



# Children's Mercy & Blue Valley School District Social Work Partnership



Children's Mercy and Blue Valley Schools began a partnership in 2017 to place social workers in the schools. The partnership has been an overwhelming success and has expanded from an original team of 19 social workers to the current team of 32. A full-time social worker is available in each building in the district.

**SCHOOL YEAR 2023-24**



Children’s Mercy social workers serve as a bridge for supporting children at school, home and in the community. The goal of the program is to help students and staff feel supported at school. Team members offer both individual and group support which provides a specialized, trusted adult to support social-emotional well-being. Our team works closely with parents to connect them with community resources and mental health services. Teachers rely on social workers to help students who are having a difficult day, or provide solutions to accommodate students during everyday instruction.

Blue Valley Schools has a long-standing tradition of academic excellence and recognize that social and emotional learning is vital to student success. A key goal for the Children’s Mercy School Social Work Team in the 2023-24 school year focused on connecting with parents, and coordinating services and support between the school, family and community providers. When social work services are suggested for a student, a key step is to connect with the parent or guardian to engage them in understanding the needs and finding solutions. With input from parents, the social workers partner with school staff to ensure everyone is on the same page to develop an effective plan to support the student’s growth and mental wellness. When more intensive needs are identified, the team’s goal is to empower parents to access services in the community and ensure effective treatment through coordinated communication.

Areas of support include: Crisis Intervention, Emotional Support, Behavioral Support, Goal Setting and Achievement, Advocacy, Resources and Referrals, Support Groups

- Top reasons for referral to the social worker:
- 1 Anxiety/Depression
  - 2 Peer/Social Concerns
  - 3 Behavior Concerns
  - 4 ADHD and other Mental Health Concerns

In 2023-24 the Children’s Mercy social workers supported

**1,586**  
students

with more than

**29,795**  
hours of service

Children’s Mercy social workers completed

**124**

Suicide Risk Assessments

**94%**

Goals Completed or Progressing

In an end of the year survey of Blue Valley faculty and staff, staff reported:

**93%** Would call the social worker in a crisis situation with a student

**92%** The social worker helped them with at least one of their students

**95%** Overall Satisfaction with the program

## What teachers are saying about services:



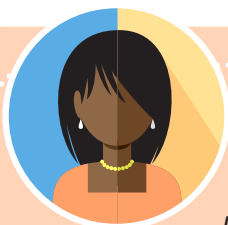
*As the principal of the building, I have had the unique opportunity to observe and partner with our social worker through multiple challenging situations. Her knowledge of community resources coupled with her empathetic demeanor is a formula that removes barriers for our students to access mental health services and other community supports. I have known her to accompany a family to intake appointments, conduct home visits, and assist parents with accessing community services to ensure they are equipped with the skills, verbiage and support needed to get access to desperately needed resources. In situations where our administrative team would be left without options within our school district to help a student, our social worker's knowledge and skills have allowed us to bring family counseling services to our students' homes, to connect families with financial resources terribly needed and to initiate mental health care for students in dire need. Quite simply, students in our school are better able to learn because she's here.*



*Our social worker helps in every situation, every day. My social worker is embedded in every minute of the day across the building. She is an integral part of our team, assisting in problem solving, attending IEP meetings, helping kids in crisis, supporting families, supporting the community, providing resources, teaching classes, working one on one with students, pulling small groups, teaching leadership skills, greeting students, being a friend at lunch, etc. all day long. Our kids and families need her desperately and wouldn't access her services if she was based in an outside setting.*



*I truly do not think our school would be able to function without our social worker. There are multiple students who struggled with emotional challenges this year. Students who are emotionally dysregulated are unable to learn themselves, as well as being a disruption to the learning environment of the entire classroom. Because she is in my building, our social worker has responded quickly and been successful in de-escalating student behavior that would otherwise would have interrupted learning. She formed a connection with the student, taught him self-regulation strategies, and made sure that student took responsibility for his actions She worked with the parent to help her navigate some difficult behaviors and emotions she was seeing at home. She got to the bottom of the problem and was able to resolve the issue.*



*Our Social Worker is consistently responding to mental health and behavior needs of students in my classroom. She intervenes with students using her trainings to best support students experiencing difficulty with self-control, task management, anger management, etc. She is an integral part of our school. I couldn't do my job without her.*



## Future Initiatives

### Trauma Focused Modalities

- The tragedy of the mass shooting at Union Station demonstrated the importance of teaching skills for self-care and resilience in youth. During the 2024-2025 school year, the school based social work team will partner with Children's Mercy for specialized training in evidence-based skills to promote effective coping following a disaster or traumatic situation This training will teach lifelong skills students can use to be resilient when unexpected challenges arise.

### Multi-tiered Systems of Support

- The Children's Mercy school-based social work team will partner with Blue Valley School District to define and implement multi-tiered systems of support to ensure maximum potential for each student.