

# **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

## **Southern Boone County R-1 Schools**

**Program Evaluated:** Guidance/Counseling

**Date Submitted to the Board of Education:** November 16, 2020

**Person(s) Responsible:**

Guidance/Counseling Team Members

Primary: Karri Amelunke and Kathleen Downey

Elementary: Sharon Horton and Ashley Roth

Middle School: Brett Strauser and Sarah Williams

High School: Erin Morris and Krista Massman

**What data/evaluation criteria illustrates the effectiveness of this area?**

**Primary School**

Our classroom teachers complete the mental health checklist for each of their students in the fall and winter through the Boone County Mental Health Coalition. We then see comprehensive mental health data that reveals our areas of strength and concerns building-wide. We can then use that data to help plan our PBS focus lessons throughout the year as well as planning for counseling groups and other interventions. Our checklist data is consistently green (low risk) in almost all areas such as social skills and peer relations, internalizing behavior, externalizing behaviors and self-regulation, and attention and academic competence. I feel this shows that we are able to effectively use our data to address building-wide issues and catch individual students who need additional support through tier 2 or tier 3 interventions.

The Primary School counselors use a tool provided by DESE called the Internal Improvement Review (IIR) to assess implementation of our comprehensive school counseling program. It is designed to identify areas of strength and improvement for our program and guide an improvement action plan. The results of the IIR completed this fall is included as well as our improvement plan which includes our goal of completing a time on task analysis on a regular basis throughout this school year.

The counselors are very active in all 3 tiers of the Primary PBS program. We serve on the Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 teams and provide input on school wide implementation of expectations and solution plans as well as tier 2 and tier 3 supports. Our building has received recognition from the state for PBS implementation every year since 2008 including the highest recognition at the

gold level for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. Through our PBS efforts each year our data shows decreases in behavior referrals, both major and minor.

### **Elementary**

In the Elementary school, our teachers and students complete the MU Coalition Checklist three times each year. We use this information to help determine which of our students need extra support. In the past, the counselor would meet with the top ten students in each grade level who were red flagged (which showed that they were needing extra help and support). Then after meeting with them, internalizing groups are created to help meet these students' needs.

Our Tier 2 Team will be looking at this data to determine which students need extra resources and support. This is a part of their referral process. This information is also shared with Burrell to provide additional support.

Attached are the results from last month's checklists. There are areas the students have marked that are yellow and red. When we ask the students why they marked their checklist this way, they often say it's because they would prefer to be at home watching tv and playing video games. We feel that even though we have very engaging lessons in our classrooms, it is hard to compete with video games and that's why some students say they don't enjoy coming to school and learning new things. As you can see, we score mostly in the green category. We've been told that our school is above average in regards to the number of green categories. This is due to the increased support we've received over the years in regards to the mental health of our students.

### **Middle School**

In the middle school, our teachers and students complete the Boone County Mental Health Coalition Checklist each year. We use this information to help determine which of our students need extra support. The Tier 1 team meets to look at school-wide minor behavioral data to determine what interventions would benefit students by being implemented in the whole building. The Tier 2 team meets bi-monthly in order to review and identify students who are not making adequate progress, behaviorally and/or academically, that could benefit from more intensive support and assistance to be honorable and successful students and citizens. Students are identified through a nomination form submitted by the middle school staff as well as an indicator list that utilizes student attendance, major discipline referrals, and tardies. The team then monitors students within Tier 2 interventions through progress monitoring and/or goal tracking forms. The middle school also utilizes student and staff surveys to determine effectiveness and provide feedback.

### **High School**

The first cycle of the teacher and student mental health checklist indicated that school engagement, internalizing problems and being able to pay attention in class are areas of concern for Southern Boone High School, as well as across Boone County. While this year is a unique year to assess these areas due to so many outside circumstances, we are working hard to tend to the student needs in these areas. Frequent communication and check-ins with parents and students who are struggling in any area, including academic or social/emotional. With so many kinds in and out of the classroom this year, it has been difficult for the counselors to provide classroom instruction that reaches each student and also not take time away from the classroom teacher. We plan to continue to reach out to students who are struggling with academic engagement.

