



# Township of Union Public Schools

## Supporting Student Mental Health in Re-entry and Beyond



### 2020-2021 Impact Report

April 20, 2021



Effective School Solutions



# ESS and Union Public Schools Objectives for our Work Together



Effective School  
Solutions



1. ESS is the largest provider of school-based mental health services in New Jersey
2. Since 2017, we have partnered with Union Public Schools to implement intensive clinical programming at Union High School, Burnet Middle School, and Kawameeh Middle Schools to serve the districts' most at-risk students in acute need of behavioral and mental health supports
3. ESS programming is designed to offer a true clinical/medical model that goes beyond what school districts typically provide
4. The goal of the programming is to stabilize students' current psychiatric symptoms, improve school-based performance, and facilitate LRE

# ESS Team Supporting Union



**Gerard Barone**  
Chief Clinical Officer



**Dawn Ortiz, LCSW**  
Executive Clinical Director



**Princess Parker, MFT, LPC**  
Regional Director



**Dr. Coleen Vanderbeek**  
Director of Clinical Services



**Jasmine Bryant, LCSW**  
Coordinator, BMS



**Amanda Bonan, LCSW**  
Clinician, BMS

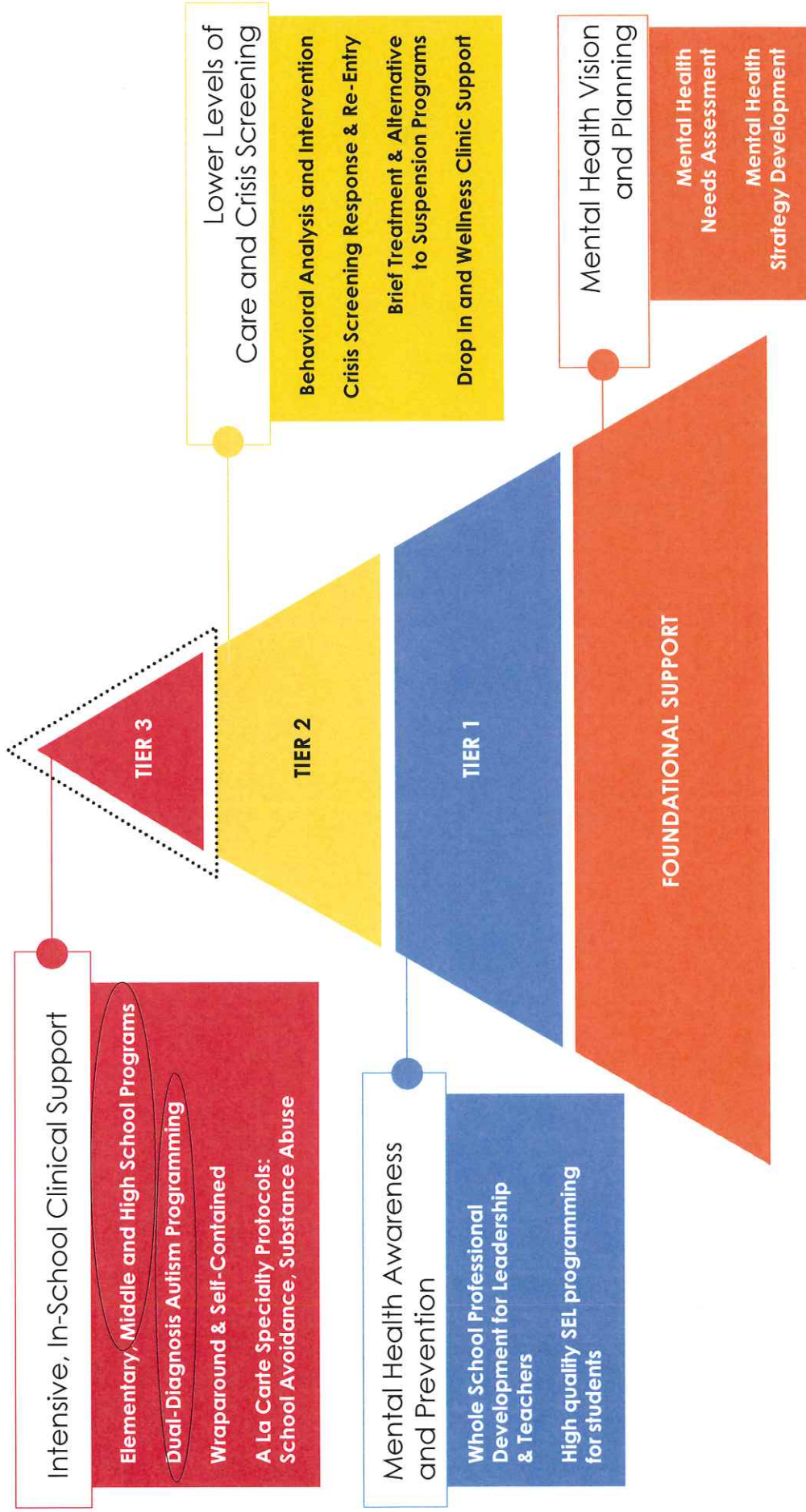


**Raushanah Reid, LPC**  
Coordinator, UHS



**Diana Hernandez, LCSW**  
IDD Coordinator, KMS

# MTSS Framework for Mental Health Support



Current area of focus of partnership with Union.

## 2020-2021 Impact Summary



- **Uninterrupted Delivery of Therapeutic Services.** Since COVID closures began, over 2,700 therapeutic interactions have been delivered, 90%+ of which have been virtual.
- **Strong Student Engagement with Needed Therapy.** Over 90% of students have engaged regularly with therapy.
- **Significant District Cost Savings.** Program is saving the district an estimated \$2.1M this year due to reduction and prevention of outplacements
