



Survey of the Use of Behavioral and Mental Health Programs in Escambia County Public Schools

This Manual was prepared for the use of the Escambia County Public Schools by the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area, Education and Juvenile Justice Committees, 2021. The contents can also be found at www.lwvpba.org under the heading of “publications”.

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Escambia County School District Summary

The Education and Juvenile Justice Committee of the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area is grateful for the assistance of Dr. Timothy Smith, Escambia County District Superintendent, Shenna Payne, Deputy Superintendent and the school principals whose help and support made this survey possible.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021, the committee were interested in and somewhat concerned about the encounters between juveniles and law enforcement seemed higher than might be expected especially in the larger community. We are aware that those statistics are trending in the right directions. Although the statistics are trending downward, members are aware of the multiple factors that go into determining differences of achievement levels of individual students.

Committee members are aware of programs in place in schools here and elsewhere to address some of the problems students might be having that put them at risk of encounters with law enforcement; however it was unknown which programs and strategies were being used in Escambia County and how they seem to be working. Questions were submitted to the school principals in order to learn as much as possible from those who are involved.

PROCESS

Relevant questions were designed in a survey to assess the range of related programs in schools. The questions were vetted and edited by Shenna Payne, Deputy Superintendent. Those 14 questions are attached in Appendix A. Thirty principals responded to the survey. This is not a formal study which would yield definitive answers about which program is best or most effective. Such a study would be above the scope of this survey and require matched control and study groups. However, some interesting findings were identified and are summarized by school level and grouped in a way that seemed to make sense to the committees. Those summaries are attached as Appendices B, C, and D. It is hoped these findings will be interesting and possibly useful to the school system.

PLANS

Recognizing the restrictions due to the pandemic, this is not a typical school year, which skewed the responses. Some of the programs are in the early stages of implementation with results not yet available. In view of these factors, question will be improved and a second survey will be conducted in early 2023 when hopefully things will be more normal.

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APPENDIX A
Escambia County School District Survey Questions

To be completed by the Principal.

1. Name of School
(This information is only used for tracking purposes and will be removed in the final report.)
2. What grades does your school include?
3. How large is the student body?
4. What percent of your students are on free or reduced lunches?
5. What is the ratio of students to counselors?
6. If you know how many other schools your social workers serve, please indicate that number.
7. How many School Resource Officers do you have on campus at one time?
8. Are School Resource Officers present on a daily basis?
9. What programs are used in your school applying the principles of Trauma Informed Care?
10. How many teachers in your school are trained in Trauma Informed Care?
11. What other programs are used in your school to address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?
12. What programs in your school focus on Social Emotional Learning?
13. What programs do you have in place to support the needs of at risk students that result in prevention of negative behavior and discipline referrals? Please list all relevant programs.
14. Has there been any improvement in student academic achievement since the programs listed in Questions 9 - 13 have been in place? If so, what are the percentages of improvement?

APPENDIX B
Escambia County School District
High School Survey Responses

INTRODUCTION:

- \$ Escambia County lists 7 traditional High Schools including one that is listed as a Technical High School. We received responses from 6 of the 7 schools including the technical school.
- \$ Each High School was assigned initials for confidential identification thus: HS-A, HS-B, HS-C. etc.
- \$ All schools had 50% or more free or reduced lunch fees. Two schools had 100% free and reduced lunches.
- \$ All schools but one had between 1230 to 1859 students. The outlier had 512 students.
- \$ The ratio of students to counselors is mostly in the range or 450:1, with one school reporting a ratio of 750:1.
- \$ Most of the respondents to the social work question reported that the social workers had students at more than 4 other schools. HS-D reported that the social worker went to 1 -2 other schools and HS-F reported that they did not have that information.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

- HS-A: 1 not present every day
- HS-B: 2 present every day
- HS-C: 1 present every day
- HS-D: 2 present every day
- HS-E: 1 present every day
- HS-F: 2 present every day

PROGRAMS USING PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE:

- HS-A: Suite 360, trained Counselors, Mental Health Counselor services, Handle with Care
- HS-B: State-mandated curriculum through Guidance Services
- HS-C: School Counseling Services from our staff
- HS-D: No programs
- HS-E: HOPE Squad, Mental Health Counseling, established counseling sessions with grade level counselors, relationships with faculty/administration.
- HS-F: Health Academy

Note: All schools report some teachers trained in TIC. Most schools report that number as being greater than 5. One school reported 3.

PROGRAMS USED TO ADDRESS ACES, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF AT RISK STUDENTS .

