

Mental Health Student Services Act Listening Session

Discussion Questions

Background:

The Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) establishes that the Commission shall establish criteria for the grant program, including allocation of grant funds. The Commission is looking for input and guidance to make the best use of the grant funds, to determine how to distribute the funds relative to counties, and to be responsive to our local educational agencies and mental health or behavioral health departments.

In the past, we have allocated funds based on county size and region and want to consider whether county size and region should be considered, as well as other factors, such as school district partnership requirements, and readiness. The MHSSA requires that the Commission develop metrics and a system to measure and publicly report on the performance outcomes of services provided using the grants. We want to develop a set of metrics representative of the diversity across the state.

Questions:

1. What demographic factors should be considered when determining how to allocate grant funds?
 - What are the considerations for small rural, and large densely populated counties, and what are their specific challenges?
 - What specific target populations should be prioritized when determining the allocation of funds (e.g., foster youth, justice involved youth, LGBTQ youth, or youth with educational challenges)?
2. Should there be incentives for partnerships that include more entities such as multiple school districts, charter schools or county offices of education?
3. Should there be incentives for partnerships that have a higher “readiness,” existing strategies, or emerging programs?
4. Should incentives for matching funds be established? (e.g., score counties higher that include matching funds; score counties higher based on the matching fund percentage)?
 - What factors should be considered for counties where a match is not available?
5. What metrics should be utilized to determine performance outcomes and measures of success (e.g., number of linkages/referrals or school success measures)?
6. How could these funds be used to leverage a long-term strategy?