- **Improved Educational Outcomes.** Positive impact on grades and attendance.
- **High Levels of Family Engagement.** Over 800 family interactions, and parent rating of programming of 3.8 out of 4.0

# The Mental Health Crisis Facing Our Young People

## Mental Health Outcomes Have Been Degrading for Students for Over a Decade

- 1 in 5 students struggle with a mental health disorder
- The population of students with significant mental health disorders has increased by 76% since 2011
- Youth suicide rates increased 57% from 2007 to 2018
- For younger students (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) the rate of death by suicide has tripled in the past 10 years

## The COVID-19 Pandemic Has Increased Sources of Trauma

- Studies show that quarantine has significantly increased rates of anxiety and depression among children
- For 11-21 year olds, rates of suicidal ideation increased 45-60% vs. the prior year in the early days of the pandemic
- Interest in divorce increased by 34% in the early days of the pandemic vs. the same time period the previous year
- Since the pandemic, emergency visits for mental health issues increased 24% for 5-11 year olds, and 31% for 12-17 year-olds

## The Latest Research Indicates that Students Will Have Significant Social-Emotional Challenges Upon Return to School

- Challenges in re-integrating into the social structures of school
- Challenges in re-setting sleep patterns
- Anxiety and stress of making up for lost academic progress

# Traumatic Impact of COVID-19

## ACADEMIC STRESSORS

- Managing unstructured time
- Lack of motivation
- Challenges connecting with teachers

## FAMILY & ECONOMIC STRESSORS

- Toxic home environments
- Parent/Child Conflict
- Conflict
- Community
- Uncertainty

Increase in intensity of existing mental health challenges

“Ambient Trauma”

