

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

CONTENTS:

- Introduction
- Process

RESOURCES:

- Proposal for In-school Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services, PS 115, F1
 - Community Partnership Annual Report, PS 115, F2
 - Cooperative Agreement, PS 115, F3
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I. Introduction

This procedure provides guidelines and safeguards for schools in developing partnerships with outside providers of mental and physical health services to students and families. These community providers typically provide services to students in schools, are dependent upon the Baltimore County Public Schools for referrals, and provide the service at no direct cost to the school system.

Recognizing that there are significant advantages to developing these partnerships to increase services to families and students, this procedure outlines a process by which BCPS' staff will screen community mental/physical health care providers to ensure the protection of students and families, protect schools from liability, and ensure a continued focus on student achievement within the framework of the *Blueprint for Progress*.

In order for a community mental/health provider partnership to be appropriate for consideration under this process, the following criteria must be met:

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

II. Process

A two-step process is used to review all requests for health partnerships. The first step occurs at the school level and verifies that the proposal meets criteria 1 through 4. The

second step occurs at the Department of Student Support Services (DSSS) which verifies that the proposed partnership meets criteria 5 through 7. Final decisions for all partnerships come from the Department of Student Support Services.

- A. Step One – A school principal, upon receipt of a request for a partnership, should request that the community provider complete the *Proposal for In-School Community Partnership with Mental/Physical Health Care Provider, PS 115, F1*. This written request should be reviewed by the school principal. Note, the proposal must be school-specific; an agency cannot use the same proposal for multiple schools. It is recommended that the principal consult with the school's Student Support Team (SST) to determine the appropriateness of the partnership according to the above criteria. To the extent possible, the school employee representing the service area most closely related to the proposed service to be provided should participate in the SST (e.g., school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist for mental health services, and physical therapy for PT services, etc.)
- B. An outside provider must discuss with the school team or principal mechanisms for addressing confidentiality and sharing of information. To ensure coordinated care for students that optimizes educational success, the parent/guardian 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. This may be in the form of one release authorizing two-way communication or two releases (see BEBCO 0907 and/or BCPS *Authorization to Release Protected Health Information* form available at <http://www.bcps.org/offices/sss/psManual/Author-Release-Protected-Health-Info.pdf>)
- C. The professional license and Criminal Justice Information Service (CJIS) report for all personnel to work in the school must be attached to the proposal. If a new provider is assigned to the school during the course of the school year, the principal or designee must obtain the license and CJIS report prior to the person's first day of work.
- D. If the principal believes that the partnership is indicated and is in the best interest of the target group of students and meets criteria 1 through 4, the principal and SST chair should sign the *Proposal for In-school Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services, PS 115, F1* and forward the completed proposal to the director in the Department of Student Support Services. The principal and the representative from the partnership agency should also sign the *Cooperative Agreement, PS 115, F3* and forward this agreement with *Community Partnership for Mental or Physical Health Services, PS 115, F1*, to the director of the Department of Student Support Services.
- E. Step Two: The director of the DSSS will review all proposed partnerships for completeness. The director and appropriate school system staff will review the proposal for compliance with criteria 5 through 7 and the ability to support achievement of the superintendent's goals articulated in the *Blueprint for Progress*. The director

will share any concerns with the school principal. Approved proposals and Cooperative Agreements will be signed by the director and returned to the school principal.

Note: Services may not begin until the Agreement is signed by the director, DSSS, principal, and the provider representative.

At the conclusion of each school year, the provider should provide the principal and the director of the Department of Student Support Services a written report, *Community Partnership Annual Report*, PS 115, F2, indicating the number of students receiving services and the number of sessions/interventions provided at the school during the school year.

An updated proposal and Cooperative Agreement must be renewed each school year using the steps above.