

Reducing Barriers to Mental Health Access

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Hawthorn District 73 | Vernon Hills, Illinois



About Me





20 Years

Dedicated to Education at Hawthorn

Previous Roles:

- Teacher (grades 4 & 5)
- Assistant Principal
- Coordinator of Student Services

Passionate About

-  Creating safe and supportive schools for all students
-  Educating the whole child
-  Partnering with families
-  Holistic student growth



About Our District

~3,600 students

Preschool - 8th grade

Second most diverse district in Lake County

61 different languages spoken by students

9 Schools

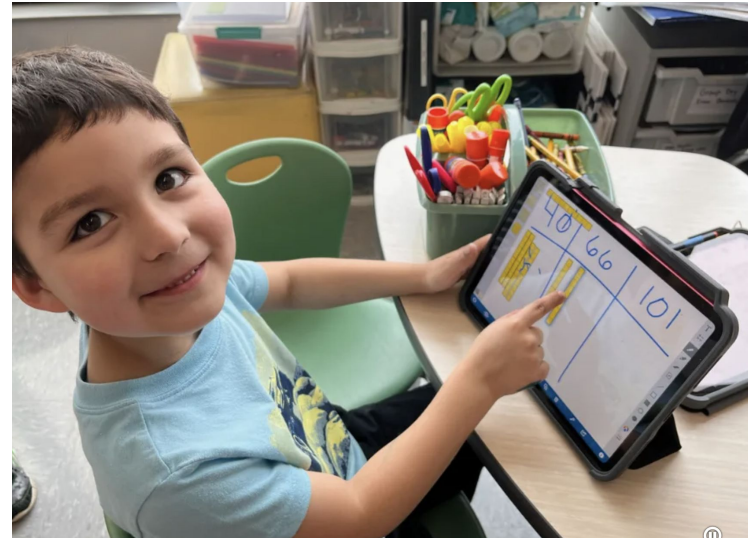
2 Exemplary, 5 Commendable

32% Low Income

30% English Learners

5.6% Student Mobility

17% Chronic Absenteeism



Discussion Question

What is the biggest issue your students are experiencing right now?



If you said mental health crisis, you are not alone.

1 in 5

Children ages 3–17

Experience a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder each year.

(CDC)

20%–25%

Treatment Gap

Only this percentage of children with diagnosable mental health conditions receive treatment or services.

(NIMH / HHS)



Discussion Question

What are the barriers to students accessing mental health services in your district?



Reflecting on Current Challenges

How many students in your district, building, or classroom right now need support but aren't getting it?

What happens when support requires families to leave work, find transportation, or navigate waitlists?

Who ends up carrying that gap in your school?



Current Challenges

- Counselors/social workers stretched thin
- External referrals not consistently followed through
- Fragmented supports

This is not a replacement for our social workers, rather an extension of support.



The Idea

What if students could have access to a licensed therapist during the school day on a weekly basis?



Finding a Partner

Initial Connection

Mental Health Committee at Vernon Hills High School.

Connected with the Community Outreach Coordinator at YFC.

Legal Considerations

District attorneys advised to keep the two separate. Involved in drafting the MOU. Needs to be separate.

Exploration

Talked about how it worked at other schools.

Set up a meeting to further discuss.

Formalizing the Partnership

Drafted an MOU to clearly identify how they are two separate entities, but it is operating in our buildings.



Logistics



The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Establishing the formal agreement framework.



Attorney Review

Ensuring legal compliance and protection.



Identified Needs

From Youth and Family Counseling.



Board Notification

Keeping stakeholders informed of progress.



Memorandum Of Understanding:

- Purpose
- Agreements by both parties
- Insurance
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Cooperation of Parties
- Primary Contacts
- Indemnification
- Commencement/Amendment/Termination
- General Provisions
- Signatures



Partnership Design Key Features

On-Site Access

Reducing travel barriers for families. Space reserved in each school for therapy.

System Integration

Aligned with school schedules. Family Liaison plays essential role in coordinating.

Guided Referrals

Support through every step of the process. Multiple ways to initiate a referral. Support with initial assessment.

Prompt Start

Efficient intake to begin therapy quickly. Two weeks maximum.



Communication Plan

Social Work Meeting

Administrative Team

Meet and Greet with Social Workers

Toured schools to meet office staff and principals

Flyer in Newsletters Periodically

Social Workers Referral List

Meeting with Family Liaison

Midyear Touchbase

End of Year Review

Introducing a New Partnership:

Hawthorn + Youth & Family Counseling (YFC)

Expanding access to mental health services.



Getting the Word Out

- Administrators
- Social Workers
- D73 Digest

*Megan has intake packets in English and Spanish available if parents ask.

*Megan will drop off fliers at all buildings in English and Spanish.

Youth and Family Counseling has partnered with Hawthorn School District 73!

Together for Student Well-Being

Hawthorn District 73 is thrilled to announce that we have partnered with Youth and Family Counseling to support student well-being!

As part of this partnership, a licensed therapist will be on-site at Hawthorn each week. Therapy sessions can take place during the school day for families who find this option more convenient or better suited to their needs.

Get Started! →

Call our intake line
847-748-0301

Register online
www.counselingforall.org

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT:
QR Code
847-748-0301
www.counselingforall.org

Scheduling Students



School Day Schedule

Built into school day schedule with 8 slots open every hour.



Minimal Disruption

Carefully planned to minimize instructional disruption for students.



Team Coordination

Close coordination between the school and Family Liaison.



Open Communication

Ongoing updates for events, field trips, absences, and testing.



Roles and Responsibilities



School Staff

Collaborates on student needs and consults with therapist on an as-needed basis.



Mental Health Provider

Provides direct clinical support, manages caseloads, and maintains student confidentiality.



Intake Coordinator and Family Liaison

Facilitates the referral process and acts as the primary liaison between families and services.



Confidentiality

School & Provider

Boundaries

Clear operational boundaries maintained between the school and service providers.

Release of

Information

Required ROI signed between the School and YFC to facilitate communication.



Impact and Benefits



Increased Engagement

Higher levels of participation in services.



Reduced No-Shows

A reduction in missed appointments.



Earlier Intervention

Support provided at an earlier stage with increased access.



Troubleshooting - Learn from us!



A student refuses to attend their session.



The therapist is not the right fit for the students' needs.



Student misses session due to illness, field trip, etc.



A students' family cannot pay the fee.



Family cannot take student for the assessment on-site.



Parent reaches out to the school asking about sessions.



Providing services while school is not in session.



Therapist attending IEP and 504 Meetings.

Questions?



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We are here to help!