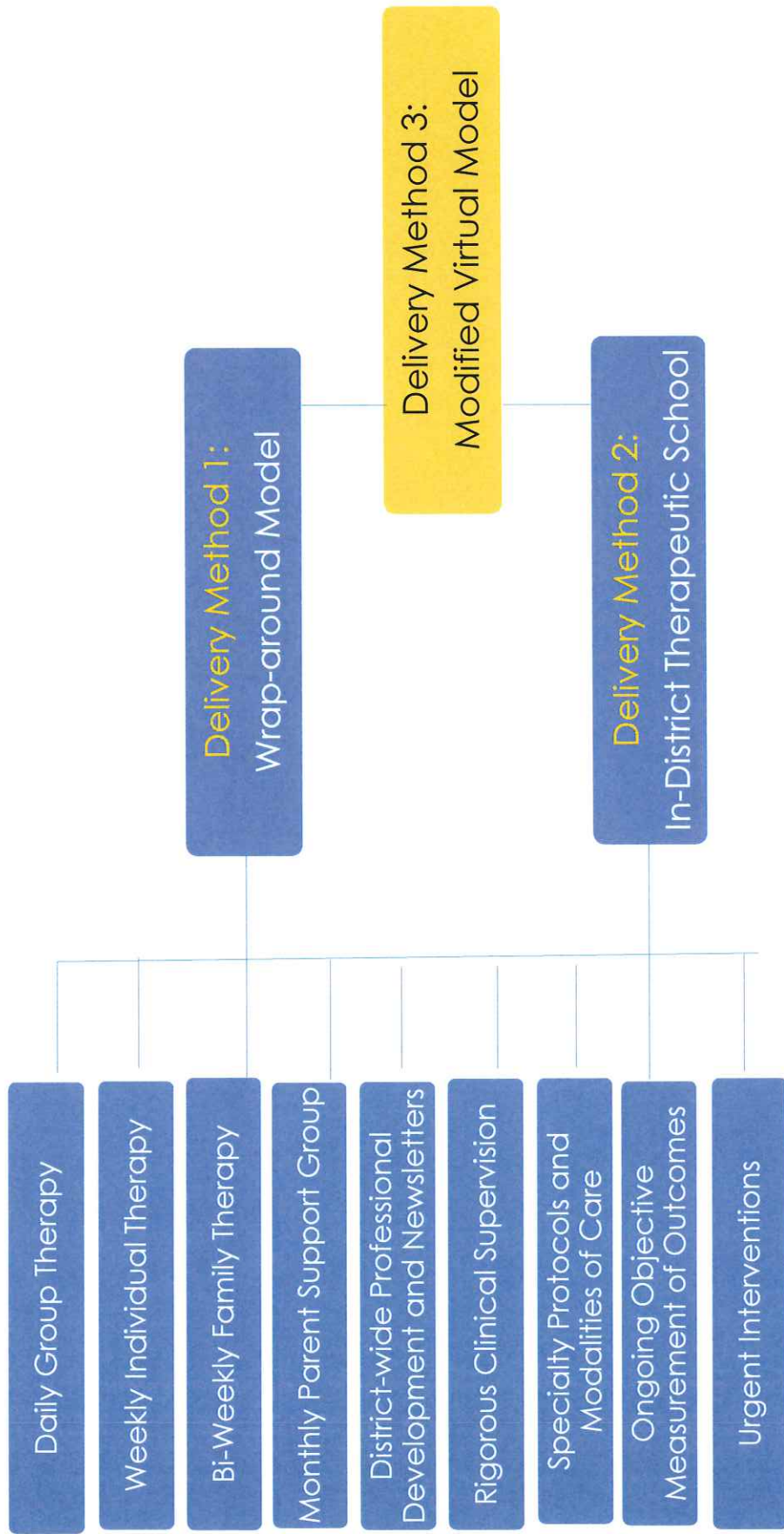
## SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Loneliness
- Lack of peer group support
- Separation from caregivers and mentors

## ANXIETY ABOUT COVID-19

- Fear of getting sick
- Fear of a loved one getting sick

# Tier 3 Clinical Program Structure: A Set of Best Practices



Characteristics of successful school-based programs include: “consistent program implementation”; inclusion of peers, teachers, and families in the therapeutic process; “use of multiple modalities”; integration of the program into the classroom; “developmentally appropriate program components”; and directing program activities “toward changing specific behaviors and skills” associated with the student’s mental health challenges Rones & Hoagwood



# Diagnostic Profile of Typical Tier 3 Students



Students often present with clinically complex issues requiring intervention. Below are some of the diagnoses and issues typically presented by Tier 3 students

Diagnoses	Clinical Issues Requiring Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PTSD</li> <li>● Acute Stress Disorder</li> <li>● Autism Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>● Major Depressive Disorder</li> <li>● ADHD</li> <li>● Reactive Attachment Disorder</li> <li>● Anxiety</li> <li>● Oppositional Defiant Disorder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trauma</li> <li>● Depression, including Suicidal Threats and Self-Harm</li> <li>● Anxiety</li> <li>● School Avoidance</li> <li>● Grief</li> <li>● Suspected Substance Use</li> <li>● Parental Substance Use</li> <li>● Sexual Identity Issues</li> <li>● Homelessness</li> <li>● Domestic Violence</li> <li>● Financial Instability</li> <li>● Parental Disengagement</li> </ul>

Students who exhibit 3 of 7 intervention categories meet criteria for ODP Risk.  
 Currently there are 8 UPS Students at-risk of an ODP

