

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES
AND THE
LAWNSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) – Camden County-Vicinage 4 initiative includes a partnership between Center For Family Services, a nonprofit organization, and Lawnside School District, as well as social service organizations, and community-based organizations. The efforts, resources and strategies of the DCF NJ4S-Camden County Vicinage 4 initiative are targeted to provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students' family members, and community members that are designed to improve education outcomes for children.

In an effort to create an effective, efficient and successful initiative across Camden County, Center For Family Services has developed a structure that is responsive to the measurable outcomes set forth in the scope of the New Jersey Statewide Support Services (NJ4S) program by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families:

- Promote positive mental health
- Teach and strengthen social, emotional, and behavioral skills
- Support a positive school climate and staff well-being

Through this structure, CFS will recognize the whole family – in addition to the individual student – as the focus of support and to increase student achievement; provide a standard set of supports and services, with local adaptations, that leverage the best approaches the field has to offer, so that no matter where a student lives, they can be assured of accessing a core set of high-quality services and programming; involve communities in design and implementation and integrate programing within the communities; and intentionally integrate with existing statewide

and community-based services and supports for school aged youth, to maximize public funding and avoid duplication of services.

The Mission: The mission of the New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) is to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for all children, including future generations of children who live in the communities, by working with and supporting parents and children as they focus on success through youth development, value of education, working hard and going on to obtain college and career opportunities.

The Vision: The efforts, resources and strategies of the New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) partners will be targeted to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of the children and youth in the target neighborhood, while greatly strengthening the social, communal, and familial infrastructures that support and nurture their success.

Theory of Change/Action: Center For Family Services' NJ4S Hub will provide an array of prevention and early intervention services to school districts both in schools and at community locations. Center For Family Services' NJ4S Hub will utilize prevention, screening, brief clinical intervention, and referral to treatment using evidence-based practices, to promote positive youth outcomes. We will do this by working with school leaders and staff to use programming to teach—and strengthen—social, emotional, and behavioral skills, and to foster a positive school climate and staff well-being.

New Jersey Department of Children and Families NJ4S – Camden County Vicinage 4 Initiative Values:

- **All children and families have the potential to be successful.** Center For Family Services and its partners will be intentional in providing comprehensive services to students and families in a holistic way. The NJ4S Camden County Vicinage 4 team will

existing certified staff trainers to train interested school staff in trauma-informed care and other appropriate evidence-based practices (as approved by the Advisory Group).

- **Creating a culture of inclusivity.** CFS embraces cultural competence and awareness as a critical component of workplace culture and service delivery. We are dedicated to incorporating multicultural principles and practices throughout our innovative continuum of care, providing programs and services that are linguistically appropriate, culturally relevant, and sensitive. Through collaborative and culturally responsive service delivery, CFS honors individuals and families as experts in their own lives.

Roles and Responsibilities

Center For Family Services is the lead organization for the DCF NJ4S – Camden County Vicinage 4 initiative. As the lead social services agency, Center For Family Services is committed to a collective impact approach in joining with partners to identify and fill gaps in services, ensuring a seamless continuum to improve outcomes for children and families in Camden County. Center For Family Services will:

- Provide leadership and infrastructure to support the implementation.
- Serve as the liaison between NJ4S – Camden County Vicinage 4 partner organizations to support successful coordination of services to the target population.
- Provide mental health screening, assessment, and services to include:
 - **Tier 1 Services (Universal Services)** *Purpose: Universal prevention interventions to support the strengthening of families. Services focus on improving mental health/well-being, social connections, job readiness/career exploration, and classroom management/disruptive behaviors. Services can be delivered through school-/district-wide programming or through partnerships with others - through workshops, webinars, assemblies, training, and evidence-based interventions.*
 - **Tier 2 Services (Small Groups)** *Purpose: Selective services and support to address mental health concerns are provided for groups of students who have been identified through referral, needs assessments and school teaming processes as being at risk for a given concern or problem. When problems are identified early and support put in place, positive youth development is promoted, and problems can be eliminated or reduced.*

work with school administrators, teachers, social work team and parents to identify overall family needs and refer within the pipeline to ensure all needs are addressed through a solutions-based approach.