Among the 6 responding schools many different programs and strategies were listed. Most schools listed more than one.

- HS-A: Handle with Care, PBIS. Suite 360, Monitoring of Focus, Rti-b, RTI–sponsored student check-in
- HS-B: PBIS [*Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support*] We also use the Human Trafficking curriculum provided by Gulf Coast Kids’ House. We have a full time Military Life Counselor on staff that works with our military dependent students. We have a full time mental health counselor and we participate in the state mandated curriculum for Social Emotional Learning. Our school in the past has participated in training for Social Emotional Learning for military children-part of a DOD grant.
- HS-C: Mental Health training and awareness for staff and students from multiple sources, Early Warning monitoring system. On-sight(sic) therapist from an external source
- HS-D: Positive Behavior Intervention Support, SOAR (Student Opportunities for Academic Reinforcement)
- HS-E: Extracurricular activities, club/ organization membership, Leadership Course for the majority of 9th grade students, Character Education in Information Technology courses (9th grade), PBIS, HOPE Squad, Peer Mediation, Restorative Justice,
- HS-F: Mental Health Counseling, 8th Period Tutoring

NOTE: Some of the things mentioned above are not programs , but instead are measures

undertaken by the school with the desired result of improved mental health behavior, reduced risk of negative behaviors, and social emotional health.

The most mentioned program is PBIS Used in three schools. Mental Health counseling, training or mental health counselors are mentioned specifically by three schools. General counseling, military life counseling and an on site therapist were each mentioned by one school.

ACADEMIC GAINS

HS-A: 50% ODRs and ILR transitions. Class attendance has improved

HS-B: We do not have specific data, our kids are more familiar with signs and strategies to help as well as who to go to if they need assistance.

HS-C: No significant improvement

HS-D: Yes. Our school went from 30% failure rate to 10% failure rate

HS-E: Continuing to gather data. HOPE Squad started second semester 2021.

HS-F: Some

The two schools with apparent academic gains (HS-A and HS-D) both used PBIS [*Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*] among other things. If we look at the school (HS-F) which reports “some” as academic gain, it cites mental health counseling and 8th period tutoring.

It would be interesting for purposes of comparison to identify how long each program had been in place. It would also be useful to know which programs had the greatest acceptance by faculty, parents, and students. We would suspect that among the several listed programs for any one school, some are used more than others or are incorporated in different ways. A follow up survey with more refined questions in a couple of years would yield a clearer result.

EC APPENDIX C

Escambia County School District

Middle School Survey Responses

Introduction:

- \$ Escambia County lists nine traditional Middle Schools. Seven responses were received from them.
- \$ Each Middle School was assigned initials for confidential identification thus: MS-A, MS-B, MS-C, etc.
- \$ Three schools have 100% free or reduced lunches (MS-A, MS-B, MS-E). The other four range from 30% to 60%.
- \$ Enrollment in each school is variable. Two schools were on the low end: 507 and 800. Schools of 1320 and 1250 were on the high end. The other schools have 1004, 1035 and 1100.
- \$ There are no apparent differences in reported improvements that can be related to school size or free and reduced lunch rates. However, it should be noted that the school with both the smallest student body and the lowest percent free and reduced lunches is an “A” school.
- \$ The ratio of students to counselors is mostly 400 to 500 to one. Two of the schools had ratios of around 250 to one. The different kind of counselors were not specified in the survey.
- \$ Most respondents to the social work question were not aware of how many schools the social workers served. However, one respondent stated that their social worker served more than four other schools.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SRO)

All middle schools except one had one school resource officer on site daily; one had no school resource officer.

PROGRAMS USING PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

- MS-A: Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH)
- MS-B: Trauma Informed School Strategies through partnership with CDAC, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Handle With Care in partnership with Escambia County Sheriff's Office
- MS-C: We use positive behavior strategies and offer group and individual counseling.
- MS-D: Counseling groups through Lutheran Services, counselors meet with individual students, teachers are trained to spot warning signs
- MS-E: We use Suite 360
- MS-F: TBRI [Trust-Based Relational Intervention]
- MS-G: Guidance submits referrals. RISE, CHS, Mobile Response Team.

All responding schools except one had more than 5 teachers trained in Trauma Informed Care. The one outlier had 3 trained teachers.

PROGRAMS USED TO ADDRESS ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES), SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

Multiple programs and strategies were listed. Many used various community resources here and for Trauma Informed Care.

