

[\\$300K to support hiring 2 mental health clinicians at Mohawk Trail Regional School](#)  
By [MADISON SCHOFIELD](#) Staff Writer Published: 09-17-2024 11:12 AM

BUCKLAND — Thanks to a \$300,000 grant from the state Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Mohawk Trail Regional School is looking to hire one full-time and one part-time mental health clinician through the Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) program.

Mohawk Trail Regional School Assistant Principal Paula Brault explained that although the middle and high school does not have a large issue with student mental health, administrators heard there was leftover grant money available as part of a total \$13 million in awards and decided to apply. The BRYT program will add an extra layer of support for students.

Once they are hired, Brault said the clinicians will first work with individual students whose mental health is impacting their ability to focus in class and thrive in their studies.

BRYT, a Tier 3 mental health education program through the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health, works to create individualized, group and schoolwide programs to destigmatize mental health and support students who may be struggling. According to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the BRYT program provides integrated supports that include academic case management, direct clinical care, family support and broad care coordination in a dedicated classroom.

“Across Massachusetts and the nation, young people are struggling. They’re expected to juggle academics, extracurriculars, social lives and family needs — often in the harsh and unrelenting light of social media — while also maintaining their mental health,” Health and Human Services Secretary Kate Walsh said in a statement. “Teens frequently have to navigate multiple systems to address their health needs. Our kids shouldn’t have to ‘case manage’ themselves — that’s why BRYT is so valuable. BRYT helps students navigate and balance academic requirements and mental health treatment while also providing the space to take a step back when needed. Expanding this program means that more students than ever before will be able to access the mental health support they need, in their home and at school. We’re thrilled to help make that a reality.”

Brault added that in addition to individual work with students, the two mental health clinicians will also work with groups of middle school students to teach them about the importance of language and word choice, and to have discussions on “isms.”

“If they’re calling people out for different genders, different races, different abilities ... it’s not OK, and somebody needs to spend a concentrated amount of time with a particular group of students who darken my doorstep on that topic regularly,” Brault said.

Essentially, Brault said the clinicians will lead workshops over a period of six or eight weeks to teach a group of students how some jokes can be more hurtful than funny, and that sexism, racism and ableism are not acceptable. After that, the clinicians will bring in the next group of students and repeat the process, as part of the school’s plan for culturally sensitive teaching.

“Those are things we need to help the community and the students understand that it’s unacceptable,” added Sheryl Stanton, superintendent of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont regional school districts.

Overall, Mohawk Trail School Committee members expressed support for the program during a meeting last week, but they did raise concerns regarding costs.

“It’s awesome we got the grant to take care of that much-needed area, but when the grant goes away, are these positions we’re hoping to fund out of our operational budget?” School Committee member Jason Cusimano asked.

Brault said the grant covers the salaries of the two mental health clinicians for two years, but after that the school district would have to take on the cost if it chooses to continue the program.

Mohawk Trail Regional School Principal Chris Buckland advised the School Committee to consider not only the program’s benefit to students, but the overall cost savings the district could see if it has mental health clinicians in-house and doesn’t have to send students out-of-district for the support they need.

Brault said the school is still finalizing the logistics of the program and working to hire the clinicians.

In the meantime, the school has budgeted to offer Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of mental health support through a program led by the Center for Restorative Justice at Suffolk University. Stanton said teachers will begin trainings and working with students shortly.

Reach Madison Schofield at 413-930-4570 or [mschofield@recorder.com](mailto:mschofield@recorder.com).

*Source: <https://www.recorder.com/-300K-to-support-hiring-2-mental-health-clinicians-at-Mohawk-Trail-Regional-School-56986068>*