

# Mental Health Initiative Update



Metuchen School District

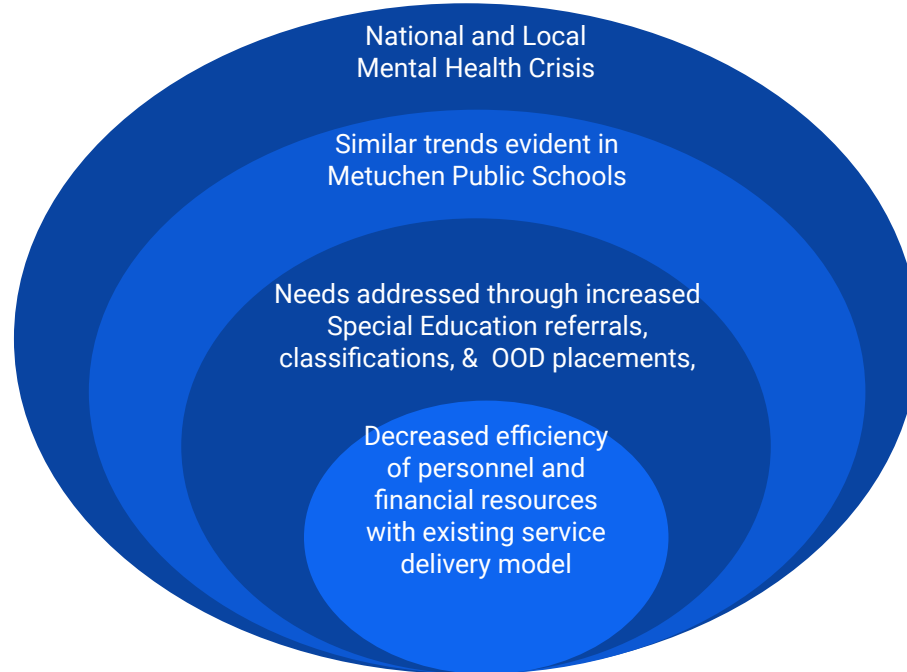
March 2021

Presented by:

Dr. Tania Herzog, Director of Special Services

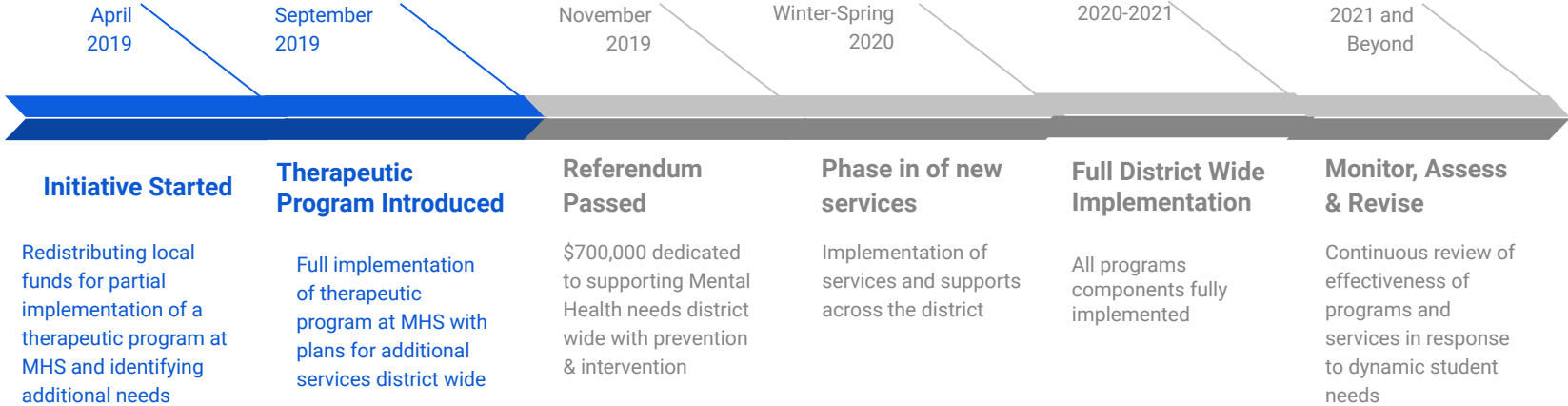


# Identified Needs



Support staff advocated for the need for increased mental health services and a more targeted service delivery model to meet the needs of all students

