

Social Emotional Support Services (SESS) Program

[2-minute Video of SESS in Action](#)

This two-minute video was created in 2015. Some employees highlighted in the video are in different positions within the same school district while others may no longer work for the school district. The brief video provides a visual gist of the program and impacted stakeholders.

Program Summary

The SESS program provides counseling support to students with social emotional and behavioral needs that have historically resulted in disciplinary actions leading to above average time out of class or consideration of more restrictive placements. Identified students receive an intake assessment to determine specific needs and are provided services based on a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework. Based on the identified student needs, the supports available include social skills counseling, anger management counseling, grief counseling, small group and individualized counseling including *Motivational Interviewing* techniques, development of individualized behavior intervention plans and daily monitoring of those plans, check in/check out support, crisis intervention, de-escalation support, and conflict mediation with peers and/or school staff using a Restorative Practices model. Additionally, school and staff needs are assessed and professional development and coaching of all staff is provided on an ongoing basis in the areas of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), culturally responsive teaching using a culturally relevant teaching framework, trauma informed care, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), Restorative Practices, Mindfulness, and the impact of secondary trauma on teachers. **The mission of the SESS program is to provide tiered comprehensive school mental health services to students and consultation to stakeholders in order to promote social emotional growth and wellness among the school community.** A unique feature of the program, particularly in comprehensive school settings, is the assignment of social workers and school psychologists equipped with specialized training who are placed full time in one school versus being assigned to three or four schools with the complete responsibility for the special education evaluations, truancy, and mental health of thousands of students. Ultimately, the goal is to move your school district toward a shared school-family community commitment to bring high quality and evidence-based mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention to staff, students and their families.

**The SESS program was developed by Dr. Hamlett, with the assistance of an Alternative School Principal, clinicians, and other district leaders.*

Program Highlights & Considerations

After implementing the program as a pilot at an alternative school discipline referrals reduced by 58% in the first semester and out of school suspensions (OSS) decreased by 37%.

Over 80% of teachers who received professional development (PD) from the clinicians said that they felt better prepared to serve students who exhibit challenging behavior and who had experienced trauma.

There are opportunities for alternative funding to create additional positions to support implementation of the program.

- The program started in an alternative school in the 2014-15 school year and expanded into 18 schools by June of 2019; with several other school administrators requesting the program for their school.

Specialized and ongoing PD of the clinicians is imperative. There are certifications that are not education based, but have a mental health focus that can and will benefit your students, their families, and the school district (LCSW, Certified Trauma Practitioner, etc.)

A School-Based Mental Health Supervisor to supervise and support the program for sustainability and ongoing professional learning of the clinicians and staff is recommended.

A commitment to and investment in implementation of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and Restorative Practices as part of your district's MTSS framework are necessary.