

## **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS**

### **Rationale**

The District and the Federation agree that supporting student mental health and wellness in Saint Paul Public Schools is critical to addressing the predictability of disparities by race, socioeconomic status, and disability. In fact, supporting student mental health accelerates learning and achievement for all students. For this reason, the District currently invests more than \$40 million in staff who provide student mental health support. These district staff members (e.g. counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and intervention specialists) provide critical support to our students.

In addition to our own employees, the District invests over \$300,000 in School Based Mental Health programs, through which more than 30 mental health practitioners and professionals from the community support the students in our schools.

The following proposal updates contract language to match this philosophy and work.

### **ARTICLE 26. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS**

#### **SECTION 1. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS**

The District and the Federation agree that supporting student mental health and wellness in St. Paul is a critical step to addressing the predictability of disparities by race, socioeconomic status, and disability, and will accelerate learning and achievement for all students.

**The District and Federation agree that it is part of everyone's role in the SPPS community to support student mental health and wellness. We do this by providing empathy, support and building authentic relationships with every student, even when the adults feel challenged. We also acknowledge that some students need additional support.**

**Therefore, student mental health and wellness needs are best served by a continuum of services and supports. ~~This includes a team of trained professionals and support staff at each Pre K-12 school including Licensed School Social Workers, Licensed School Counselors, Licensed School Psychologists, Licensed School Nurses, Health Assistants and Intervention Specialists.~~**

**The District and Federation agree to use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of Mental Health Supports: “mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood, adolescence through adulthood.”**

To that end, the parties have agreed to the following:

In order to create effective mental health support structures across SPPS, the parties agree to maintain a student mental health team at each school serving PreK-12 students. Teams will include, at a minimum:

- A licensed school social worker
- A licensed school counselor
- An intervention specialist
- A licensed school nurse
- A health assistant when applicable
- A licensed school psychologist
- **An Administrator**

The parties agree that not all positions will be serving the building in the same capacity and in some cases, itinerant team members may not be available to fully participate in the work of the team.

**~~For the 2022-2023 school year, the current number of district allocations directly serving students will remain, with the exception of additional school psychologists position 6 FTEs of licensed school psychologists. The Federation agrees not to file a grievance if all 6 positions are not filled due to a lack of acceptable applicants. The district will post these positions within two weeks of ratification and work with the lead school psychologist to recruit and complete the hiring process in a timely manner.~~**

Positions may be reallocated across district sites. The current number of positions will be allocated to buildings based on enrollment and needs of the building and the students served. **~~The parties agree to discuss allocations at the Professional Issue Committee and come to an agreement on final placements.~~** If mental health support positions are not filled by October 1, in consultation with district hiring subject matter experts, schools may repurpose that funding and work with district administration to access alternative services to meet student needs for the school year.

SPFE positions, within this article of the contract, serving Non-Public schools and/or grant funded positions will be maintained contingent upon continued funding.

**~~Starting with the 2023-2024 school year the parties will meet to review current enrollments and discuss allocations for the upcoming school year.~~** The district will continue to work towards achieving the following staffing goals:

- Licensed General Education Social Workers: 1:500 staff to student ratio district wide
- Licensed School Counselors: 1:250 staff to student ratio district wide
- School Psychologists: 1:700 staff to student ratio district wide
- Licensed School Nurses: Full time health office support for elementary schools; 1.0 FTE **staffed by a licensed school nurse and health assistants or a combination of a licensed school nurse and health assistant. Full time health office support for secondary schools; 1.0 FTE licensed school nurse support for secondary schools with a student population over 500, with health assistant support.**
- Intervention Specialists: A minimum of one per elementary school and a 1:300 staff to student ratio for secondary schools.

## ARTICLE 26. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS (continued)

### SECTION 1. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS (continued)

Subd. 1. Position titles. Mental health support teams will include: Intervention Specialists, Licensed School Social Workers, Licensed School Nurses, Health Assistants, Licensed School Psychologists, and Licensed School Counselors. These individual positions will each play a distinct and important role in providing complementary mental health support to the school. The descriptions below illustrate typical functions and are not official job descriptions:

Licensed School Social Workers: Trained mental health professionals who can assist with mental health concerns, behavior concerns, positive behavioral support, academic and classroom support, consultation with teachers, parents and administrators as well as provide individual and group counseling. School Social Workers have special expertise in understanding family and community systems and linking students and their families with community services essential to promote student success. School Social Workers' training includes specialized preparation in cultural diversity, systems theory and social justice, risk assessment and intervention, consultation and collaboration and clinical intervention strategies to address the social emotional and mental health needs of students.