# Action Steps



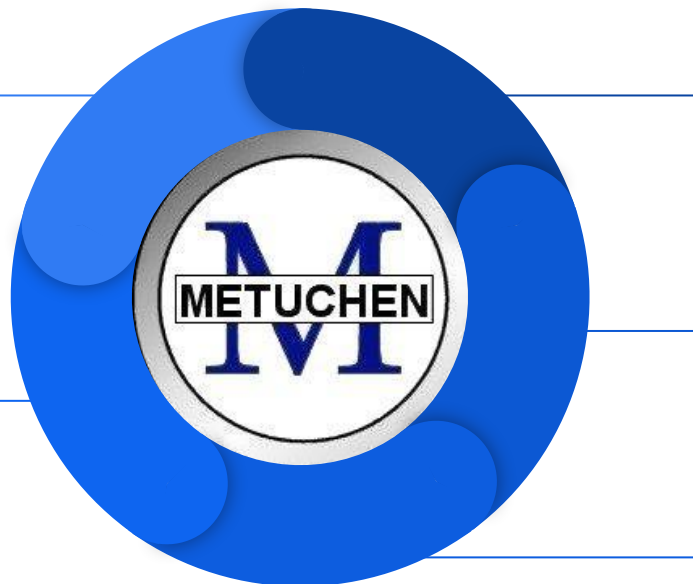
# Mental Health Initiative Components

## School Psychologists

Services expanded at all schools with two new positions

## Behavioral Support

Increased support from Board Certified Behavior Analysts district wide



## Therapeutic Programs

Clinicians added at Campbell & Edgar and continued at MHS

## Academic Interventions

Reading Specialist  
Math Intervention Teacher  
Increased Response to Intervention services  
Individualized intervention plans  
Learning Strategies programs

## Clerical Support

Part time secretary added to increase efficiency and availability of support staff for direct services

# Therapeutic Program at MHS

## In partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS)

- Two Full time Clinicians, One Part-Time Clinician and Regional Director
- Services include:
  - Individual therapy
  - Daily group therapy
  - Learning Strategies class
  - Case management
  - Crisis intervention
  - Family sessions and support groups
  - Professional development for staff
  - Educational resources for staff and families
- Supervision, quality control and progress monitoring by Regional Director
- Services provided to select students enrolled in the program

# Program Goals

## In partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS)

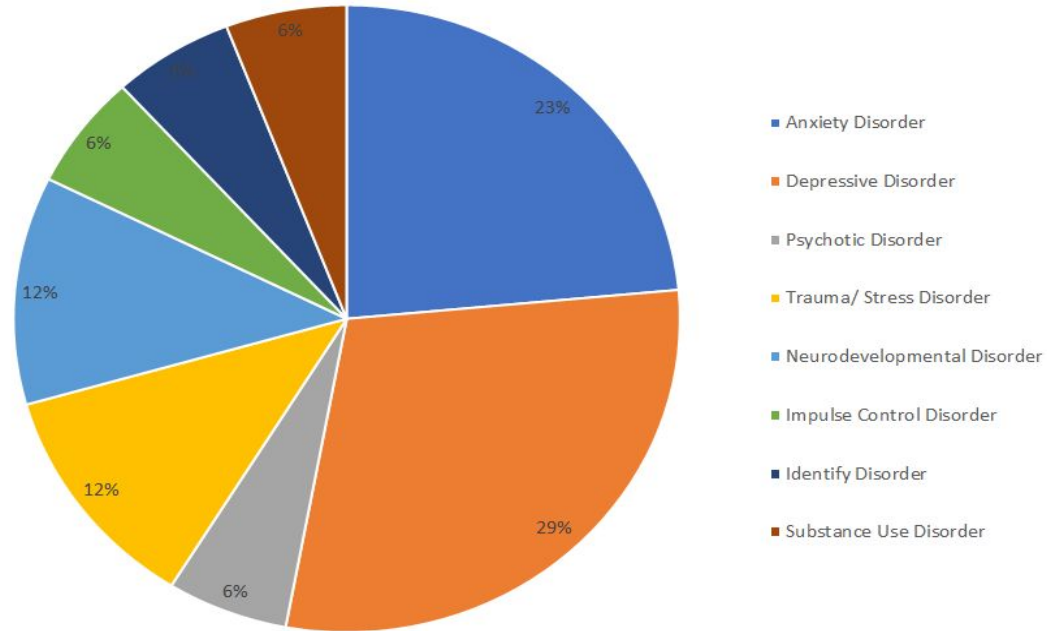
1. Implement Tier 3 Programming at Metuchen High School to serve students that are in acute need of behavioral and mental health supports (identifying and treating comorbid issues)
2. Provide supports and services to stabilize psychological symptomatology within the regular school setting, increasing academic success and reducing the need for alternative placements
3. Provide family counseling, education and coaching for parents to support a strong partnership
4. Offer additional support for students returning to district from alternative placements
5. Meet emerging mental health needs within the high school community and assist with overall district goals related to mental health.

