



Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief II Funds
Mental Health Allocation
Guidance for Allowable Uses of Funding

Section I: Overview of Uses of Funds

This guidance document is intended to support school districts in identifying allowable ways in which to spend the allocation of the Mental Health funds. These funds must be allocated by budgeting a minimum of 10% of the total allocation towards professional development, and the remaining amount for other mental health supports and services.

In addition to this document, please access the [NJDOE Unlocking Federal funding document](#) for additional information. School districts are encouraged to explore how they can use their federal funds to address identified needs in a coordinated manner. Districts should consider how their efforts to expand mental health supports and services could be supported with their available federal funds.

Section II: Examples of Ways to Use Funds for MH Supports & Services

Tier 1 Supports and Services (Primary Prevention)			
Example	Staff	Students	Families
<p>Example 1: A school district decides to use the available funding to implement the Pyramid Model in their preschool program to support the social-emotional development of all children.</p>	<p>Initially, the staff is trained in the Pyramid Model through the purchase of online Modules for all staff members who work in the preschool program including teachers, paraprofessionals, and therapists. After the initial training, the school district hires a consultant to conduct follow-up professional development and coaching in the use of the model in the classroom.</p>	<p>The district uses the funding to provide classroom materials relative to the students’ social-emotional development in the classroom. They purchase materials to create a cozy area in the classroom for children to utilize if they need a break. They populate the area with items such as a mat, bean bag chair, fidgets, and social stories for the children.</p>	<p>The district offers family events to discuss the importance of social-emotional development in young students and strategies to use at home. The district hires a consultant to host these meetings and allocates additional funds to provide minimal refreshments during the events.</p>



Example	Staff	Students	Families
<p>Example 2: School district uses the funding to support a schoolwide positive behavior support implementation team.</p>	<p>Funding is used for substitute coverages of the implementation team leaders and/or members to compensate for additional time and/or responsibilities. Funding may be used for trainers/coaches, or if the school is participating in New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools (NJPBSIS is free to schools that apply and are accepted into the training cohort), the implementation team receives release time to participate in trainings.</p>	<p>Part of the implementation of a schoolwide positive behavior support system is the universal expectations framework and incentive system. Since students will be part of developing the system, funding may be used to establish a “school store” with student supplies and materials or to fund activity-based events (movie night, student/faculty basketball tournament, etc.)</p>	<p>Training and information sessions with parents can be supported through ESSER II funds by using these monies for the salaries of implementation team members to provide after-school programs, and to contract with 3rd party providers to deliver parent behavioral training to support consistent approaches at school and in the home. Parent organizations are often fund raisers, as well, and can contribute to the sustainability of the program.</p>



Tier 2 Supports and Services (Secondary Support)

Example	Staff	Students	Families
<p>Funding is used towards contracting with a community-based mental health provider in order to provide brief interventions to students who are identified as needing additional mental health support.</p>	<p>Staff receives training by community mental health provider in mental health literacy and recognizing early warning signs that a student may need additional mental health support.</p>	<p>Students receive group interventions such as social skills groups, training in problem solving skills, and group grief counseling from the contracted provider. Brief individual interventions may also be provided in Tier 2.</p>	<p>Contracted mental health provider coordinates group and/or brief interventions with caregivers and conducts trainings re: mental health literacy and recognizing signs of distress.</p>

Tier 3 Supports and Services (Intensive Interventions)

Example	Staff	Students	Families
<p>Funding is used towards contracting with a community-based mental health provider in order to provide intensive individualized interventions to students who are identified as needing more sustained and significant mental health support.</p>	<p>Staff receives training by community mental health provider in mental health literacy and recognizing early warning signs that a student may need additional mental health support, as well as strategies for supporting students with intensive mental health needs.</p>	<p>Students receive intensive interventions such as individual counseling, home visits, family counseling, behavioral assessment, and possibly an individualized behavior plan.</p>	<p>Parents receive training by community mental health provider in mental health literacy and recognizing early warning signs that a student may need additional mental health support as well as individualized, home-based strategies for supporting students with intensive mental health needs. Parents participate in family counseling as part of an individualized student treatment plan.</p>



Section III: Examples of Ways to Use Funds for MH Supports & Services for Professional Development

- Provide coaching and training to administrators on positive discipline practices
- Contract with provider to train pre-K staff on the implementation of the Pyramid Model
- Identify relevant professional development opportunities for I & RS team members to increase the team's ability to develop plans for Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior interventions
- Access training in schoolwide (Tier 1) programs to address mental health literacy, positive school climate, positive discipline and behavior practices, trauma-informed practices, cultural competency, and/or social emotional learning
- Provide more intensive training to educators in methods to identify students exhibiting signs of depression or suicidality across in-person, remote, and hybrid settings
- Provide training to establish or enhance the skills of a crisis intervention team

Section IV: Other Resources (state, local)

Free resources to access, partner with, and/or utilize:

- [Center for Excellence for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- [National Center for School Mental Health](#)
- [Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network](#)
- [School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System](#)
- New Jersey Department of Children and Families – [Children's Interagency Coordinating Councils](#)
- New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety – [Youth Services Commission](#)
- New Jersey Department of Education – [Social and Emotional Learning Resources](#)
- [New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools](#)
- [Traumatic Loss Coalitions for Youth Program](#)
- [Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#)