### ***What has changed since the last program evaluation?***

#### **Primary School**

Since our last evaluation 2 years ago, our program has seen many positive changes! This includes the addition of another school counselor, Kathleen Downey. Having 2 school counselors in the building full-time brings our school counselor to student ratio to the desirable level as recommended by DESE and the American School Counselor Association. This change allows us more classroom time to implement our preventive school counseling curriculum to all students PreK-2 as well as more opportunities to provide student support through individual and small group counseling.

Another positive change in our building is more space with the opening of our new wing. With the additional space, the school counselors no longer have to share one room to provide our services. We each have our own room which provides more opportunities for student support without the worries of breaking confidentiality. The additional space also provided an area called the "Reset Room" to support students needing a break as part of their behavior plan or in response to behaviors. We are lucky to have a teacher who runs the Reset Room to provide that additional support. In years past, this kind of support was provided through the counselor's room so having the Reset Room frees up more time that we can use for planned services or response to other mental health needs.

Another wonderful addition to our district has been the school-based services through Burrell Behavioral Health. We have been able to offer outside therapy to students in an easier and less-disruptive manner through Burrell. Referring families to outside therapy is now so much smoother and more accessible which has made a big difference for many of our district families. This school year, we are utilizing a curriculum in our building called Second Step. It is a research-based program focused on social, emotional and academic skills which builds on itself through classroom lessons from grade-level to grade-level. It was provided through the Boone County Mental Health Coalition to pilot in our building. We are also utilizing See Saw this year to provide lessons and information from the counseling department to students and parents. Our goal is to become more and more fluent with this tool to provide reinforcing activities and

home support for our Second Step lessons as well as activities and support for individual counseling and group counseling students, especially when we are learning from home.

### **Elementary**

Since the last program evaluation, the elementary school has increased in size. We now have 457 students (that's 49 more students than we had 2 years ago). The counselors work to support the students and families as their school counselor. In our building, we have 22 elementary classrooms (that's 3 more classrooms than we had 2 years ago). We go into each of these classrooms for 30 minutes each week.

We are very thankful to the school board for hiring an additional elementary school counselor to be in our school every day to help with this growth. Because of this addition, we have been able to have more counseling groups and meet with more students for individual counseling.

### **Middle School**

The student and teacher numbers have increased since our last evaluation. Currently, we serve 432 students in the middle school. The Boone County Mental Health Coalition has been helpful with identifying more students with mental health needs through the checklist. Their services include assisting with groups and individual counseling by providing supplemental curriculum for individual and group counseling sessions. The partnership we have with Burrell has shown to be extremely helpful with our students who are most at-risk.

The middle school counseling department has hired a second full time school counselor, which allows the department to implement a year-long academic, career, and social/emotional curriculum that supports all students in the building. We have also added more exploratory courses to the master schedule to help create a more well rounded middle school experience and increase individual interests for all students.

Missouri Connections is a career exploration program that provides students the opportunity to discover and solidify their interests. In the 2020-21 school year, the 8th grade class will attend the fall Career Exploration Day in November. Students will attend one of three sessions relating to Natural Resources and Ag, Health Services, and Engineering and Technology. Our goal is to continue the relationship with State Technical College of Missouri to increase our participation in future years when the restrictions from COVID are lessened. This partnership will provide our students with tools to help them become successful members of society.

## **High School**

In the past two years the high school counseling department has seen a number of changes, as well as improvements. One of the major improvements we have seen in regards to social/emotional development has been the development of the partnership with Burrell Behavioral Health school based services. This partnership has allowed students across the district the opportunity to access mental health services while at school. This has been simultaneously beneficial to all parties since students can see licensed professionals on a regular basis and miss a minimal amount of class time to do so while allowing the school counselor more time to direct their work in other needed domains. The counseling team meets bi-weekly with Burrell providers to make sure we are providing all necessary supports.

