The Georgia APEX program: School-Based Mental Health Services

Georgia Health Policy Center

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Recommended Citation
Georgia Health Policy Center, "The Georgia APEX program: School-Based Mental Health Services" (2019). GHPC Briefs. 127.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ghpc_briefs/127

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Program Overview
The Georgia Apex Program, funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, creates partnerships between community-based mental health providers and local schools to provide school-based mental health services. The program began as a pilot in August 2015 and is now in its fourth year (academic year 2018-2019).

The program’s goals include increasing access to mental health services for children and youth, providing early detection of child and adolescent mental health needs, and strengthening coordination between community-based mental health providers and local schools.

Georgia Apex Program Reach (Year 3)

Darker-shaded counties have at least one Apex school. As of June 2018, Apex was in 55% of Georgia counties and 56% of Georgia school districts.

Year 3 By the Numbers

- **29** funded providers
- **396** schools involved; **309** schools report engaged partnership*
- **27** average number of students served per school
- **288** average number of first-time students served per month
- **3,464** students received mental health services, who had not previously
- **15,635** referrals made for school-based mental health services
- **60,318** services provided in schools
- **95.9%** of parents surveyed reported being satisfied with the services their child received

*Engaged partnership is defined as three or more months of reported data.
APEX GROWTH ACROSS 3 YEARS

From August 2015 to June 2018 (program Year 1 to Year 3), Apex demonstrated substantial increases in access to care based on the number of schools participating and the number of students receiving services, including first-time recipients of services. Delivered services include behavioral health and diagnostic assessments; crisis intervention; psychiatric treatment; community support; and individual, family, and outpatient services.

School-Related Program Outcomes

Apex and Apex + Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) schools saw greater increases in average School Climate Star ratings, including Safe and Substance Free Environment scores, than the statewide average.

Mental Health Promotion Within Apex Schools

Apex prioritizes addressing the need for intensive intervention for students identified as living with mental health concerns — the top tier of the pyramid. Apex providers also work with schools on additional mental health promotion activities across Tiers 1 and 2 of the pyramid below.