



1

Precipitating Circumstances

- Lack of access to therapeutic day programs in Northwest Washington.
- Closure of the Skagit Discovery program in the 2021-22 school year.
- Input from LEA special education administrators.



2

Is it feasible for NWESD to collaboratively create and operate a therapeutic day program based on best practices?



3

Information We Were Seeking

- Staffing (roles and staff-to-student ratio)
- Foundational beliefs and frameworks
- Intervention strategies
- Physical space
- Policies and procedures
- Partnerships
- Funding sources



4

Interviews (n=40)

- Special Education Administrators (13)
- ESD Special Education Administrators (2)
- Site Program Administrators (9)
- Mental Health Providers/Consultants (6)
- Governmental Entities (9)
- WSRMP Staff (1)



5

Research-Based Best Practices

Interventions

- Life Space Crisis Intervention
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (used by licensed clinical staff)
- *Collaborative Problem Solving*
- Mindfulness and other social-emotional strategies
- Animal-Assisted Therapy
- Activity-Oriented Therapy
- Ukeru (promising practice)
- Occupational and physical therapy

Program Systems

- Capacity to integrate community and private agencies involved with students and families
- Capacity to communicate regularly with resident districts
- Consistent outreach to families
- Appropriate space
- Embedded mental health services
- Focus on recruitment and retention of experienced and skilled staff



6

Legislative considerations to keep in mind

- No de-escalation rooms
- Rethinking time and space
- Breaking the dependency on restraint.



7

Committee Process

Who are you thinking of?

- Autism Spectrum
- Non-verbal
- Physically aggressive
- Resistant to self-protection
- High level of adaptive need
- Self-harm: biting and flexing against will
- Sensory seeking, oral sensory seeking
- 3:1 or 3:2 support to maintain the safety
- Subject to separate systems
- Significant communication concerns
- Possible benefits from animal and outdoor therapies
- "Present-in-it, skilled-but", what is the entry and exit strategy?
- Not their only community have also accessed them to their community

Who are you thinking of?

- Student is
- Emotional volatility
- 1 to 2:1 support
- Physical aggression in safety, rather than a system
- Screened for trauma to create a relationship
- Present overall behavior
- SIBB support method
- Plan not had a strong academic background needs to learn how to do school

Who are you thinking of?

- Drug and alcohol involvement (Self and friends)
- At-risk/abused/PO
- Inappropriate behavior (element of rage)
- Misbehavior and protection behavior
- Gang affiliation
- 1:1 line to engage in physical play (rather than 1:1 line)
- Significant academic skill gap
- Identifying staff interventions (physical and verbal)
- Misbehavior toward behavior (particularly physical and verbal) any other location needs to be considered as well (especially outside of school)
- Willing and needed academic behavior
- Willing positive connection to the home school
- Engaged in regular connection to home school
- Open of respect with other students
- Physical strength able to open (often) internal door (unable to be endorsed or not)



8

Pulling it Together

- Mental Health Supports: part-time dedicated clinical psychologist with experience in schools, substance abuse treatment, hospital-level treatment
- Communication/ Sensory Support: Sensory rooms (multiple) PT, OT, SLP, food therapy
- Professional Development: staff wellness, LSCI,
- Teacher credentials/experience: SPED Endorsed, level of psychoeducation Education/psychology (out of state)
- Behavior interventionist: phd clinical experience, BCBA
- Administrator credentials/experience: Potentially two elementary and secondary clinical/trauma backgrounds (former school psychologist)
- De-escalation supports: planning, debrief, and teaming time built in



9

Pulling it Together

- Building space: protects the dignity of students and proximity to other students. Needs to be large enough for the program. Separate campus for elementary and secondary. Looks like a school, welcoming, space, outdoor area, garden
- What other roles would students need Social Worker, chemical dependency, etc. family/ guardian liaison,
- Entry and Exit scheduling options:
- Transportation:
- Connection to home schools: the ability to float between placements
- Community:
- Academic: credit recovery, multiple graduation pathways, Daily Schedule options
- Calendar: Year-round school with a shorter day (how would you support the hours where they are not in school)
- Adaptive supports: toileting, feeding



10

Proposed Program Design: Staffing

Staffing		
One Classroom	Two Classrooms	
1	1	Administrator
1	1	Site Assistant
1	1	School Counselor
1	2	Licensed Mental Health Clinicians
1	2	Certified SPED Teacher
2	4	Paraeducators
1	1	Board Certified Behavior Analyst/ Behavior Specialist
2	2	Behavior Intervention Specialists
0.5	0.5	School Nurse
Contracted		
0.5	0.5	School Psychologist
0.1	0.1	Psychiatrist or Nurse Practitioner
0.1	0.2	OT
0.1	0.2	PT
0.1	0.2	SLP

Two Classroom Model	
16	Students
\$129,148	Annual Cost
180	Days of Instruction
\$717	Daily Rate

Two Classroom Model	
14	Students
\$147,598	Annual Cost
180	Days of Instruction
\$820	Daily Rate



11

Additional Program Costs: MSOCS & Contract Services

Start-Up

- Modifications to leased space
- Classroom equipment and supplies
- Office supplies
- Curriculum materials
- Collaboration time for program planning
- Professional development

Ongoing

- Lease cost
- Food service
- Custodial
- Maintenance
- Supplies and materials
- Professional development
- Program transportation



12

Next Steps

Milestones	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Continue to Identify and refine cost estimates.	█												
Continue to work with architect to determine City building requirements and project estimate.	█												
Determine District interest in moving forward with program planning.		█											
Establish committees to work on the referral process and billing model.		█											
Committees meet and report recommendations to NWESD Leadership.			█										
Referral and billing procedures finalized by NWESD.								█					
Work to develop partnership (and ultimately contract) with local psychiatric provider.		█											
Develop job descriptions for program staff.					█								
District commitments to participate in the program (interlocal agreement).							█						
Hire staff.								█					
Capital modifications at Lincoln School.								█					



13

Please take a few minutes to provide us with feedback



14