The counseling office has undergone a major restructuring in regards to student and work caseload. In Fall of 2019, the counselors decided to reorganize the student caseload between counselors. The students were previously divided by grade level (9th-10th & 11th-12th) but are now split up alphabetically by last name (A-K and L-Z). This change was made so that the counselors have the opportunity to see each student progress through high school and work more closely with families. Reassigning the student body by alphabet also forced the counseling department to restructure the duties of each counselor. Each counselor is responsible for her own tasks, but they are able to work closely together and collaborate frequently.

## ***What next steps would better serve our students?***

### **Primary School**

One next step to better serve our students would be a reconsideration for bringing back the 3rd round of teacher mental health checklists. Since the checklists began, we have participated in 3 rounds- fall, winter and spring. During the 2019-20 school year the 3rd round did not happen because of the school closure in the spring. This year only a fall and winter checklist are scheduled. Our building used the 3rd checklist every year as important data to gauge the effectiveness of our school-wide efforts and also to plan for summer interventions and to plan for the beginning of the school year. Without the spring checklist we have a 9 month gap between data points, from January to October, which is way too long.

Another next step we believe is important is the addition of a district 504 coordinator. This position would insure that our 504 process and documents are consistent from building to building. Right now each building has their own case manager who handles 504s.

## **Elementary**

We are seeing more students with social and emotional deficits. These students are acting out with physical violence, running away, and not responding by shutting down.

We continue to track building wide discipline data for PBS and TierII/III Intervention Teams. At this time we have 11 students with three or more major referrals to the office. Of these 11 students, 6 are special education students and 5 are general education students. So more than half of our students that are being referred to the office are special education students.

We would like to add a Life Skills classroom to the elementary school. This would be a place where our special education students in our building can go to learn how to process their social and emotional skills. Matt Klemme does an amazing job with the students on the north side of campus. We would like to have something similar in our building to help the students learn these same skills in our grade levels.

During our Life Skills classroom, our special education students would come and learn about emotions. They would identify emotions in themselves and others. The students would learn effective ways to exhibit these emotions. They would have time to learn and practice these strategies on how to handle their emotions.

## **Middle School**

To increase student engagement across the board in middle school, students need to have access to smaller class sizes. Students would benefit from additional teachers in the building to alleviate the large class sizes in core and elective classes because there is a greater chance of students' basic needs to belong being met in a small group setting. Students who are in a smaller class will have more access to academic and social/emotional support from their teachers. Smaller class sizes will also increase student intrinsic motivation because they will feel a greater sense of belonging in the school community.

It has become apparent that the Math Interventionist position is a high need in our building. There have been a higher number of students who are being identified with a strong math deficiency/difficulty by the Tier 2 team due to the lack of specific math support and guidance. We believe that bringing that position back to the middle school is imperative to the success of all students.

It is one of the goals of the middle school counseling department to implement and ensure the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program is technology driven. Technology driven lessons will increase the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. Using technology will help increase the collaboration

between the middle school counselors and staff to better implement an adapted version of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's personal/social-curriculum. We will use the observations and assessments within the adapted Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's personal/social-emotional and career curriculum to monitor student progress through the use of technology by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.

### **High School**

Over the next two years, the high school counseling department's goal is to continue to improve programs that are already in place and implement new programs and services to students. Some of the specific areas we would like to see grow include providing more small group sessions, as well as classroom learning opportunities. We plan to continue to collaborate with the Boone County Mental Health Coalition to grow these areas. We also have a goal to create a plan for a cohesive counseling curriculum in collaboration with the middle school to be implemented to the appropriate grade levels to both evolve social emotional skills as well as enhance preparation for college and careers. We plan to utilize Missouri Connections as a resource that houses a portfolio to track each student throughout their secondary education and present them with pertinent college and career information. We feel introducing this curriculum would serve the highest number of students and equip them with skills and opportunities for future success both in and beyond high school.