The Georgia APEX program: School-Based Mental Health Services

Georgia Health Policy Center

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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
- 15,536 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.

**APEX GROWTH DATA**

- **435 schools**
- **8,705 students receiving first-time services**
- **123,002 services provided in schools**

- **85% retention**
- **191% increase from Year 1 to Year 3**
- **42% increase in students receiving first-time services from Year 1 to Year 3**
- **166% increase in services provided in schools from Year 1 to Year 3**

**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.