

HHS/ED COMM #1
October 10, 2013
Briefing

MEMORANDUM

October 8, 2013

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
Education Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Strategic Plan for Linkages to Learning**

The Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education Committees will receive a presentation on the Linkages to Learning Strategic Plan Priorities for FY2015-FY2020. Presentation slides are attached to this packet at ©1-14.

The following individuals are expected to participate in the discussion:

- Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Kate Garvey, Chief, Children, Youth and Families, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Timothy Warner, Chief Engagement and Partnership Officer, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- Scot Marken, Executive Director, Mental Health Association of Montgomery County

Council staff understands that the strategic plan had not passed through all levels of review in County Government and MCPS at the time of printing. Thus, the full plan is not yet available to the Committees for review; however, the presentation summarizes the key points in the draft strategic plan.

Background

According to the FY2008-FY2013 Linkages to Learning Strategic Plan, the program is a joint effort of DHHS, MCPS and a coalition of community providers to "improve the well-being of children and their families through the collaborative delivery of comprehensive school-based services that support school success." The key characteristics of the program are provided at ©2, and the schematic at ©4 describes the collaborative structure of the program.

Currently, Linkages provides mental health, social service and prevention programming at 28 school sites including 22 elementary and six middle schools. DHHS School Health Services also provides specialized health services at nine School-Based Health Center sites. FY13 service and outcomes data for the program is reported at ©4.

Prior Strategic Plans

The FY2015-FY2020 strategic plan is the third strategic plan to be put in place for the program with the first approved for FY2001-FY2006, and the second approved for FY2008-FY2013. The FY2008-FY2013 plan outlined budget recommendations and ordered the recommendations by priority:

- Sustain existing Linkages sites;
- Strengthen nonprofit partners' capacity to deliver high-quality services;
- Support the Linkages Resource Team's oversight and planning efforts;
- Strengthen the health component of the school-based LTL team; and
- Add two new sites each year.

During this time period, fiscal constraints not only limited implementation of these recommendations but also resulted in reductions to administrative support staffing and contractual cuts that reduced staffing patterns at Linkages sites. The Council approved in FY14 to expand the program to two sites: Arcola and Georgian Forest ES.

FY2015-FY2020 Strategic Plan Priorities

The following table describes the priorities and accompanying cost neutral strategies and needed resources to implement the priorities.

Priority	Cost Neutral Strategies	Resources Needed
New evaluation plan with new logic model to guide services, data collection and future expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logic model session • Use existing research and best practices • Continue Process Technology Modernization efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data/evaluation specialist • Administrative specialist in site funding formula for data collection • Electronic "partner dashboard"
Maintain quality services by strengthening school and community partnerships and decreasing staff turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced/flexible work year model (hourly wage increase) • Recruit workforce with different salary requirements, e.g., ex-military • Continue Process Technology Modernization planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative specialist in site funding formula for management and oversight • Increase base budget to make site salaries more competitive • Site funding formula supports supervisor/staff ratio: ≤ 1:12
Build stronger ties among MCPS, DHHS, and service partners, and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Council and BOE briefings • Use new logic model to communicate purpose and benefits • Integrate with Excel Beyond the Bell • Increase shared professional development among site and school staff • Make program connections with MCPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Site Coordinator job description and salary to attract/retain experienced staff • Reinstate program manager in LTL central office with communication duties • Site funding formula supports

	<p>strategic plan and social/emotional learning goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align site staff into Collaborative Problem Solving process at schools • Require LTL participation on School Improvement Teams • Update site and system MOUs to align processes 	<p>supervisor/staff ratio: ≤ 1:12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New collaborative website with update communication tools for all partners
Build on family involvement practices to formalize youth/family leadership structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate operating funding for consultant work on family involvement strategies and design parent/youth leadership model • Invite parent "graduates" of LTL to present at parent events as community advocates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family involvement/leadership funds in site funding formula to support parent/youth leadership structure
Build capacity to meet needs of residents: expand to new sites and restore current sites with highest poverty levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving criteria is Ever FARMS except priority for middle schools with 3 feeder LTL elementary school and space considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annualize operations at Arcola and Georgian Forest • Fund full staffing (Ever FARMS ≥85%): New Hampshire Estates, Harmony Hills, Highland Wheaton Woods, Weller Road • New site: South Lake ES, 85% • Fund Full staffing (Ever FARMS >79.4%): Summit Hall, Kemp Mill • New site: Clopper Mill ES, 79.4% • New site: Col. E. Brooke Lee MS, 78.3% • New paired site: Cresthaven, 77.2% and Dr. Roscoe E. Nix, 74.3% • New site: Jackson Road, 77.1% • Fund full staffing (Ever FARMS ≥75.7%): Washington Grove, 75.7% • New site: Francis Scott Key MS, 75.7%
Strengthen availability of SCHN to participate on site collaborative team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase school nurse time at non-SBHC site to ratio of 1 SCHN per 2 LTL sites
Implement evidence based practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff development funding to support staff training and implementation
Strengthen capacity to bring in new revenue from diverse sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working with MCPS Educational Foundation and MCDHHS Grants Resource and Acquisition Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant writer/implementation specialist at LTL central office

