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To: Special Committee on Education

From: Craig Neuenswander, Deputy Commissioner  
KSDE Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services

Re: Overview of Mental Health Intervention Team Pilot Program

Chair Williams and members of the Special Committee on Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the history of the Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) Pilot Program. The program began in the 2018-19 school year with nine pilot school districts and their partner, Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC). Now in the fourth year, fifty-five school districts participate. One district had to drop the program last year due to an inability to find a qualified liaison.

The basic structure and goals of the program remain the same.

- School districts and CMHCs sign a Memorandum of Understanding in order to participate.
- School districts hire a liaison to manage the communication and services between the school, CMHC, student, and family.
- The goal is to provide treatment and track the behavioral health needs of students.
- While services are provided for all students in need, a specific focus is on services for those students in foster care.

Some changes within the program have been made.

- In the first year, funding was provided to establish a database of students and services that is available to school districts and CMHCs. This database is housed at KSDE. The funding for development was shifted in the second year to allow more school districts and CMHCs to participate in the program.
- KDHE received funding directly through the program in the first year. It was determined that KDHE had other revenue sources so this funding was also redirected to allow expansion of the program.

- Liaisons were originally required to be certified at the master's level. Experience with the program indicated that a bachelor's level certification will meet the needs for most liaison duties.
- Some school districts now work with mental health providers other than CMHCs.

One significant change in the provision of mental health services is the existence of federal ESSER funds. School districts have access to three separate grants of ESSER funds. To date, districts have identified \$21 million to be use for mental health services in schools. These funds expire in September of 2024, creating a question of how to sustain these services after that point in time.

Now in the fourth year of the MHIT program, school districts and CMHCs are actively working on means to improve, expand, and sustain mental health services for their students.

For more information, contact:

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