PROCESS FOR SCREENING AND MONITORING IN-SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH MENTAL/PHYSICAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

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I. Introduction
This procedure provides guidelines and safeguards for schools in developing partnerships with outside providers of health and behavioral health services (“Community Providers”) to students and families. These Community Providers typically provide services to students in schools, are dependent upon the Baltimore County Public Schools (“BCPS”) for referrals, and provide the service at no direct cost to the school system. This procedure does not include community partners for group events such as health fairs, where preventive services are provided in a public setting with parents and/or school staff present.

Recognizing that there are significant advantages to increasing the array of services provided to students and reducing barriers to accessing needed services, BCPS will develop and maintain a list of approved Community Providers. Providers included on this list will have provided BCPS with documentation to demonstrate compliance with state law and BCPS policies, including background checks for all Community Providers to be assigned to schools and documentation of appropriate licensure and liability insurance. Community providers that are not on this list may not provide services to BCPS students.

Schools may enter into a partnership with an approved Community Provider when the following criteria have been met:

1. The provider is on the BCPS list of approved providers.
2. The services will enhance participating students’ school achievement by addressing unmet needs that interfere with achievement.
3. Barriers exist to accessing these services outside of the school setting.
4. The provider seeks to target a group of students with a specific need and is not offering services to only a single student.
5. Services will not negatively impact the delivery of the school instructional program.
6. Services do not duplicate services that are provided by the school system to the student.
7. Services do not replace or duplicate services mandated on an IEP.
8. Personnel are qualified for the services to be delivered.

Two types of partnership agreements will be considered:
A. Agency/School Partnerships to address the health needs of students attending a specific school
B. Agency/Alternative School Partnerships to address the health needs of students enrolled in an alternative school

The Department of Social-Emotional Support provides technical support to all schools and community agencies on the partnership process, including identification of potential partners and assistance on the partnership process.

II. Process

A. Agency/School Partnership

1) Step One – The school principal should request that the selected Community Provider complete the In-School Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services: Annual Form, PS 115, F1 (which is available electronically on the web pages for the Office of School Social Work and MTSS and the Office of Health Services.) This form must be completed annually and can be submitted at any point during the school year but must be approved before services begin. Forms for the subsequent school year must be submitted after June 1. This written request should be reviewed by the school principal. Note, the form must be school-specific; an agency cannot use the same form for multiple schools. It is recommended that the principal consult with the school’s student support personnel most closely related to the proposed service (e.g., school counselor, school social worker, and school psychologist for mental health services, PT for physical therapy services, etc.) to determine the appropriateness of the partnership.

   a. An outside provider must discuss mechanisms for addressing confidentiality and sharing of information. To ensure coordinated care for students that optimizes educational success, the parent/guardians of students who receive treatment at school during the school day must provide a signed release to share educational information with the treatment provider and a signed release for the provider to share educationally relevant treatment information with appropriate school personnel.

   b. The principal should submit the completed F1 to the Office of School Social Work and MTSS.

   Note: If a new provider is assigned to the school during the course of the school year, the agency must notify the principal of the new provider’s name. The principal should submit an updated F1 to the Office of School Social Work and MTSS before the provider begins working in the school.

2) Step Two – The Director of the Department of Student Support Services will review all proposed partnerships for completeness. The approved In-School Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services: Annual Form and the Cooperative Agreement will be signed by the director and returned to the school principal.
B. Agency/Alternative School Partnerships

1) **Step One** - An alternative school principal may enter into partnerships under the procedures listed above. Principals of alternative programs are encouraged to select an approved partner designated on the list as an alternative school partner. These partners will have been approved to provide services at alternative schools AND at students’ home schools during a transition period of up to 90 days after a student returns to his or her home school from the alternative school. The purpose of these partnerships is to ensure that students attending alternative schools receive treatment and support during the transition period from the alternative school back to the home school. The alternative school and agency should follow Step One a and b under “Agency/School Partnership”. **Be sure to check off “Alternative School Partnership with Transition Service” on the F1.**

2) **Step Two** – The Director of the Department of Student Support Services will review all proposed partnerships for completeness. The approved *In-School Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services: Annual Form* will be signed by the director and returned to the school principal.

3) **Step Three** - When a student is transitioning back to his or her home school from an alternative school, an approved community provider under PS 115B can continue to see the student at their home school for up to 90 calendar days. A written transition plan should be developed for all students returning from an alternative school and should identify the name and agency of the approved Community Provider and should indicate whether the services are to be continued in the home school for the transition period (no longer than 90 days.)

**Note:** For both types of partnerships services may not begin until the *In-School Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services: Annual Form (F1)* is signed by the Director, Office of Student Support Services, the school principal and the provider representative. All parties will receive a confirmation E-mail when a partnership is approved.

III. Reporting

A. At the conclusion of each school year, the Community Provider should submit the *Community Partnership Agency Report, PS 115, F3* to the school (as requested) and to the Office of School Social Work and MTSS.

B. At the conclusion of each school year, the school liaison should complete the Community Agency School Report, which is available electronically on the web pages for the Office of School Social Work and MTSS and the Office of Health Services.