

From: "The Ojakian" <[REDACTED]>
Date: April 22, 2020 at 2:31:15 PM PDT
To: <Norma.Pate@mhsoac.ca.gov>
Cc: <MHSOAC@mhsoac.ca.gov>, "Hasbrook, Carly" <Carly.Hasbrook@sen.ca.gov>
Subject: MHSOAC Grant Letter of Intent

April 22, 2020

Mental Health Services
Oversight and Accountability Commission
1325 J Street, Suite 1700
Sacramento, CA 95814
Re: Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA)

Dear Commission Members,

I strongly support the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) grant application for Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission's Mental Health Student Services Act funding. SCCOE would utilize this funding in a collaborative partnership with the County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services and Santa Clara County school districts. The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is a very deserving candidate for this grant application.

SCCOE would use this funding to increase mental health prevention, early intervention services, and direct service opportunities for students and families on school campuses. Some funding would be used to create wellness centers on school sites; increase the number of mental health professionals at school sites; and provide relevant professional learning to educators. If awarded, the robust consortium will expand their current services, creating an integrated approach to mental health services in order to meet a critical need of the region.

I write with firsthand knowledge and experience with the Santa Clara County Office of Education interest in student mental health and suicide prevention services. As the Co-Chair of Santa Clara County's Suicide Prevent Oversight Committee (SPOC) and the Co-President of NAMI Santa Clara County, I have participated in discussion and meetings with the County Office of Education's Superintendent of Education and administration staff. The intent of our discussion was to improve both mental health services and suicide prevention efforts for students, families, and school district faculty and staff.

There are some unique factors that make the SCCOE a good candidate for this grant. One, as mentioned, the SCCOE has done ground work on mental health and suicide prevention services, including two school-based programs in conjunction with the County Behavioral Health Department. The SCCOE has a staff dedicated to enhance school mental health and suicide prevention services. Two, the Santa Clara County Behavioral Health has a robust suicide prevention plan and program to help bolster this work. Finally, because Santa Clara County has a diversified population, both economically and racially/ethnically, the results from this funding may be useful/portable for other communities. Our County demographics provides a good test environment for this effort and a possible model for other areas.

The Santa Clara County Office of Education is well positioned to meet the objectives of this application. They have a track record for caring about the well-being of their youth and families.

For these and many more reasons, I strongly encourage that Santa Clara County Office of Education be awarded a MHSOAC grant.

Sincerely,

Victor Ojakian