CMS School-Based Mental Health Program Evaluation: Baseline to Year 2 Results

The CMS School-Based Mental Health program (SBMH) is a collaborative effort between Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Mecklenburg County, and several private mental health agencies in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. For the 2014-2015 school year, Carolinas Healthcare System, Pride in NC [formerly Mélange Health Solutions], Family First Community Services, and Thompson Child and Family Focus provided services to participants of the SBMH program. For the 2015-2016 school year, Turning Point Family Services was added as a provider for SBMH participants. It should be noted that these agencies have been assigned to multiple CMS schools in which they provide services to SBMH participants for both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, with the exception of Thompson Child and Family Focus. Thompson Child and Family Focus was assigned to multiple schools during the 2014-2015 school year and by request, was assigned to one school only for the 2015-2016 school year. This report represents the end of Year 2 results of an ongoing evaluation of the SBMH program to help determine the effectiveness of each of five individual provider agencies, assess overall program outcomes, and support funding decisions.

This Year 2 report provides both program and comparison group academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes at the end of Year 2 of the SBMH program. Comparison group students represent students who have behavioral and emotional needs similar to those in the intervention group and were referred to receive SBMH program services, but who never received SBMH services.

A brief summary of overall results are as follows:

- More male than female students were in both the intervention and comparison groups.
- The vast majority of intervention and comparison students are Black, followed by Hispanic, and then White.
- At program entry, 23.4% of participants in the intervention group and 18.7% of students from the comparison group were Exceptional Children (EC) students and approximately 13% of participants in both groups were Limited English Proficient (LEP); these percentages generally align to the district percentages for each group.
- For Year 2 of the SBMH program, agencies provided services for, on average, 16 sessions and for 59 minutes each session.
- From baseline to Year 1 and Year 2, there were no significant differences in academic performance between the intervention and comparison groups.
- There was a treatment effect on student behavior and attendance at Year 1 and over time where intervention group participants attended school significantly more and experienced significantly fewer unexcused absences and OSS day assignments compared to comparison students.
- “Higher dosage” SBMH program participants experienced significantly better attendance and behavior outcomes compared to both the “Lower dosage” SBMH program participants and comparison group students.
- Academic, attendance, and behavior outcomes are reported for each of the five agencies in the full report.