# Key Accomplishments

## In partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS)

- Delivery of intensive intervention programs to participating students
- Academic support through Learning Strategies class
- Collaboration with School Counselors, teachers and Child Study Team
- Bi-weekly structured collaboration meetings to coordinate care
- Delivery of teacher wellness groups
- Professional Development for staff
- Parent presentation for SEPAC
- Services successfully delivered to support students amid the challenges of COVID

# Presenting Diagnostic Categories Identified in partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS)





# Assessing Outcomes

## In partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS)

- Individual Treatment Plans- Monitor goals
- Grades - monitor Genesis gradebook, collect teacher feedback, monitor work completion
- Discipline - Review and track conduct data
- Attendance - Monitor daily and class attendance
- Staff Benefits - Survey teachers
- Engagement- Track services delivered and participation rates
- Parent Feedback - Surveys to parents
- Out of District Prevention- cost benefit analysis
- Effective School Solution has provided services for 20 at risk students

# Next Steps

## In partnership with Effective School Solutions (ESS)

- Professional Development focused on developing Trauma Informed Teachers
- Support students returning from alternative placements
- Increase delivery of presentations to community on topics related to mental health
- Increase dissemination of printed psycho-educational materials to greater scope of recipients

# Therapeutic Program at Campbell and Edgar In partnership with Rutgers UBHC

## Nurturing Empathetic Supportive Trust (*N.E.S.T.*) Program

- Two Clinicians and Clinical Program Manager
- Prevention and intervention services including:
  - Classroom lessons
  - Individual therapy
  - Counseling groups
  - Professional development for staff
  - Family resources
  - Crisis intervention
  - Support for staff
- Supervision, quality control and progress monitoring by Clinical Program Manager

# Program Goals

## In partnership with Rutgers UBHC *N.E.S.T.*

- Philosophy is that emotional wellness = academic success
- Development of prevention and intervention strategies that promote academic and life success for all students.
- Identify and intervene during the early stages of problematic behavior and assist parents and school personnel in developing comprehensive strategies for addressing these behaviors.
- Provide mental health services to students who wouldn't otherwise have access in a safe and accessible setting that reduces mental health stigma.

# Key Accomplishments: Intervention Services

## In partnership with Rutgers UBHC N.E.S.T.

- Groups provided at both Campbell and Edgar school focusing on:
  - Emotional Regulation Skills
  - Executive Functioning Skills
  - Social Skills
  - Problem Solving and Coping
- Services were provided to 57 students including:
  - Counseling groups
  - Daily check-ins
  - Weekly individual Therapy
  - Family therapy
- Weekly collaboration meetings with Student Support teams, building and district administration
- Students expressing suicidal thoughts or ideations at the elementary and middle school level were screened on site in the schools by our Licensed Mental Health Professionals.

# Key Accomplishments: Prevention Services In partnership with Rutgers UBHC N.E.S.T.

- Four week 5th grade and 9th grade transition groups in summer 2020 to support with transition into the new school.
- Coping Skill and Executive Functioning weekly class lesson at Campbell, supplemented with parent tip sheets and teacher follow up activities.
- Coping skills, Emotional Wellness and Executive functioning tips provided during morning announcements and weekly newsletter at Edgar.
- Faculty trainings provided on supporting children with anxiety and depression and staff stress reduction.
- Presentations provided to district parents with strategies for supporting themselves and their children.

