

Building Partnerships to Meet Students' Wellness Needs

Minnesota School Board Association
Leadership Conference 2023

MAHTOMEDI PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELLNESS IN ACTION



WHY WE STARTED A WELLNESS PROGRAM

- Our district strategic plan calls on us to "ensure the social and emotional well-being of each student with an emphasis on mental wellness."
- Families expressed interest and voiced need.
 - Surveyed Families-Results showed a need and informed plan
 - Barriers to access appointments- waitlists, time (evenings are difficult for families)

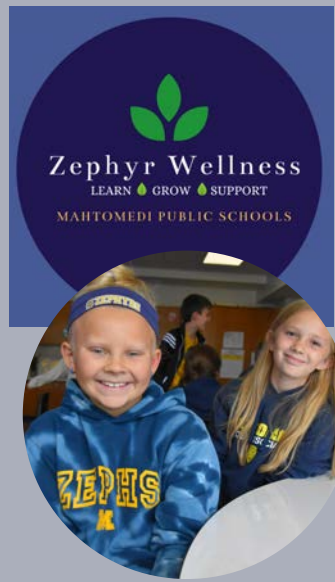
Tony Pierce
Director of Student Support Services
651-407-2164 | tony.pierce@isd832.net

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTH HOMES

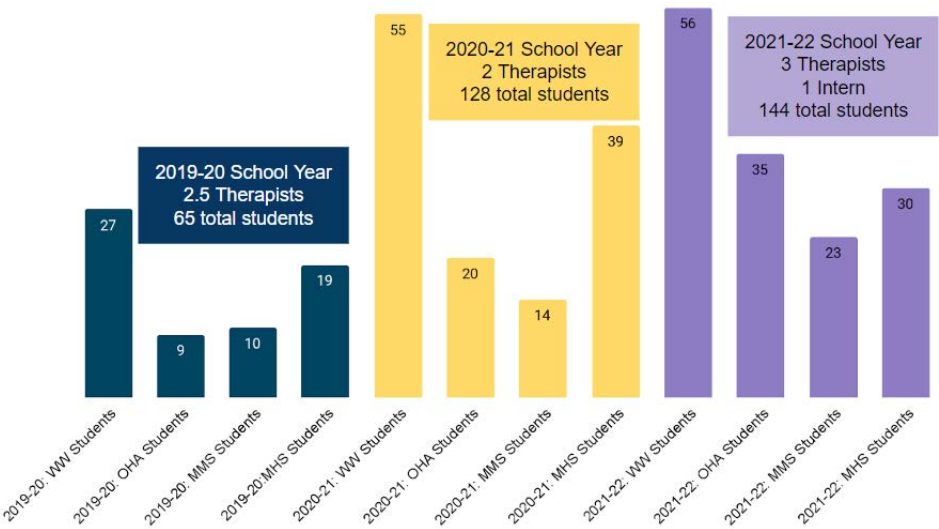
- Mental Health Therapists available in each building
- Grant-funded (grant contributes to access of services and staffing)
- Staffing based on student need (when we have an increasing need, we increase staffing-ongoing)
- The provider manages staff hiring. The Director of Student Support is involved in the hiring process.
- 2022: Addition of Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) in each building (students who receive therapy can access services addressing student needs related to their individual therapy plan). Funding for CTSS services is provided by Minnesota Health Care Programs (for eligible families) and the School Linked Mental Health Grant (families with private insurance)
- Therapy services are billed through insurance (private or MHCP)
- Grant funding is available for underinsured families.

ZEPHYR WELLNESS PROGRAM

- Created plan in collaboration with our educational foundation (Mahtomedi Area Educational Foundation) to begin addressing mental health needs. Approximately \$70,000. Priorities for funding:
 - Prevention (community presentations for families and staff, CEU offered, student engagement conversations-schedule needs)
 - Intervention (staff development, ACES training, and support strategies)
 - Support (service and support during the school day, by 832 staff and North Homes, staff mental health support)
 - Uninsured or underinsured support for services-No denial of services



CO-LOCATED SERVICES OVER TIME



2022-23

- Wildwood Elementary School (Pre-K-Grade 2)**
Therapy - 31 clients receiving therapy (13 referrals in process)
CTSS - 19 (all therapy clients)
- O.H. Anderson Elementary School (Grades 3-5)**
Therapy - 37 clients receiving therapy (9 referrals in process)
CTSS - 18 (all therapy clients)
- Mahtomedi Middle School (Grades 6-8)**
Therapy - 20 clients receiving therapy (3 referrals in process)
CTSS - 15 (2 NOT therapy clients, receive therapy outside school)
- Mahtomedi High School (Grades 9-12)**
Therapy - 18 clients receiving therapy (10 referrals in process)
CTSS - 14 (3 NOT therapy client, receive therapy outside school)

THE IMPACT OF PRIORITIZING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IN OUR DISTRICT

- The mental health/wellness needs of students are part of conversations and considerations across the district
- Removed stigma of students accessing services and families asking for support
- Increased community collaboration
 - Community agencies reach out to partner with the school district to provide additional mental health support, for example, new student groups (after-school opportunities)
- Staff agency to start new initiatives
 - Therapy dogs-two dogs at middle school, one at high school
 - Readiness for Advanced Academics Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) Groups
 - All students identified receive SEL-integrated activities/lessons
 - 3rd-8th grade (2nd-grade groups begin this spring)
 - Occurs during What I Need (WIN) time at the elementary level and lunch in grades 6-8
 - CTSS (Executive function)
 - Additional wellness supports: counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and teachers creating mental health groups and activities (classroom-level talks, small group talks based on similar mental health needs, special education-focused small groups, high school flex time offerings that are wellness-focused like walking)



READY TO START CO-LOCATED SERVICES?



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Find a service provider that matches needs and wants of the district and establish a strong working partnership.
- Identify private one-on-one spaces in school buildings where services can be held.
- Your current mental health staff need to buy-in and support the provider services. This can be done through training and relationships where the provider is sending staff information.
- By school building, your teachers and staff should know how the referral process works and are able to answer questions when families ask. This happens when the referral process is embedded into annual school information and training structure.
- Families are informed about the program and how to access services. In our district, counselors or principals share information directly with families indicating a need. All families are regularly informed through the provider's quarterly newsletter featured in the district electronic newsletter (all staff, families, secondary students, and community members who opt-in, receive this newsletter)
- Establish how providers share the student's wellness information with their teachers (partnership and agreement with families and providers, release of information)