helping the school liaison identify appropriate referrals and prioritize interventions for identified students;
- Conducting a clinical assessment of the identified student and making appropriate treatment recommendations;
- Providing individual and family therapy;
- Communicating with school personnel to convey a student's diagnosis, family circumstances, and suggested interventions; and
- Gathering outcome data to monitor the effectiveness of the Program.

Case Managers

The duties of case managers employed by participating CMHCs include, but are not limited to:

- Working with the school liaison and clinical therapist to identify and prioritize students for treatment interventions;

- Providing outreach to students, families, and child welfare contacts to help engage in treatment;
- Helping maintain communication among all entities involved, including the student and their family, the student's school, involved clinicians, involved child welfare agencies, and the community;
- Making referrals to appropriate community resources; and
- Helping to reconnect students and families when steps of the treatment process are not being completed.

Memorandums of Understanding

Participating school districts are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Program, between the school district and its partner CMHC. This MOU outlines how the school district and CMHC will cooperate in the implementation of the Program. Such MOU must be signed by both the school district and the CMHC and must be included in the grant program application the school district submits to KSDE. KSDE produces and distributes a standard memorandum for this agreement, but does not require school districts to use the KSDE form.

Previously, in FY 2019, KSDE entered into a MOU with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) concerning the distribution of the funding for Medicaid-related costs. During FY 2019, Medicaid funding for the Program was distributed to the participating school districts. The school districts then made payments to KDHE. In FY 2020, KSDE paid KDHE directly for Medicaid-related costs. This MOU was not continued after FY 2020.

Breakdown of Funding

Total funding appropriated for the Program for FY 2023 was \$13.5 million SGF, including \$51,768 reappropriated from FY 2022 to FY 2023. The 2023 Legislature appropriated \$13.4 million SGF for FY 2024.

The majority of the Program funding flows through participating school districts. The following is a description of the two different grants available to school districts.

School liaison grant. This grant is distributed to school districts on a monthly basis. School districts must submit requests each month to cover anticipated expenditures. Allowable expenditures for this grant include salary, fringe benefits, travel expenses, and a computer that must be used exclusively by the school liaison. As of FY 2020, participating school districts must cover 25.0 percent of the total liaison costs. School liaison grant funding for FY 2023 was \$5.4 million, compared to \$5.0 million in FY 2022.

CMHC grant. This grant is distributed quarterly to school districts. School districts must forward all payments to the participating CMHC to cover the cost for treatment and services for students who are uninsured or underinsured. CMHC grant funding for FY 2023 was \$3.0 million, compared to \$2.5 million in FY 2022.

Reporting Requirements

KSDE requires participating school districts to submit, in conjunction with their partner CMHC, two reports during each fiscal year. These reports track the number of students served and various academic performance measures, including attendance, behavior, and graduation.

KSDE provided the report concerning the effectiveness of the Program required by 2022 legislation, including performance measures, to the 2023 Legislature on December 30, 2022.

Participating School Districts

During the first year of the Program (FY 2019), a total of 9 school districts participated, serving 82 schools and 1,708 students. Using the authority provided in 2019 House Sub. for SB 25, the State Board expanded the Program for FY 2020. The Program served 3,266 students in 180 schools in 32 school districts during FY 2020. In FY 2021, the Program expanded again, serving 4,711 students in 56 school districts across 212 schools. In FY 2022, the Program served 5,117 students in 55 school districts across 232 school buildings. In FY 2021, one school district applied and was not able to hire a liaison, so it did not receive funding and did not reapply for the Program in FY 2022. In FY 2023, the Program expanded to serve 6,014 students in 67 school districts across 349 school buildings. The table below summarizes participation information.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS			
Fiscal Year	Total Number of Students	Total Number of School Districts	Total Number of Schools
2019	1,708	9	82
2020	3,266	32	180
2021	4,711	56	212
2022	5,117	55	232
2023	6,014	67	349