

Yakubovich, Mark

To: Lindsay, Susie
Subject: RE: Public Comment for LFC

From: donotreply@mt.gov <donotreply@mt.gov>
Sent: Sunday, August 4, 2024 5:04 PM
To: Lindsay, Susie <Susie.Lindsay@legmt.gov>
Subject: Public Comment for LFC

Public Comments for Legislative Finance Committee

Date: 4th August 2024 17:03

First Name:
Rob

Last Name:
Watson

Email Address:
samrw@sammt.org

Subject:
Joint Meeting, Presentation of Beh. Hlth Commission Report - July 23

Comment:

Dear Members of the Committee, I am writing today to provide comment on a recent discussion which occurred at a joint meeting where you were presented recommendations from the Behavior Health Systems for Future Generations Commission. Late in the meeting that day, one committee member asked about the recommendations related to behavioral health services in schools, specifically as it related to CSCT services. Specifically there was a question or concern about gaps in services in what is currently available to schools with regard to behavioral health. In response to the committee member question, Deputy Admin Meghan Peel alluded to an inventory being completed by my organization, School Administrators of Montana. We have started preliminary analysis and I thought it would be important to share some data that we are learning from this research project. In a preliminary survey that we conducted last spring (March 2023) we asked several questions related to current behavioral health options available in schools across Montana. We had an even mix of schools (Class C to Class AA) who responded to our survey request. In asking which programs were currently being used to address behavioral health in schools, CSCT was used by a fairly small percentage of respondents. Several other programs received a much higher response rate: classroom based programs, suicide prevention programs, and student intervention teams (MTSS) received the highest response rate. When asked about resources being used to fund the behavioral health programs currently being offered, the school general fund was identified most often as the current funding source. Other funding sources that were noted at a lesser rate were grant funding, partner organization funding and federal funding. When asked about the overall effectiveness of current programs being used to address behavioral health, the majority (nearly 60%) rated their school-based programs as somewhat or marginally effective in addressing the needs of their students. When asked about barriers or challenges to providing behavioral health services in schools nearly 75% of schools that responded noted lack of funding and/or lack of qualified staff as the major barriers. As was mentioned in the hearing on July 23, the School Administrators of Montana

has received a grant to complete this research/inventory. We are in the final stages of completing this research and hope to have a final report available by November. Please contact me directly if you have questions regarding this research. Thank you. Rob Watson, Exec Director, School Admin of MT

Sent via leg.mt.gov/committees/admincom/2019-lfc/public-comments-lfc/