

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Recommendation of \$500,000 or Less
19-021V – Student Psychiatric Services

A recent Surgeon General’s report noted that many young people with emotional and behavioral needs are not accurately assessed and treated. Recent data published by the Center for Disease Control shows an increased prevalence of developmental conditions in children today. About one-quarter of children in the United States have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder, such as autism, depression, or bipolar disorder; however, only about twenty (20) percent receive evaluation and treatment by medical professionals, and only a fraction are evaluated by one (1) of the country’s approximately 8,300 child and adolescent psychiatrists. Child and adolescent psychiatrists have the opportunity to treat children in the context of their families, schools, and communities.

In Broward County Schools, psychiatric services are provided at Whispering Pines and Cross Creek schools to serve students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) as part of a therapeutic program identified on their Individual Educational Plan. Students identified as needing extensive therapeutic support receive services to include, but not limited to, individual and group therapy, family therapy, specialized groups, crisis management and intervention, on-going situational support, and medication management. The services of a licensed child psychiatrist can be provided at the EBD separate day schools rather than more costly residential and private school placements.

The District’s model of service is unique in utilizing the expertise of a trained medical doctor to identify and treat students with severe psychiatric, emotional, and behavioral concerns. This model offers the on-site consultation by a team of clinicians composed of mental health therapists and nurses, led by an experienced medical doctor.

This type of service (solicitation) has been released on Demandstar many times throughout the years, but Procurement & Warehousing Services Department (PWS) received only one (1) bid from Dr. Nyrma Ortiz.

PWS released, on Demandstar, a Request for Information (RFI) for student psychiatric services on August 28, 2017, to see if there are any new bidders for this type of service. The following companies responded to the RFI placed on Demandstar but did not submit a proposal.

Alliance Counseling and Education Services, Inc.	(Unable to provide a Psychiatrist)
Cobb Pediatric Therapy	(Thought this was for Psychology Services)
FCS, Inc.	(Psychiatric Recruitment only)
Invo/Progressus Therapy	(Unable to provide Psychiatric Services at this time)
Speech Rehab Services	(Unable to provide Psychiatric Services at this time)
Wasatch Contracting Services	(Recruitment Services only)

Dr. Nyrma Ortiz, PA, is an experienced physician who has worked with the EBD population in the District for over seventeen (17) years. She has successfully passed her board certification in general adult psychiatry, as required by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, as well as the additional board certification in Child Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Nyrma Ortiz is part of an exclusive, small number of psychiatrists that are board certified in both psychiatry and child/adolescent psychiatry. Dr. Nyrma Ortiz would like to continue providing these needed services under the existing RFP, and the District’s Exceptional Student Learning Support (ESLS) Department would like to continue its partnership with Dr. Nyrma Ortiz.

The demand for child and adolescent psychiatrists outweighs the supply nationally and locally. Miami-Dade County Public Schools did have a student psychiatric contract, but it is no longer available on their website to compare current costs. Palm Beach County Schools’ contract with Dr. Cleopatra Ortiz has a cost of \$185 per hour, and they only received one proposal. Palm Beach Schools is having the same issue in bidding and only received one (1) proposal. The District’s cost for this service is \$190/hour and is in the competitive range for this service. The cost of malpractice insurance has risen nationally at a cost from \$10,696 up to \$22,509 annually depending on the specialty.

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Dr. Ortiz has stated that she does not take vacations or time-off during the time school is in session. She has not taken any time off for illness, or personal family leaves to date. Dr. Ortiz stated that she would take her vacation when the school district is closed (holidays). In order to provide coverage in case of an illness or unexpected leave, there are private agencies or locum tenens that provide coverage to private practices, hospitals, and institutions. They are professional healthcare staffing companies. Dr. Ortiz is in contact with Barton Associates, a healthcare professional staffing company that is a job board for physicians.

Dr. Ortiz's workload: Dr. Ortiz conducts a psychiatric evaluation for each student as part of the referral process (school and Multi-agency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities referrals). She has conducted evaluations on approximately one hundred and fifty (150) students between Whispering Pines and Cross Creek schools for 2017/2018 fiscal school year. This sometimes includes observing a student at the referring school. When determined there is a need as part of a student's re-evaluation plan, Dr. Ortiz also conducts a psychiatric evaluation for students currently attending Whispering Pines Center and Cross Creek.

There is an average of three hundred (300) students enrolled in Whispering Pines and Cross Creek schools (approximately one hundred and fifty (150) at each). Dr. Ortiz provides services to these students in the following manner:

- Direct services as needed, observing and evaluating a student in crisis;
- Holds individual and group consultation/supervision with therapist to discuss all students, regularly scheduled and as needed;
- Collaborates with the school nurse, the student's community psychiatrist, and other doctors and families regarding psychotropic medication and other issues;
- Participates in child study meetings to plan for students such as when students are being mainstreamed back to a less restrictive environment.

The ESLS department has implemented numerous effective supports and services over the years to promote student success in the least restrictive environment which has led to the reduction of students in need of the EBD separate day schools.

Financial Impact

The funds for this service are provided by the IDEA Grant

Current Spend Authority: \$200,000

Current term spending: \$100,000

Unused spending: \$100,000

It is expected that up to \$100,000 may be used until the end of the contract

Average monthly spending: \$12,500 x 12 months = \$150,000

Total: \$200,000*

(*)Recommend an additional spending authority of \$200,000 to cover the new contract period. In light of the recent focus on student mental health needs; there will likely be an increase in the number of hours of psychiatric services provided.