

FY 20-21 BUDGET BRIEF: STUDENT WELLNESS AND SUCCESS FUND (SWSF)



Juvenile Justice Coalition May 2019

LINK BETWEEN STUDENT WELLNESS AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Efforts to improve school climate, safety, and learning are not separate endeavors. Proactive efforts by educators and policymakers to foster students' thriving well-being will help to improve school climate and safety. Many states and school districts across the country are collecting data related to school climate, and some have policies and programs in place to create positive school climates. Creating a positive school climate helps students feel safe, supported, and more connected in school. Further, students who are more connected and develop trusting relationships with teachers and staff are less likely to engage in negative behaviors and more likely to succeed academically.

POLICY

Ohio's current budget proposal creates the Student Wellness and Success Fund (SWSF), which specifically targets the non-academic barriers to student success and addresses the needs of the whole child. The bill invests \$275 million in FY20, and \$400 million in FY21 to provide a total of \$675 million to school districts over the next two years. With this additional funding, schools will be able to provide youth with mental health counseling, wraparound supports for families and students, social work services, mentoring and after-school programs by partnering with community organizations that focus on alcohol, drug and mental health treatment, developmental disabilities, social services, and nonprofits with experience serving children.

Under the proposal each school district would receive:

- 1) A *per-pupil* funding amount of \$20-\$250 in FY 20 and \$30-\$360 in FY 21 based on the district's federal poverty level.
- 2) A *minimum* of \$25,000 in the first year and \$36,000 in the second year to support student wellness.
- 3) *Add-on enhancement funding* to public school districts that received supplemental targeted assistance funding for fiscal year 2019, based on a formula calculation.
- 4) *Add-on enhancement funding* to joint vocational school districts, community schools that are not e-schools, and STEM schools based on the per-pupil amount of enhancement funding paid to each student's resident district.

OPPORTUNITY

Local organizations have an opportunity to partner with school districts to develop a plan for how these funds will be used. Organizations include: (1) alcohol, drug and mental health boards; (2) educational service centers; (3) county boards of developmental disabilities; (4) community-based mental health treatment providers; (5) local health departments; (6) county departments of job and family services; and (7) nonprofits with experience serving children. Local organizations, especially those serving directly-impacted and impoverished communities, should begin partnering with youth and parents in their communities to access the community's needs. If SWSF funding is maintained in the finalized budget, organizations should be prepared to contact their local K-12 school districts to assist in developing a plan.

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