

Trauma-Informed Care

(Language in red reflects Commission on Youth discussion at the 9/20/17 meeting. Commission members directed staff to include additional language for consideration and public comment.)

Recommendation 1 – Trauma-Informed Care Workgroup

Introduce budget language directing the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary Education, to create a Trauma-Informed Care workgroup. The workgroup shall include representatives from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Education, the Office of Children’s Services, the Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Virginia Department of Health, the Family and Children’s Trust Fund of Virginia, other state agencies as needed, stakeholders, researchers, community organizations and representatives from impacted communities. The workgroup shall (i) develop a shared vision and definition of trauma-informed care for Virginia; (ii) examine Virginia’s applicable child and family-serving programs and data; (iii) develop an implementation plan for data-sharing; (iv) develop strategies to build a trauma-informed system of care for children and families across the Commonwealth; (v) identify indicators to measure progress; **and** (vi) identify workforce development opportunities around evidence-based and best practices; **and (vii) identify needed professional development/training in trauma-informed practices for all child-serving professionals.** In addition, the workgroup shall explore opportunities including the creation of public/private partnerships to expand trauma-informed care throughout the Commonwealth. The Secretary of Health and Human and the Secretary of Education shall report to the Chairman of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees and the Virginia Commission on Youth by December 15 of each year.

Include an appropriation of \$150,000 each year for staff support to coordinate and carry out the duties of the workgroup.

Recommendation 2 – Establish a Small Grants Program

Request the Family and Children’s Trust Fund (FACT) to establish a competitive small grants program to prevent, mitigate or help persons recover from adverse childhood experiences across the state and to build protective factors. Encourage FACT to pursue state, federal, private, foundation and nonprofit grants to fund community programs that demonstrate the adoption of best practices to better the health and well-being of children and families. No funds awarded to a locality under this grant may be used to supplant existing funding.

Recommendation 3 – Public Awareness Campaign on Trauma-informed Practice

Request the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to conduct a feasibility study of activities that promote public awareness related to adverse childhood experiences, the impact of trauma, and the importance of trauma-informed practice. This feasibility study may include the utilization of traditional and social media, along with state and local outreach strategies. Request that a report on the study’s findings and recommendations be submitted to the Governor and report to the Chairman of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees and the Virginia Commission on Youth by December 15, 2018.

Recommendation 4 – Staffing Standards for School-Based Mental Health Service Providers

Option A – Establish A Minimum Level of Staffing for School Social Workers

Introduce legislation/budget language moving school social worker positions from the support services’ position category in the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and establish a prescribed ratio as recommended by the Virginia Board of Education.

School social workers collaborate with students, their families, and school staff to address problems that may impact a student’s ability to succeed. This includes students impacted by trauma. School social workers specialize in the assessment and implementation of evidence-based mental health interventions and in understanding family and community systems and linking students and their families with the community services that are essential for promoting student success. This collaboration includes assisting teachers and school administrators with appropriate practices, including trauma-informed practices, to be used with these students’ individual situations. Social workers also serve as the coordinator of services for homeless students and those in foster care.

The staffing ratio that was adopted by the Board of Education for school social worker positions is noted below.

- Local school boards shall employ one full-time equivalent school social worker position per 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

Recommended Staffing Change	FY 2018 Fiscal Impact
School Social Worker: One for every 1,000 students	\$48.7 million

Option B – Support the Board of Education’s Recommendation for Establishing Minimum Staffing Levels for School Social Worker Positions

Send a letter to the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Secretary of Education, and the members of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees supporting the Board of Education’s proposed changes to the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for establishing staffing standards for school social worker positions.

Option C – Appropriate Additional Funding to Virginia’s Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS) for School Social Workers

Introduce a budget amendment to increase the existing general fund appropriation to the Department of Education's Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS). The current appropriation enables the Department of Education to provide training, technical assistance, and on-site coaching to public school teachers and administrators on implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) program. This programming addresses both the academic and behavioral needs of students; including students impacted by trauma, improves school climate; and reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom.

This increased level of funding will be earmarked to secondary schools in participating school divisions to enable those schools to contract with school social workers so to further address the behavioral, mental wellness, and social needs of students, increase academic achievement, reduce student absences, and improve student behavior and wellness.