# Presenting Treatment Concerns

## Identified in partnership with Rutgers UBHC *N.E.S.T.*

- 52% Experienced Peer Concerns
- 59% Experienced Anxiety
- 32% Experienced Anger/Frustration
- 27% Experienced Behavioral Concerns
- 14% Experienced Depression
- 10% Engaged in Self Harm
- 8% Experienced Suicidal Ideation
- 5% experienced Trauma

# Levels of Support Provided

## In partnership with Rutgers UBHC *N.E.S.T.*

### Edgar Middle School

- 8 Students received individual therapy ranging from 1 to 3 times per week depending on level of need. In addition, there was weekly parent contact ranging from check ins to family therapy sessions.
- 8 students receive intensive support services to assist with keeping them connected in school. These services can range from daily check ins to once per week support.
- 23 students were involved in group.
- 17 participated in Summer Transition Group

### Campbell Elementary School

- 14 Students received individual therapy ranging from 1 to 3 times per week depending on level of need. In addition, there was weekly parent contact ranging from check ins to family therapy sessions.
- 4 students received support services on an as needed basis.
- 7 students were involved in group.
- 55 students participated in Summer Transition Group.

\*Some students receive both individual and group services.



# Assessing Outcomes

## In partnership with Rutgers UBHC N.E.S.T.

### Individual Therapy

- Parent completes the Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC-35) at Intake, at mid year and at the end of the year or completion of treatment.
- Children 11 and older complete a self-report Pediatric-Symptom Checklist (PSC-35) at intake, at mid year and at the end of the year or completion of treatment.

### Group Therapy

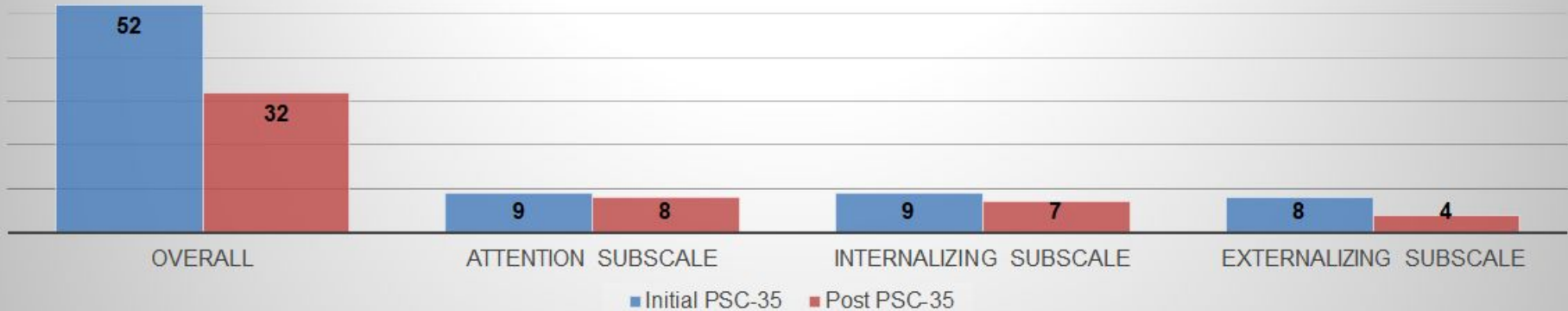
- Students/Parents receive a survey addressing child proficiency in the group topic at the start, middle and end of group.

### Classroom Presentations

- Teacher feedback is provided throughout the process to ensure the programming is improving student coping.

# Sample PSC-35

Student 1 PSC-35



- \*\*28 or above for Overall is impaired
- \*\*7 or above for Attention is significant impairment
- \*\*5 or above for Internalizing is significant impairment with anxiety and or depression
- \*\*7 or above for Externalizing is significant problems with conduct

# Next Steps

## In partnership with Rutgers UBHC *N.E.S.T.*

- Continue to provide more intensive intervention for our most at risk students.
- Work with teachers to identify additional topics for preventative classroom presentations as well as faculty trainings.
- Explore additional group topics as appropriate for student needs.
- Continue to offer transition groups for 5th and 9th grade and add in 1st grade transition.
- Work with parents to identify additional training needs to offer continued parental support.

# School Psychologist & Behaviorist Services

Increased Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) support at each school

Increased School Psychologist presence at each school

Direct services:

- Counseling services
- Student support plans
- De-escalation & crisis intervention
- Executive Functioning groups
- Social Skills groups
- Functional Behavioral Assessments
- Behavior Intervention Plans

Indirect services:

- Consultation
- Intervention
- Program development
- Training for teachers, paraprofessionals and parents



# Other School Counseling Services

The increase in support staff and additional expertise has increased the efficiency of School Counselors, Student Assistance Counselor, Child Study Teams and Administrators

- Support staff is partnering with clinicians to enhance and expand their services
- Shared resources
- Increase in counseling groups offered
- Increased involvement in pre-referral interventions
- Increased involvement in support plans and individual intervention plans
- Academic advisement and counseling
- Career exploration and planning
- Transition support
- Consultation on behavioral manifestation