# Prevention Profiles



Students who have been successfully retained in the least restrictive learning environment typically present in ways that prevent the student from accessing their education and/or prevents other students from accessing their education due to behaviors. Students may (but not always) present in one of the following ways:

- Disruptive, distracting, aggression (verbal and/or physical), oppositional, defiant, lacks impulse control, difficulty managing emotions appropriately, multiple behavioral infractions, off-task behaviors during learning
- School/Class/Work avoidant or refusal, anxious, difficulty with peer interactions and poor social skills, classroom meltdowns, outbursts and/or other disruptive behaviors, lacks impulse control, difficulty managing emotions appropriately
- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, lack of motivation and/or lack of interests, reported thoughts of SI or SIB, low self-esteem, struggles with peer interactions and/or isolation, difficulties with concentration

# Uninterrupted Service Delivery: Over 2,700 Interactions

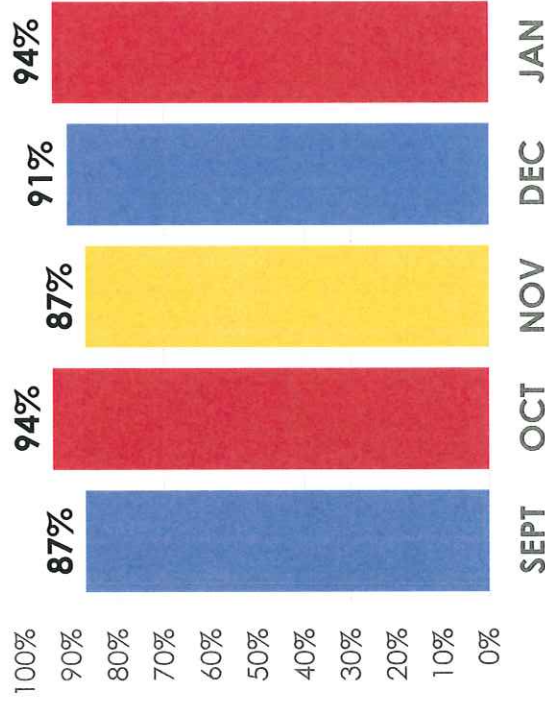
- Since the pandemic began, ESS has adapted its therapeutic delivery according to the district's operating model
- Delivery of vital therapeutic services to this at-risk population has been maintained
- For this school year services have been delivered 90%+ virtually

**Prior to School Closures there were 292 Urgent Sessions provided to students for MP 1 & 2 for the 2019-20 SY**

Remote Individual Check-In's Held	Remote Family Check-In's Held	Remote Group Check-In's Attended
1,465	800	357
Remote Educational Check-Ins Held	School Meetings Held	Parent Support Groups Attended
87	142	14

# Strong Student Therapeutic Engagement

**% of students with at least one service per week during time period**



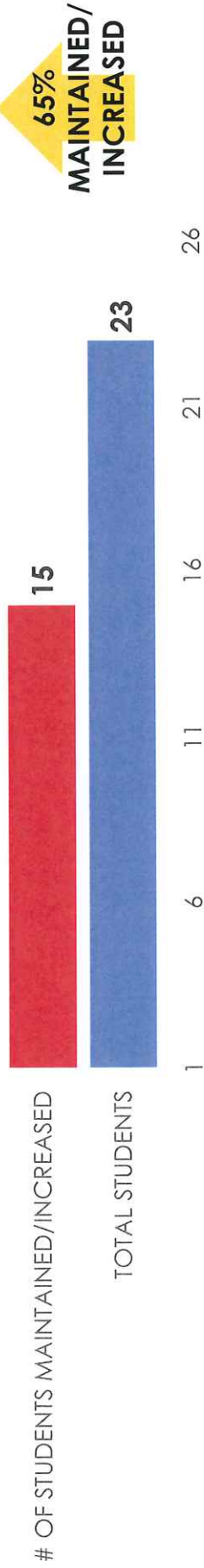
## **ESS Steps to Ensure Engagement**

- Providing morning wake-up calls, daily classroom check-ins, individualized Google-Classrooms,
- Providing virtual office hours for CST, teachers and separate hours for students
- Creating virtual behavioral modifications as well as hand-delivering rewards/incentives.