- **Solutions will be family-focused, culturally-competent, and community-based.** NJ4S-Camden County Vicinage 4 partners will create localized opportunities for families living in the school communities to receive services and access resources that promote overall family well-being. Programs and service provision will reflect the needs of families across Camden County school districts.
- **Efforts will be driven by data and evidence-based or evidence-informed practice.** CFS uses Electronic Health Records across programming to track client data and outcomes. Center For Family Services has extensive experience providing regular programmatic and fiscal reports for services provided in partnership with the Department of Children and Families. Reports will be submitted quarterly to the Advisory Group.
- **Creating Trauma-Informed Approaches.** All Hub staff will receive training on Trauma-Informed Care, Mental Health First Aid, Psychological First Aid, and the Nurtured Heart Approach. We will ensure Hub staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the impact of trauma on youth brain development. NJ4S staff will be expected to strive to preserve the dignity of the youth and families they serve, providing opportunities for skill development and promoting wellbeing through strengths-based, trauma-informed practices.

Because so many students have experienced trauma, this initiative creates opportunities to provide additional training for school staff regarding a trauma-informed school climate. We will bring CFS' strength and experience in providing trauma-informed care to our collaborative implementation of the NJ4S Hub and partnering schools. CFS will leverage its

- **Tier 3 (Individual Mental Health Services)** -*Purpose: Indicated services and supports (Tier 3) to address mental health concerns are individualized to meet the unique needs of each student and families who are displaying concern in multiple life domains (home, school, and community). When individualized interventions are put in place, the severity and intensity of problem behavior decrease.*
 - Collaborate in the development and selection of Evidence-Based Mental Health Interventions with district staff.
 - Facilitate EBP Mental Health Interventions, including linkages to psychiatric care, and treatment planning.
 - Monitor that chosen Evidence Based Interventions are being implemented with fidelity.
 - Monitoring the progress of students receiving interventions.
 - Communicating with students and staff on student progress in interventions.
 - Coordinate referral to psychiatric evaluation for individual students as needed.
 - Participate on the Intervention Support Teams (as requested) to provide consultation and problem-solving strategies.
 - Facilitate transitions to and from community agencies and programs by utilizing a continuum of supports.
- Coordinate and allocate funding for both infrastructure and the continuum of solutions.
- Establish effective data management and training to support partners in data collection.
- Collect, track, and analyze the full range of data necessary to effectively coordinate a seamless continuum of comprehensive solutions.
- Report progress and outcomes to funders, partners, and community members.
- Host community outreach events to spread the word and build accessibility to services and resources offered through the NJ4S-Camden County Vicinage 4 program.

Lawnside School District would provide access and support communication to key personnel to aid in the facilitation of service coordination to students and families through the NJ4S program structure. Within the scope of the NJ4S Program for Camden County Vicinage 4, the **Lawnside School District** will:

- Identify district/school representative(s)/Point(s) of Contact to facilitate successful integration of community mental health providers into school(s), and to address any concerns.

- Facilitate the inclusion and active participation of community partners in school teams that utilize best practices in teaming.
- Establish a process for teams and team members to ensure frequent and consistent communication with NJ4S representative(s).
- Participate in data-driven decision models and referral processes that promote early identification and intervention for students.
- Obtain written consent before submitting NJ4S referral for Tier 2 and/or 3 services.
- Ensure a teacher/school representative will be present during ALL Tier 2 (group services) to support school policies and procedures, and overall school safety.
- Provide confidential individual and group space in school(s) that includes access to mechanisms for communicating with families and other providers (e.g., phone, internet access, smartboard, etc.).

Accountability

All parties commit to ensuring that all of the solutions are of high quality and new solutions are identified and implemented to meet the changing needs necessary to change the outcomes for the target population.

- If applicable, actively use the centralized data system to connect families and community members with solutions identified above.
- Exert reasonable efforts to perform the activities as described and summarized in this partnership agreement.
- Keep organizational information up to date with all respective parties.
- Regularly utilize outcome and performance data to influence changes in NJ4S Camden County Vicinage 4 programming that will achieve better outcomes.
- Commit to working with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and the selected evaluator to ensure data collection and program design meet national evaluation standards.

Acknowledgment and Signature

This partnership agreement is in effect upon the signature and is to be reviewed annually by a group of representatives from the NJ4S Camden County Vicinage 4 implementation team. The annual review will include an evaluation of the progress being made regarding the NJ4S Camden County Vicinage 4 objectives and outcomes identified in the proposal.

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, my organization agrees to uphold the vision and values of the NJ4S Camden County Vicinage 4 Program and to actively participate as a collaborative partner to carry out activities identified in the continuum of solutions.

Richard Stagliano, CEO
Center For Family Services

School District Representative
Lawnside School District

Date: _____

Date: _____