Support Team for Educational Partnership (STEP)

What is STEP?

☑️ An initiative providing behavioral health interventions, while increasing access to more intensive services if needed

☑️ A system of support for students and the guardians, caregivers, teachers, and schools who support them

☑️ Aims to:

» Ensure child and family wellbeing by offering interventions early on that encourage healthy coping skills;
» Connect children and families to community resources;
» Serve students’ behavioral and social needs, to enable students to engage meaningfully with school, community, and social connections;
» Coach caregivers and teachers on new ways to create safe environments that meet social/emotional needs;
» Help schools strengthen their approach to climate through a trauma-informed lens

2 main areas of support:
STEP meets school-wide needs through services such as professional development for staff and supporting school-wide initiatives. STEP also meets whole child and family needs through services like therapy, case management, and peer support, both in school and at home, as needed.

4 person staff team

6 original partnering agencies:
School District of Philadelphia, City of Philadelphia (Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services, Community Behavioral Health, the Managing Director's Office, the Department of Human Services), and Drexel University’s Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

The School Behavioral Consultant, in addition to a small individual therapy caseload, helps adults create an environment of success for students by teaching trauma-informed behavioral strategies that can be used at home and at school.

The Clinical Coordinator leads the team, connecting children to the best-fit supports and provides individual, group and/or family therapy. They also take part in school leadership and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) meetings.

The Case Manager connects families to community resources to address a child’s needs.

The Family Peer Specialist uses their experiences to walk alongside the family to offer support, encouragement and advocacy.
School District of Philadelphia schools: include elementary, middle, high, and community schools. An additional 41 schools have been funded by the District and have at least one STEP staff person.

Total staff:
STEP started in late School Year 17-18 with one Clinical Coordinator in each of the 21 schools. Staffing increased when School Behavioral Consultants and Case Managers were hired in School Year 18-19. The initiative was fully staffed with the fourth team member (Family Peer Specialists) at the start of the 19-20 School Year. Additionally, staff is supported by the STEP Director and two Clinical Supervisors to ensure quality services, training, and supervision to all staff.

2,269 unique students served during School Year 2018-19.
2,663 unique students served during School Year 2019-20.

54,988 hours of services provided by flexible and resilient staff during the COVID pandemic (from March 2020 - June 2021).

As the number of STEP team members grew, these staff were able to provide more in-depth and multilayered support to students, “wrapping” them in services.
How is it funded?
STEP is an innovative initiative with multiple agencies' investment to support children, the School District, and their caregivers.

- **Years One and Two**
  - Philadelphia DHS (year 2)
  - DBH/CBH Reinvestment Funds
  - School District of Philadelphia
  - Drexel University's Promise Neighborhood

- **Years Three and Beyond**
  - Philadelphia DHS
  - Medicaid
  - School District of Philadelphia

How does a child access services?

» Support from the STEP team can be for any student at a STEP school, with any insurance, for any length of time, for any frequency, for many types of behavioral health, mental health, or social service needs.

» STEP is part of a continuum of available supports. Both the District and Community Behavioral Health have additional options along their continuum of services.

» The child’s teacher can discuss a child's behavioral concerns with the school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team.

» Parents can request support from the STEP team by contacting their child's teacher, or the Clinical Coordinator at their child's school. Students can also self refer.
STEP Initiative Highlights
AY 2018-19

2,269 unique students served
14,452 total hours* by STEP staff

*Total hours includes both child-level and school-level activities

How did STEP staff support students?*

Engaging with Home and Community Supports
11%
Home Visits
Collateral Contacts with Family
Collateral Contacts with Others

Providing Screenings & Clinical Consultation
21%

Intervening in a Crisis
11%

Providing Case Management
4%
Referral Coordination
Non-Clinical Intervention

- Providing Therapy
  - 37%

- Interacting with Teachers
  - 16%
  - Teacher Coaching
  - Classroom Observation
  - Collateral Contacts with Teacher

- Providing Therapy
  - 37%

*data collected from the School District of Philadelphia's STEP Initiative Encounter Forms

STEP Staff Hiring Periods
Team members were phased in at STEP schools
The dotted line indicates that a position continued to be staffed at schools from that point forward.

Clinical Coordinator
between February 2018 and July 2018 (21 staff)

School Behavioral Consultant
between December 2018 and May 2019 (21 staff)

Case Manager
between March 2019 and May 2019

Family Peer
between May 2019 and August 2019

School Year AY 18 - 19
School Year AY 19 - 20
STEP Initiative Highlights
AY 2019-20

2,663
unique students served, a 16% increase from the previous year, reaching 394 additional students

38,024
total hours*
Over 2.5 times higher than the previous year

Please note: The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic affected STEP programming capacity
*Total hours includes both child-level and school-level activities

How did STEP staff support students?

- Engaging with Home and Community Supports
  - 23%
  - Home Visits
  - Collateral Contacts with Family
  - Collateral Contacts with Others

- Providing Screenings & Clinical Consultation
  - 16%

- Intervening in a Crisis
  - 9%

- Providing Therapy
  - 25%

- Interacting with Teachers
  - 13%
  - Teacher Coaching
  - Classroom Observation
  - Collateral Contacts with Teacher

- Providing Case Management
  - 14%
  - Referral Coordination
  - Non-Clinical Intervention

How was work spread across STEP staff?

- Clinical Coordinator
  - 30%
  - 11,270 hours

- School Behavioral Consultant
  - 30%
  - 11,376 hours

- Case Manager
  - 19%
  - 7,355 hours

- Family Peer
  - 21%
  - 8,023 hours

*data collected from the School District of Philadelphia's STEP Initiative Encounter Forms

School Climate Scores

Three-quarters of STEP schools saw an improvement in climate score across these two years (measuring school years 2017-18 and 2018-19).

Four of these schools' climate scores improved by entire categories, for example, from "Intervene" to "Watch."

Across the two years, half of the STEP schools improved by at least 5%, and across all STEP schools, the average improvement was 8%.

*for detailed climate score methodology and categories, please see the School District of Philadelphia's school progress reports
Please note: The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic affected STEP programming capacity, as school was fully virtual this year.

*Total hours includes both child-level and school-level activities

How did STEP staff support students?

- **Engaging with Home and Community Supports**
  - 37.6% Home Visits
  - 10% Collateral Contacts with Family
  - 10% Collateral Contacts with Others

- **Providing Screenings & Clinical Consultation**
  - 10%

- **Crisis Interventions**
  - 0.4%

- **Providing Therapy**
  - 21%

- **Interacting with Teachers**
  - 17% Teacher Coaching
  - 14% Classroom Observation
  - 14% Collateral Contacts with Teacher

- **Providing Case Management**
  - 10%

- **Providing Case Management**
  - 10%

How was work spread across STEP staff?

- **Case Manager**
  - 24%
  - 10,013 hours

- **Family Peer**
  - 23%
  - 9,695 hours

- **School Behavioral Consultant**
  - 28%
  - 11,555 hours

- **Clinical Coordinator**
  - 25%
  - 10,249 hours

**School Climate Scores**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures, multiple state and local assessments were canceled during the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, the School District of Philadelphia was not able to release a full School Progress Report for the 2019-2020 school year.