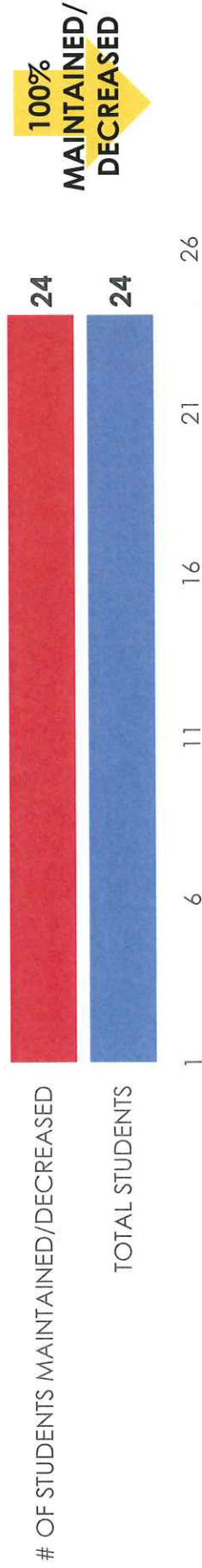
**Despite the challenges of hybrid learning, therapeutic engagement of students in the program has been sustained at 87% or higher since the school year began**

# Improved Education Outcomes

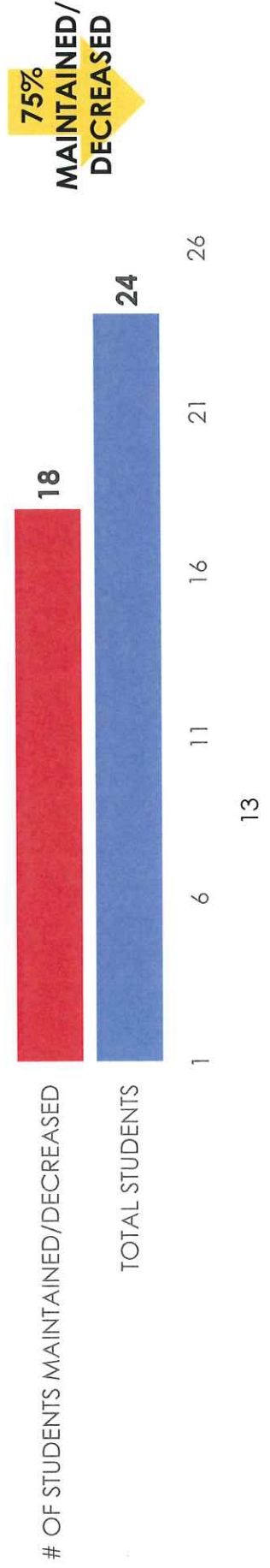
## GPA



## DISCIPLINE (OSS)



## ATTENDANCE (DAYS ABSENT)



# ODP Returners and Prevention

## ODP Returners

# of students currently in program returned from ODP

5  
x

\$100,000

Average annual cost per ODP



\$500,000

Estimated Annual Savings from Returners

## Avoidance of In-Process Mediation, Home Instruction, ODP

# of students currently in the program who were in mediation, home instruction, or in the process of ODP admittance

5  
x

\$100,000

Average annual savings



\$300,000

Estimated Annual Savings from Returners

## ODP Prevention

# of students currently in program prevented from being referred to ODP

11  
x

\$100,000

Average annual cost per ODP



\$800,000

Estimated Annual Savings from Returners

Total Estimated Savings from Returners and Avoidance for 2020-2021:  
**\$2,100,000**

