

Marion County Mental Health Policy

Marion County Board of Education recognizes that the social and emotional wellbeing of students should be addressed and promoted in order to maximize academic achievement. In accordance with this principle, protocols and policies will be adopted that address the prevention, early identification, referral, and follow up of student mental health needs.

The Mental Health Policy is designed to improve student achievement by reducing fragmentation of services and aligning and integrating mental health services to children. The policy addresses the infrastructure necessary to coordinate, improve, and evaluate support programs currently offered in school and in the community. It does not require new program development, but calls on our school system to consider how best to support resilience in youth, identify students who need in-school mental health support, and provide a family driven and seamless integration within established community systems of care.

1. The Marion County BOE will align systems and available resources to enable all pupils to have an equal opportunity for success at school by addressing barriers to and promoting engagement in learning and teaching. This includes prevention, early intervention, referral and follow up policies and procedures within a system of care.¹
2. Marion County BOE shall develop and maintain a positive school climate in all schools ensuring a global approach to addressing barriers to learning and promoting resilience in children. Current laws regarding the prevention of hazing, bullying, and intimidation will be fully implemented as an essential element in the protection of student mental health and the fostering of a positive school climate.²
3. According to the Tennessee Comprehensive School Counseling Model and other curriculum standards³, Marion county BOE staff will provide students with effective early intervention activities such as social and emotional learning, positive behavior supports and strength-based developmental assets.
4. School personnel shall create a plan whereby appropriate staff can provide proactive on-site support services to students having social, emotional, and mental health concerns, including those students that do not meet criteria for special education services.⁴
5. Marion County BOE administration will require staff and administrators to attend professional development on how to identify warning signs of emotional and behavioral barriers to learning, how to address such barriers, and promote engagement in learning.⁵ School staff new to the district shall receive this professional development in a timely manner.

6. Marion County BOE staff will utilize clearly identified referral protocols for in-school student support that is easily accessible to all students, families, and school personnel. Intentional effort will be made to reduce stigma, keep the referral process simple and user friendly, and provide a variety of strategies to assist students in need.

7. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between schools and community resources will be created to enable effective linkages for services. These MOUs will include agreements regarding the responsibility of both entities with respect to working together (e.g. formal linkages, weaving resources together, sharing information, making and accepting referrals, intervention during and after a crisis).⁶ The MOUs will be reviewed and updated as needed.

8. Consistent with HIPAA⁷ and FERPA⁸ standards, all materials will protect the confidentiality of each student throughout the referral process.

9. As prescribed by existing policy unless otherwise specified by law, ⁹ policies will assure parental consent prior to making a student referral.

10. Marion County BOE staff will facilitate smooth transitions for students who are entering and exiting the classroom due to involvement with community mental health treatment, Department of Children's Services including juvenile justice services, or other child serving programs.

11. Marion County Director of Schools will appoint a team leader to oversee overall implementation of the Mental Health policy. Team leaders will engage the participation of families¹⁰, students, educators, community mental health providers, local Department of Children's Services, and local juvenile court representatives, as well as all student support divisions within the district (including school social work, school counseling, school psychology, and coordinated school health) in the development of local protocols and MOUs. These local protocols shall address routine concerns as well as crisis response. Referral protocols will be family driven, student guided, and whenever possible allow for universal access. The Mental Health team will meet regularly to review the integration and alignment of services.

12. Successful strategies used to address barriers to learning include promoting a positive school climate, providing in-school support to students that enhance their social and emotional development, establishing clear and effective relationships with community agencies, and developing effective transition practices between schools and community programs and therefore will be incorporated into the continuous school improvement plan as well as the Tennessee Comprehensive System-wide Planning Process.

13. Marion County BOE will use the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment Instrument (CANS). The CANS provides a common language, objective criteria to support decisions about intervention plans and intensity of services, monitors progress through outcome measures, and supports quality improvement initiatives. Information from the CANS serves as a valuable tool to assist in making decisions regarding the nature and intensity of targeted

student services within the school and with partnering agencies. The CANS is consistent with system of care values and principles, focusing on the needs of children and families.

14. Marion County BOE policies will honor cultural diversity, provide culturally and linguistically competent services, and respect the dignity of all individuals.

¹ See T.C.A. §49-1-1002

² See T.C.A. §49-6-801, §49-6-1016, §49-6-4216, §49-2-120

³ Tennessee School Counseling Model, Policy 5.103, pp. 60-74

⁴ See T.C.A. §49-5-302, §49-6-303, TN Dept. of Ed. SBOE rule 0520-2-2-.26, SBOE

Standards and Guidelines 5.103

⁵ See T.C.A. §49-6-3004(c) (1)

⁶ See T.C.A. §33-1-308

⁷ See Public Law 104-191

⁸ See 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99

⁹ See T.C.A. §10-7-504(4) (A), §§33-3-206—33-3-209, §37-1-403, §37-1-605, §33-8-202

¹⁰ See TN SBOE Policy, Standards, and Guidelines 4.207

Additional resources:

State

Tennessee Office of Coordinated School Health, Tennessee Department of Education

www.tennessee.gov/education/schoolhealth

Tennessee Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Guidelines

www.state.tn.us/education/ci/doc/tncomschconsmdl.doc

Tennessee Voices for Children

www.tnvoices.org

Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

www.tspn.org

National

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Mental Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/mentalhealth/index.htm>

Center for School Mental Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine

<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

<http://www.casel.org/>

National Community of Practice on Collaborative School Behavioral Health

<http://www.sharedwork.org/section.cfm?as=4&ms=4>

National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/find.asp>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Model Program Guide

http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index.htm

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

<http://www.pbis.org/main.htm>

Search Institute – Developmental Assets

www.search-institute.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<http://www.samhsa.gov>

Tennessee National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

<http://www.namitn.org/>

UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>