Licensed School Social Workers: assigned to Special Education work specifically with students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet their identified needs.

Licensed School Counselors: Professionals who are uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, transition, career and social/emotional development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that proactively promotes and enhances student success. The School Counselor will work directly with students and families daily to proactively support mental wellness through classroom lessons for all students, evidence based small group counseling and individual counseling support. In addition, counselors assist in the coordination of post-treatment plans for students and refer students for school or community based mental health support.

Licensed School Psychologists: Highly qualified members of school teams who support students' ability to learn and collaborate with teachers to problem solve and support instruction. They apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior, to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. School Psychologists partner with families, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals to help create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community. School Psychologists receive specialized advanced graduate and postgraduate preparation that includes coursework and practical experience relevant to both psychology and education.

Licensed School Nurses: Healthcare professionals who understand the link between health and learning. They provide a comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing student health problems, including mental health concerns, that interfere with learning. The school nurse leads change to advance overall health. Licensed school nurses collaborate with school staff,

students' families, and community members to keep students safe at school and healthy to learn.

Health Assistants: Staff with health-related experience that work under the direction and training of a licensed school nurse. Health assistants support the day to day health needs of students and identify and communicate potential concerns and risks for further evaluation by or in consultation with a licensed school nurse. Health assistants collaborate with school staff, students' families, and community members to keep students safe at school and healthy to learn.

Intervention Specialists: Educational support professionals who have the most regular direct contact with students. They provide behavioral support for students beyond Tier 1 in a Multi-Tiered System of Support and support re-entry into the classroom by assisting students in assessing their behavior.

## ARTICLE 26. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS (continued)

### SECTION 1. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS (continued)

Subd. 2. Licensed School Counselor and Licensed School Social Worker Duties. It is essential that Licensed School Counselors and Licensed School Social Workers are able to perform their duties according to their professional training. To ensure this occurs, the parties have agreed to the following:

- The following duties shall not be assigned: Test coordination, teaching classes outside of core counseling curriculum lessons or related social emotional content, performing master scheduler duties, and clerical work (for example: assigned as the sole staff person to write and send attendance letters, transcript editing, etc).
- If it is necessary for them to carry a walkie talkie a schedule will be cooperatively created when they are required to carry a walkie talkie.
- Counselors shall only proctor testing as part of a rotation with other staff.
- In an emergency, counselors may substitute up to one class/prep period when no general education substitute teacher is available. They shall be compensated at the hourly rate stated in Appendix D when subbing.

### SECTION 2. PURPOSE OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS AND DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR TEAM MEMBERS

The purpose of the Mental Health Support Team is to implement and support interventions that reflect best practices in mental health, behavior, and social-emotional learning, including connecting students and families to appropriate community resources. Successful Mental Health Support Teams will engage in interdisciplinary collaboration, case consultation & communication to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of services. **In order to fulfill this purpose, Mental Health Support Teams shall be granted a minimum of two hours per**

~~month of uninterrupted time to meet during the work day. Site teams will provide on-site professional development for school staff focused on mental health and trauma-informed practices and promote a positive message about mental health to decrease stigma and misunderstanding. Site teams will work to schedule professional development according to needs, school schedules and in coordination with the building administrator.~~

~~The parties agree to provide support for mental health support team staff and the development of school teams. The District will provide guidance to school Mental Health Support Teams, share best practices, offer opportunities for interdisciplinary professional development and share community resources.~~

### SECTION 3. MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

The School Mental Health Support Team will provide onsite mental health and trauma informed training **including de-escalation training** for up to a minimum of 6 hours per school year for all staff. The training will be spread throughout the school year and can be a combination of formal training and ongoing consultation with individual staff members. Each site team will work to schedule training according to needs, school schedules and in coordination with the building administrator. **Mental health support team members can request support from their designated department leads as needed.**

### ~~SECTION 4. PROFESSIONAL ISSUE COMMITTEE REVIEW~~

~~The parties agree to discuss and review support for school mental health support teams at the Professional Issue Committee meetings regularly. Either party may request the topic of school mental health support teams to be an agenda item for PIC at any monthly meeting.~~