- MS-A: Capturing Kids Hearts, Personal Development, PBIS [*Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*], MTSS [*Multi-Tiered System of Supports*]
- MS-B: Restorative Practices, Trauma Informed School Strategies, Suite 360, CDAC Behavioral Counseling, Peer Mediation
- MS-C: We have an onsite CDAC Behavioral Counselor who offers supports and resources. Students receive lessons from Gulf Coast Kids House and Suite 360. Positive Behavior Strategies, School-wide token economy, RTI/MTSS
- MS-D: None for Adverse Childhood Experiences Our STAR block class meets every other day and all students work through lessons that deal with a variety of subjects. These are delivered through Suite 360 on line program. Our PBIS team has monthly activities. We support our BMS motto: Be Respectful, Make Responsible Choices, and Stay Safe. We also use Suite 360 Program in ISS to help students reflect on why they are there and provide steps to deter from repeating the same actions.
- MS-E: We have a CHS Navigator [*Core Humanitarian Stand*] on our campus, PBIS
- MS-F: TBRI [*Trust-Based Relational Intervention*], Hope Squad
- MS-G: Guidance trains the faculty, each Guidance Counselor uses the programs and skills, RISE, PBIS, Suite 360.

PBIS was mentioned by 5 schools; all reported some measure of improvement (MS-A, MS-C, MS-D, MS-E, MS-F)

Suite 360 was mentioned by 4 schools (MS-A, MS-B, MS-C, MC-D, MS-G)

Capturing Kids Hearts along with other programs was reported by one school (MS-A) where it was reported that due to COVID they were having more social issues. This was thought not to be due to what they were doing.

RTI along with other programs was reported by one school (MS-C) with varying improvement.

TBRI and Hope Squad were listed only by MS-F reporting the programs were one year old.

RISE, along with other programs was reported by MS-G. They felt that there has been improvement but have no data.

It should be noted that most schools use more than one program or strategy. Some programs have been in use longer than others. The question of whether or not some programs are accepted more than other programs was not asked. This question is for another survey.

ACADEMIC GAINS:

MS-A: Due to COVID and the impact it has had on our students, any data that we have is skewed. At this point we are dealing with more social issues than we had before but do not think it is because what we are doing is not working.

MS-B: 47%

MS-C: It varies, but many students make learning gains according to progress monitoring data.

MS-D: Yes, we have had less referrals overall. I am not sure of the specific percentage but would say we have improved 15% in the last 3 years.

MS-E: We have shown improvement in our behavior data.

MS-F: Unsure, first year for both programs.

MS-G: We feel that there has been improvement, but don't have data to support that stand.

COMMENT

The Education and Juvenile Justice committees of the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area are grateful for the generous participation of the responding schools. We know that this has been an unusual and hectic year. We appreciate the time it took to create these responses.

It is apparent from these responses that the school personnel generally are energetically engaged in helping all students including and especially those who need extra support. It is

also gratifying to see that the whole community including not-for-profit agencies and the sheriff's office are engaged in the work of educating and caring for our children.

EC APPENDIX D

Escambia County School District

Elementary School Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

- § Escambia County lists 32 Elementary Schools. We received responses from 17 schools.
- § Each Elementary School was assigned initials for confidential identification thus: ES-A, ES-B, ES-C, etc.
- § The schools had between 30% and 100% free or reduced lunches. 8 schools had 100% free lunches.
- § The student body size ranged from 407 to 888 with most schools in the 420 to 783 range.
- § Most schools have one counselor. However ES-C states that they have one school counselor and CHS counseling 3 times a week. ES-G has 2 school guidance counselors and 1 Military Family counselor and 1 part time Lakeview counselor. ES-O has two full time guidance counselors.
- § Most respondents to the social worker question were unaware of how many schools the social workers served. However, ES-A, ES-B, ES-I, ES-M, ES-Q stated more than 4. ES-N said 3-4.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

Most schools report having one School Resource officer who is present on a daily basis. ES-A, ES-B, ES-M, ES-P report no school resources officers .

PROGRAMS USING PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

- ES-A: Youth Mental Health Training.
- ES-B: Restorative Discipline Practices - some of the principles are embedded
- ES-C: Leaps, Miss Kendra, PBIS, Suite 360
- ES-D: Sanford Harmony
- ES-E: Sanford Harmony

ES-F: Miss Kendra, Capturing Kids Hearts
 ES-G: Capturing Kids Hearts, Suite 360, Safety Care, Military Social and Emotional Grant, Gulf Coast Kids' House
 ES-H: NA
 ES-I: We don't; have a specific program in place at this time
 ES-J: No specific program,
 ES-K: N/A
 ES-L: None
 ES-M: Sanford Harmony
 ES-N: Miss Kendra
 ES-O: Suite 360
 ES-P: Suite 360, PBS, TRAUMA INFORMED CLASSROOMS/ACES TRAINING
 ES-Q: School wide training is ongoing, no particular program is implemented

Most schools report more than 5 teachers are trained in Trauma Informed Care. ES-D and ES-M each report 1 teacher trained. ES-E reports no teacher trained.

