

Central and School Based Supports

Lisa Jeanne Graf, written March, 2018

I was thinking about the question of how best to increase access for therapy for students in BPS.

Therapy Costs

I am not sure if it is common knowledge that therapy is sometimes paid for by parents using school partners. The parent's insurance is billed, and then the co-pay is paid for by families. This is a problem largely for equity. If some schools cover therapy costs for their students, and other schools expect families to cover the costs that isn't fair. One way to improve the situation would be for BPS to pay for family's copays when a family's insurance is used. Then in either situation a family is not paying for therapy and more students have access to therapy.

I wonder if a lot of social emotional staffing is being set up centrally because there is a hope that parents will help pay for a lot of the cost through their insurance and families paying the copays. Even if families don't pay the copay and BPS paid the copay, the district would still save money because insurance would be paying the largest part of the bill. I hope this issue is discussed and thought through carefully. Is this the best way to pay for services?

Creating Safe, Healthy and Welcoming Schools: Supporting the Whole Child through SEL & Wellness

I was wondering what would happen in the following scenario. A student has been hurting other students in a classroom and the teachers are not able to stop the behavior. If a classroom needed help strengthening a safety plan by hiring a one on one aid, or an additional para in the classroom would the costs come from the school budget or from the central office? I personally hope that it would come from central office as I think that could bring a quicker response, and not force a school to make hard budget choices. Or if a school doesn't have the funding (having already allocated the funding for the school), to fix the problem, then school staff would not be able to solve a problem easily, or quickly.

When additional money for staff is needed for a crisis, it is my hope that the money would come from central BPS instead of school funding.

School Budgets

I would like to see more detail on the partners that schools use (with partnership funds and through the school budget). When a family is paying for services through a school partner, this information is not shown in the school's budget. If there was data available to review, then it would be easier for school communities to decide if it would make more sense to have a school staff person provide some of those services instead of a school partner.

I have a concern of there being a movement away from staff in schools, and towards partners. If this is good fit for the parents and school that is one thing. If it is happening out of financial necessity, then that isn't ideal. Also, if parents are taking on some of this burden that isn't ideal either.

Possible BPS Budget Goals:

1. Central office could provide training in addition to (and not in place of) spending money on staff and resources at a school.
2. If central office is taking away resources from schools more than adding resources to schools, then the staffing of central office needs adjusting. Central office should be a value added to schools.

Ideas for more equity at schools:

1. If family insurance is being used to pay for services for ELL or Special education students, then the schools would cover copays for these services.
2. All schools would either have a therapist onsite or schools would cover a family's copay if they wanted to choose a school partner who provided therapy.
3. All schools would have a full-time nurse.
4. All schools would have a social worker.
5. Partnership funds could be used to pay for staff if a school community would find that more useful.

I will be updating this proposal if I think of more things to add.

http://ljgraf.com/BPS/Central_and_School_Based_Supports.pdf

Feedback is very welcome.

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