

Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Services (BHS), in partnership with the County Office of Education (COE), was awarded a four-year, \$6 million MHSSA grant to support school-based mental health services starting in September 2021.

Mental Health Student Services Act

The Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) was passed in 2019 to establish partnerships between County Behavioral Health Departments and County Offices of Education or other local educational entities. Through the MHSSA, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission has awarded grants to support these partnerships and expand mental health services to students across the State of California.

Contra Costa County MHSSA Grant

In Contra Costa County, this grant will be used to support the Wellness in Schools Program (WISP). The WISP seeks to provide all students in the County with access to needed behavioral health services and supports in a timely manner. The mission of the WISP is to:

1. **Build capacity of the County's schools** to identify and address student behavioral health;
2. Establish a more uniform **awareness of the range of existing behavioral health services** and supports available to students and their families/caregivers in the County;
3. Create increased **understanding of how to access those** services and supports;
4. Foster **an appreciation for the importance of mental health wellness** and a community that welcomes seeking mental health help; and
5. **Increase communication and collaboration** between BHS, the COE, and school districts.

The WISP will accomplish this through a tiered mix of services that leverages and expands upon existing school-based behavioral health services. The \$6 million grant will allow for broad support to schools over the next 4 four years that would benefit all students, as well as more targeted support to high-need and underserved school districts and to parents/caregivers of students identified with moderate or acute behavioral health concerns.

	Tier 1: Baseline Preventative Behavioral Health Training & Technical Assistance	Tier 2: Moderate Parent/ Caregiver & Student Support	Tier 3: Intensive Parent/ Caregiver Support
Target Recipients	100% of students and their families	Students identified with moderate behavioral health concerns and their families	Students identified with acute behavioral health concerns and their families
Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher and staff training ▪ Mental health awareness communications ▪ Technical assistance to schools for Wellness Centers and establishing screening mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scale up existing PEI-funded parent/caregiver support program ▪ Establish student mental health support groups ▪ Parent Champions provide navigation support in each school district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-on-one navigation support for parents/ caregivers ▪ Expand existing PEI- and MediCal-funded direct mental health services in high-need or underserved school districts
Goal	Increase capacity of teachers and staff across all County school districts to identify and escalate behavioral health concerns	Equip parents/caregivers to proactively address emerging behavioral health concerns before they increase in severity	Ensure that families successfully access needed behavioral health services and supports

WISP Implementation and Oversight

- ❖ **Governance Group:** This group will convene regularly to review progress, troubleshoot emerging issues, and identify opportunities for quality improvement. Comprised of the WISP Manager and representatives from BHS and COE.
- ❖ **School-Based Mental Health Collaborative:** This collaborative will regularly convene and serve as a key venue for capacity building and establishing linkages between the County's school system and a variety of behavioral health providers. Comprised of representatives from the COE, BHS, the County's school districts, CBOs, and others.
- ❖ **Youth Mental Health Coalition:** This coalition will periodically convene to provide input on WISP activities and help to identify current and emerging issues related to mental health among their peers. Comprised of student representatives.
- ❖ **WISP Manager:** New position that will oversee the planning, implementation, evaluation, and CQI of all the County's WISP activities. This individual will report on program progress; facilitate the School-Based Mental Health Collaborative and Youth Mental Health Coalition; and supervise the WISP Liaisons, Foster and Homeless Youth Navigator, and the Parent Champions.
- ❖ **WISP Liaisons:** Four individuals will be hired for each region in the County (North, South, East, West) to provide technical assistance and support to the districts in their region. These individuals will serve as a resource for Parent Champions and District Liaisons, support stigma reduction and 211 awareness, provide one-on-one navigation support to parents/caregivers of students identified with acute behavioral health concerns in their region, and provide technical assistance to schools seeking to establish, expand, or improve their Wellness Centers and establish a mental health screening mechanism.
- ❖ **Foster and Homeless Youth Navigator:** A new position established by COE who will provide one-on-one navigation support to parents/caregivers of foster and homeless youth identified with acute behavioral health concerns across the County.
- ❖ **District Liaisons:** Each school district will identify a liaison to support the WISP. District Liaisons will deliver trainings to school staff on a range of behavioral health and wellness-related topics and work closely with the WISP Manager and WISP Liaisons to communicate their district's needs and resources.
- ❖ **Parent Champions:** Through lived experience of navigating the children and youth behavioral health system, champions will provide peer support to parents/caregivers of students with behavioral health needs as they work to identify and access behavioral health services and supports.

Grant Timeline

The MHSSA grant will begin in September 2021 with funding continuing through August 2025. The WISP will be implemented in a phased approach beginning with Tier 1 services in all school districts and Tier 2 services in high-need districts. All districts are expected to be receiving all WISP services by the end of 2022. The County plans to continue funding the WISP once the MHSSA grant has concluded.