# Academic Interventions

## Reading Specialist at Campbell:

- Services provided to 21 students
- Accelerated student growth and skill retention
- Collaborates with individual teachers to develop instructional plans, analyze data, assist with small groups during hybrid learning, recommendations of specific resources
- Shares strategies with parents to support student literacy
- Co-facilitates Reading Assessment Committee shares best practices in screening/assessing, guiding reading intervention & guiding next steps

## Math Intervention Teacher at Edgar Middle School:

- Services provided to 37 students
- Utilizes and shares effective intervention resources
- Consistent increases in grades and Link It Scores



# Academic Interventions

## Individualized Support Plans:

- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Summer programs
- Individualized intervention plans

## Learning Strategies summer classes:

- Open to all students in grades 5-12 through Summer Institute

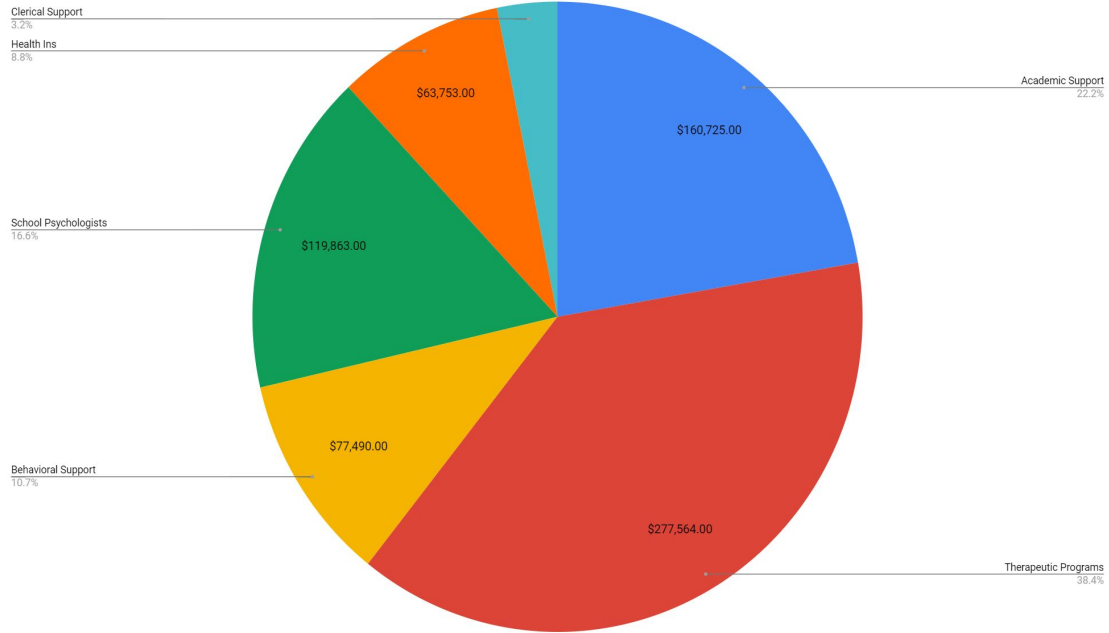
## Transition to Middle School and High School;

- Open to all students in 4th and 8th grade through Summer Institute
- Adding transition to 1st grade program this summer



# Budget Allocations

## Mental Health Initiative 2021-2022





# District Trends in Special Education

	18-19	19-20	20-21
<b>Referrals for Special Education</b>	79	58	36
<b>Classified Students</b>	389	368	382
<b>Home Instruction due to Mental Health Issues</b>	14	10	10
<b># of Special Education Referrals primarily due to emotional concerns</b>	10	11	5
<b>% of Special Education referrals which include emotional concerns secondary to primary referral issue</b>	22%	9%	19%
<b># of Students placed out of district during the current school for therapeutic services</b>	4	2	0
<b>% of Out of District Students primarily placed for therapeutic services</b>	37%	34%	29%

\* 2020-2021 data as of 3/9/2021



# Key Accomplishments

- Tiered interventions and prevention programs (SEL & Academics)
- Enhanced expertise and additional resources
- Direct supports for students, staff, and families
- Professional development
- Structured interdisciplinary collaboration focused on wellness & academic success
- Services for more students
- Adjusted service delivery models to respond to new emerging needs from pandemic

***A special thanks***  
***to all of those involved in the daily implementation of this initiative.***  
***It takes a Boro!***

