# Department Plans 2025-2026

# Overview

---

**Department:** THRIVE: School Mental Health

**Mission:**

To provide comprehensive, integrated, and culturally sensitive school-based mental health services that support the academic success of all PUSD students by addressing social, emotional, and mental health barriers — at no cost to families, including those who are privately insured or uninsured.

---

## Core Services

- **Direct Clinical Services:**
    - Individual, group, and family therapy
    - Social-emotional learning (SEL) supports
- **Crisis Response:**
    - School-wide and district-wide crisis intervention
- **Capacity Building:**
    - Professional development for school staff
    - Staff consultations and trainings (PD)
    - MSW Internship Program (supervision and coordination)
- **Parent Engagement:**
    - Workshops
    - Outreach and education
- **Systems Navigation:**
    - Community service linkage
    - Advocacy and referrals
    - Mental health consortium oversight
- **Program Infrastructure:**
    - Grant writing and management
    - Program evaluation and development

# Department Plans 2025-2026

## Target Populations

- English Learners (EL)
- Low-income students
- Foster youth
- African American students
- Uninsured or underinsured students
- Privately insured students

## Ongoing Needs & Challenges

- Unmet Need: Several schools remain without mental health coverage due to staffing and funding limitations.
- Workforce Reduction: Loss of CSWs in 2024-25 limits service expansion.
- Funding Gap: Current grants sunset September 2024; additional sustainable funding is critical.
- Disparity in Access: Schools with high need (based on referrals) and no CSW/intern coverage remain underserved.

## Ideal Scenario (Long-Term Vision)

- Sustainable funding secured for a larger, permanent mental health workforce.
- Every school site has access to CSW/intern mental health support.
- PUSD achieves equitable access to school-based mental health care for all students, especially the most vulnerable.

# Department Plans 2025-2026

# Roles and Services

---

**Department Organizational Chart (Please list names and Titles)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Manager** | Lara Choulakian (central) |
| **Licensed Clinical Social Workers** | Mari Martin (central)<br>Luisana Marquez (site-based)<br>Edith Ballard (site-based) |
| **Clinical Social Workers** | Julia Paniagua (site-based)<br>Karina Venegas (site-based)<br>Aja Arana (site-based)<br>Melissa Banuelos (site-based)<br>Stephanie Murcia (site-based)<br>Jannet De La Torre (site-based)<br>To hire 2 more CSWs who will provide crisis counseling post wildfires (site-based) |
| **Interns** | 8-12 interns a year; TBD for '25-26 (site-based) |

**Services provided by the THRIVE: School Mental Health Department:**

1. Ongoing mental health services - individual therapy, group therapy, crisis counseling/intervention, biopsychosocial assessments, parenting support, check-in support, brief intervention
2. District-wide crisis management/behavioral threat assessment trainings and management
3. Social work services - case management, linkage to services, referrals, resources to families, students, school sites
4. Collaboration with administration and staff
5. Collaboration with community partners and agencies
6. Psychoeducational presentations to staff, students, and families on mental health
7. Staff professional development trainings

# Department Plans 2025-2026

# Prior Year Reflection

---

**Accomplishments in 2024-2025 include:**

- 1 total # of students served for individual mental health services: 136 new individual cases serviced as of 6/2/25; 127 continued from last year
- 2 total # of students served for group, crisis, check-in, brief: 343 as of 6/2/25
    - Group: 29
    - Crisis: 29
    - Brief: 176
    - Check-in: 109
- 3 total # of referrals received: 323 as of 6/2/25
    - 111 received since the Eaton Wildfire
- 4 total # of students served in any capacity: 568 as of 6/2/25
- 5 total # of caregiver workshops/presentations: 14
- 6 total # of staff presentations: 11
- 7 total # of tabling events: 22

**2024-2025 Goals and Reflection**

1. Sustain and expand the workforce by securing three new state and federal grants.
    - We were not able to secure these grants; we were not awarded these grants.

2. Reach underserved schools — especially those with no prior mental health presence.
    - We couldn't expand our workforce due to budget cuts. Thus, some schools remained underserved.

3. Increase visibility and knowledge through flyers, tabling events, presentations (staff, principal, and parent), enhanced referral processes.
    - We absolutely met this goal and increased visibility and knowledge of services given the amount of referrals and requests for services received.

4. Empower school communities to identify mental health concerns early.
    - We met this goal given the number of presentations we conducted and the number of new referrals received for services.

# Department Plans 2025-2026

**Next Steps/Continued Actions for 2025-2026:**

- 1 Expand workforce by hiring 2 crisis counselors dedicated to providing crisis support to students impacted by the wildfires (donor funding). Their primary focus will be students impacted by the fires but will also be available to provide services to students who have faced other trauma and/or crises
- 2 Continue delivering mental health services

# Department Priorities & Goals

---

**Actions/Strategies/Projects/Priorities for 25-26**

| Item #1 | Budget Allocation | Timeline for Outcome/ Implementation |
|---|---|---|
| **Expand workforce** by 2 crisis counselors | Donor funds; PEF; Direct Relief | Hire August 2025 |

| Data Used to Determine (Prior Year Data) | Alignment to Strategic Plan | LCAP Alignment | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A significant percentage of the 111 referrals received since January 2025 have been for wildfire related mental health support | 2. Outstanding and respected employees<br>3. Quality learning environment | Goal 3 | Action |
| | | | |

| Success Indicators | Data Used to Determine Success | Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Current | Goal |
| | | | |
| | | | Not Met |

# Department Plans 2025-2026

**Actions/Strategies/Projects/Priorities for 25-26**

| Item #2 | Budget Allocation | Timeline for Outcome/ Implementation |
|---|---|---|
| Continue **delivering mental health services** | LCAP | Ongoing |

| Data Used to Determine (Prior Year Data) | Alignment to Strategic Plan | LCAP Alignment | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of referrals received; number of students who received services in any capacity | 2. Outstanding and respected employees<br>3. Quality learning environment | Goal 3 | Action Fund 9 FTEs (Manager ,LCSWs, CSWs) through LCAP (1 is funded through Community Schools) |
| | | | |

| Success Indicators | Data Used to Determine Success | Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Current | Goal |
| | | | |
| | | | Not Met |

# Spending Priorities

---

Spending Plan for 25-26 (lists year over year changes, **if any**) with 2 prior years spending.
Please see SWSS Budget