## Student Success Highlights



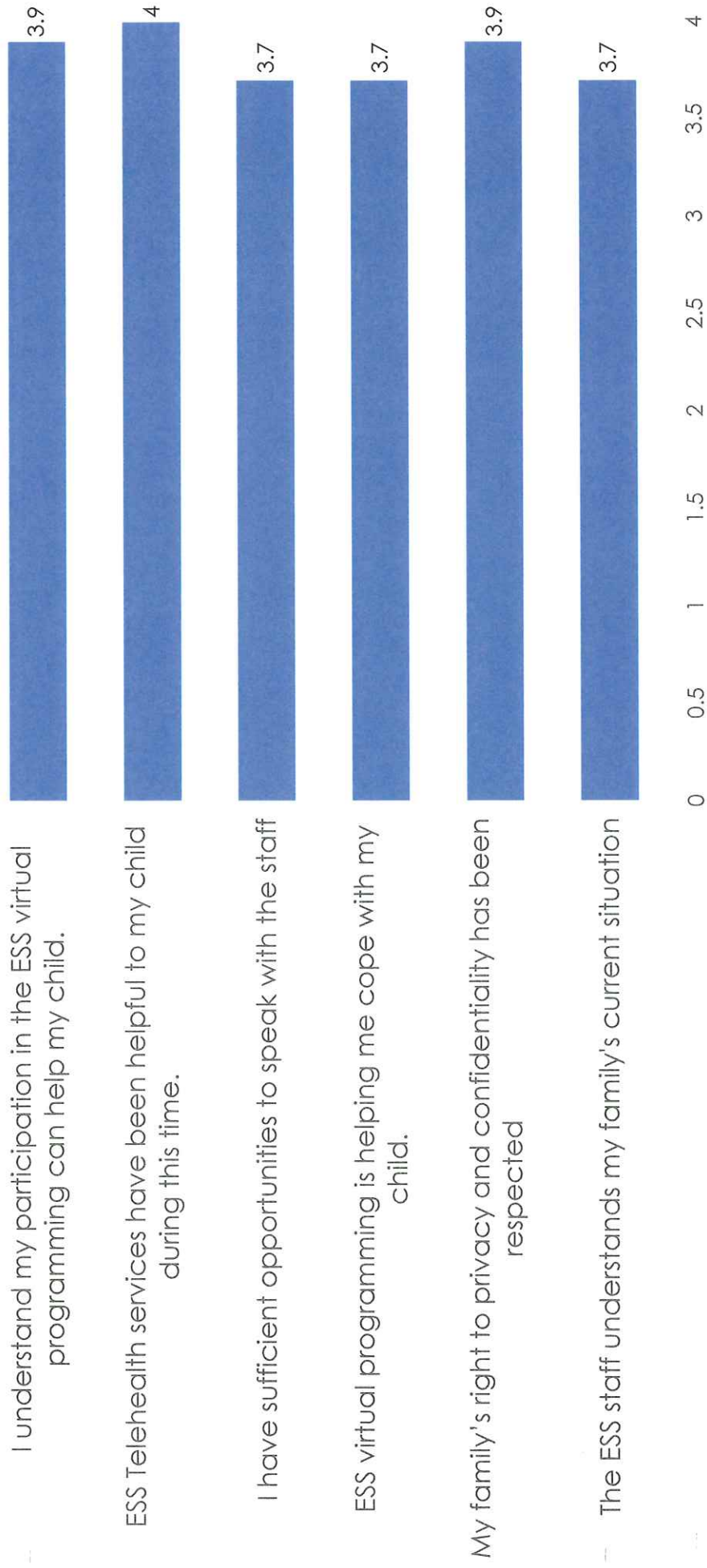
### **Student Success Vignette:**

Student was admitted to ESS due to multiple outbursts in classrooms and work avoidance. Student has been working on anger management, impulsivity, and academic performance. Student has done a great job learning to recognize triggers and express needs in a healthy way, while making use of appropriate coping skills. Behavioral incidents have greatly decreased, having none so far this school year. In addition, this student has been able to develop better relationships with teachers and improve academically by passing all classes. Student has also used ESS frequently as a resource throughout remote learning to help with the transition. Student has done great attending virtual classes daily and reaching out to teachers for additional support when needed. Parent is appreciative of services and is always open to program recommendations.

# High Levels of Family Engagement and Satisfaction



**Parent Survey Ratings (4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree)**





# What parents are saying...

Thankful for all you do for us. It would be hard for me to do it all by myself. I love the program and can't say enough nice things to repay you."

It is good to have the program because I am a single mother. I like that I can call and speak to someone about my child."

Ms. Bonan has been wonderful and very consistent with working with our family. Ms. Bonan has been the reason student has gotten through this year and has made a difference in the student's life."

Really happy with the service. And pleased with how much attention and patience the ESS staff has."

The program is great. It has really helped me and my child. My child has had a significant amount less of discipline actions than last year."

My child has come a long way from where he was emotionally. I truly believe ESS is a big part of his development. Thanks. "

Thank you for the support! The ESS Staff are amazing and wonderful with our child."



Effective School Solutions

Thank You!