

Intermediate District 287

RESPONSIVE. INNOVATIVE. SOLUTIONS.

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Sandra Lewandowski, Superintendent

FROM: Char Myklebust, Executive Director of Mental Health and Partnerships

DATE: December 10, 2012

Re: **What Board Members Should Know About the SAMHSA/MacArthur Grant**

History

At the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, Minnesota was one of eight states chosen to receive funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Grant funding and supports are designed to improve diversion policies and programs for justice-involved youth with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. Intermediate District 287 is one of several agencies to serve on the Minnesota Core Team. Others represented include the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS mental and chemical health), Hennepin County Attorney's Office, Volunteers of America (private mental/chemical health treatment facilities), and the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC).

Project Goal

The goal is to increase the number of youth with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues diverted to appropriate community-based behavioral health services, and to reduce the unnecessary contact of these youth with the juvenile justice system. The development of more effective diversion policies and programs will result in better outcomes for youth and more appropriate use of behavioral health and juvenile justice services. Minnesota chose to design a school-based model, as school arrests propel a disproportionate number of youth to the juvenile corrections system. Research indicates that youth arrests result in little more than the creation of juvenile arrest records that negatively impact the futures of arrestees.

Recent Activities

Since receiving the grant, the Minnesota Core Team has met several times to develop a work plan and the Minnesota Home Team, which includes District 287 parents and students as well as other stakeholders, has met twice to provide feedback to the home team. Additionally, the Core Team traveled to Maryland in September to receive guidance from nationally renowned experts. The Core Team is developing a tool that will become a State template for diverting low level juvenile offenders to mental and chemical support systems. The tool will help school district and community (e.g. school resource officers) teams to make decisions about mental and chemical health screening and referrals when criminal charges might be considered.

Bill Wyss, DHS, and Dr. Char Myklebust, District 287, traveled to Washington D.C. in early December to present the Minnesota project to the national Models for Change conference and to learn from other states. They learned that there is national concern about the overrepresentation of youth with mental and chemical health issues in the juvenile justice system. Much of the problem stems from the lack of appropriate community resources for youth with mental and/or chemical health problems; especially those with co-occurring disorders.

The Core Team plans to pilot the new protocol at three 287 sites; North Education Center, South Education Center, and West Education Center. Eventually, the model will also be tried in rural Minnesota school districts. Future plans include bridges to school-linked mental health grants, should the legislature authorize this program. Implementation is planned for January 2013.