PROGRAMS USED TO ADDRESS ACES, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING, AND SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF AT RISK STUDENTS

ES-A: RISE Program, Sanford Harmony, Mental Health counselor (1 day a week)
 ES-B: NA (for ACEs), Sanford Harmony and Restorative Practices, Restorative Discipline Practices
 ES-C: Miss Kendra and Leaps, PBIS, Suite 360
 ES-D: None (for ACEs), Sanford Harmony
 ES-E: Sanford Harmony, Counseling sessions by counselor, behavior contracts
 ES-F: Lakeview Counselors, Suite 360, PBIS
 ES-G: Capturing Kids Hearts, Suite 360, Safety Care, Military Social and Emotional Grant, Gulf Coast Kids' House
 ES-H: N/A (for ACEs), SOCIAL CURRICULUM, SWBP
 ES-I: N/A (for ACEs), Suite 360, We have been trained in PBIS and are working to implement it.
 ES-J: None (for ACEs), The Leader in Me Habits, Functional Behavior Assessments, Positive Behavior Intervention Plan, 504 Plan
 ES-K: N/A (for ACEs), Suite 360, PBIS
 ES-L: None (for ACEs), Suite 360, PBIS
 ES-M: None (for ACEs), Sanford Harmony, Suite 360
 ES-N: Sanford Harmony, MS. Kendra, Suite 360, PBIS
 ES-O: Suite 360,
 ES-P: PBS, LEARNING FOR LIFE/ Suite 360.

ES-Q: Positive Behavior Intervention and Support currently, School wide plan and time in the schedule for implementation of a community meeting and social skills instruction on a daily basis. Increased teacher training and implementation expected next school year. Planned Positive Behavior Coach for the 21-22 year, mentors, volunteers and community involvement projects when COVID allows.

Ten schools list Suite 360, six list Sanford Harmony, six list PBIS and 2 others list PBIS as either Positive Behavior Intervention Plan or Positive Behavior and Support for a total of eight. Two schools list Ms Kendra. One school each lists RISE, Capturing Kids Hearts, and Leaps.

Other measures included are: counseling, Gulf Coast Kids' House, Lakeview, Restorative Practices, 504 Plan, The Leader in Me Habits, SWBP, Social and Emotional Military Grant.

ACADEMIC GAINS

ES-A: No data to support this

ES-B: Yes

ES-C: Yes, the school moved from an F to a B

ES-D: There is no improved academic achievement that can be linked to the program listed above.

ES-E: I don't have a percentage however our behaviors are minimal

ES-F: NA Due to COVID19

ES-G: Yes, the number of social and emotional referrals have (sic) increased due to the increase(sic) awareness and training of staff. Students are being survey (sic) to assess their emotional and mental grit. We are seeing an increase in abuse and violence among the students.

ES-H: NA

ES-I: We are in the implementation phase

ES-J: Learning gains improvement in the lower quartile as measured on the FSA Math Assessment. No data to prove that it is based on the programs implemented.

ES-K: Implementation phase

ES-L: We are currently on Implementation phase of these programs

ES-M: NA

ES-N: Yes

ES-O: We have seen improvement in awareness and behavior

ES-P: Increased academic time on task

ES-Q: Our programs just began this year and we are still struggling with lack of attendance and loss of instruction due to pandemic. I believe their (sic) will be improvement in the future.

COMMENT

- ES-B which reports “yes” to academic gains uses Sanford Harmony and Restorative Practices.
- ES-C which reports moving from F to B, uses Miss Kendra, Leaps PBIS and Suite 360.
- ES-G which reports greater awareness resulting in more referrals uses Capturing Kids Hearts and suite 360 as well as community resources.
- ES-J which reports some specific gains uses The Leader in Me Habits, Functional Behavior Assessment, PBI plan and 504 Plan
- ES-O which reports improvement uses PBIS
- ES-P which reports increase academic time on task uses PBS Learning for Life and Suite 360.

It is interesting that eight schools report no programs or measures specifically to address ACEs.

Due to the surveyors lack of familiarity with all the programs and the acronyms for the various programs in use, there maybe some overlap in reporting. For example, is PBS the same as PBIS? Is Learning for Life part of another program or is it a stand alone?