The powerpoint notes that cost neutral activities will be implemented; however, all other elements are dependent on the budget process and available resources and will be phased-in.

Discussion and Follow Up Items

At the briefing, Committee members may want to raise the following issues with program leadership:

- ***Site Staffing Model:*** What would a fully staffed Linkages site look like as provided in the Strategic Plan? What would be the positions, their associated FTEs, and job descriptions? To what extent would management and oversight functions of each site be shared by the administrative specialist and site coordinator?
- ***Central Administrative Staffing Support:*** What positions, associated FTEs, and job descriptions would support the program centrally? Is the grant writer/implementation specialist considered a separate position from the reinstated program manager position with communication duties? If so, are they both recommended as full-time positions? Is the data/evaluation specialist recommended as a full-time position?
- ***Outcomes and Data Collection:*** What would the electronic "partner dashboard" include? How and when will the DHHS Process Technology Modernization support the program's data collection and analysis, improve staff turnover, and help children and families served? The Committee may also be interested in understanding how the program is measuring family self-sufficiency and quantifying resource development efforts in the FY13 data.
- ***Prioritization of Recommended Actions:*** The proposed plan provides a number of recommendations with cost implications and suggests that actions will be phased-in. It is not clear which actions take precedence within or among the priorities in the plan. The Committee may want to seek clarification whether actions within a particular priority are listed in order of importance. In addition, the Committee may want to seek input from the Advisory Group about the priority for implementing/funding the plan's actions. Which items have the greatest potential to effect positive outcomes for children and families served by the program?
- ***Cost and Impact of Recommended Actions:*** The proposed plan includes a number of recommendations that have cost implications; however, cost estimates have not been provided with the recommendations. The Committee should request the cost implications accompanying each recommendation along with its expected impact on services to children and families or overall program functioning. What would be the per site budget for a Linkages program that incorporates all recommendations broken out by specific cost category?

The Committee may want to schedule a follow-up session to review the finalized Strategic Plan and requested information on cost and priorities before FY15 budget discussions begin.



Linkages to Learning Strategic Plan Priorities: FY 2015 – FY 2020

Linkages to Learning Advisory Group Briefing to the
Health and Human Services and Education Committees
of the County Council
Thursday, October 10, 2013



Background

- 1988 to 1991
 - Educators/community members concerned about demographic and social trends in school system formed work group and made recommendations
- December 1991
 - Council Resolution No. 12-502 urged CE and MCPS to create network of school-based social, educational, and mental health services aimed at supporting at-risk children and their families, citing obstacles to success:
 - Deep poverty
 - Poor healthcare
 - Lack of English
 - Emotional issues
 - Unfamiliarity with American mental health and social service systems



Background

- 1993
 - MCDHHS, MCPS and private sector pilot Linkages to Learning
- 1998
 - “Linkages Resource Team” (LRT)- collaborative management structure created with administrator from each key partner (MCDHHS, MCPS & coalition of provider agencies)



Characteristics of LTL

- Population Served
 - Families in poverty, young school-age children
- Essential Programmatic Elements
 - Concept of “linking;” each site is unique
 - Culturally & linguistically appropriate; whole-family approach
 - Comprehensive services
- Partnerships at every level
 - Initiative leadership (LTL Advisory Group)
 - Project leadership (Linkages Resource Team)
 - At school sites (LTL Site Collaborative Team)
- Leverage county resources
 - Collaborative management team brings internal resources of each primary partner to bear
 - Community school model - “Site Coordinator” role for local resource development, community education & development



Strategic Planning

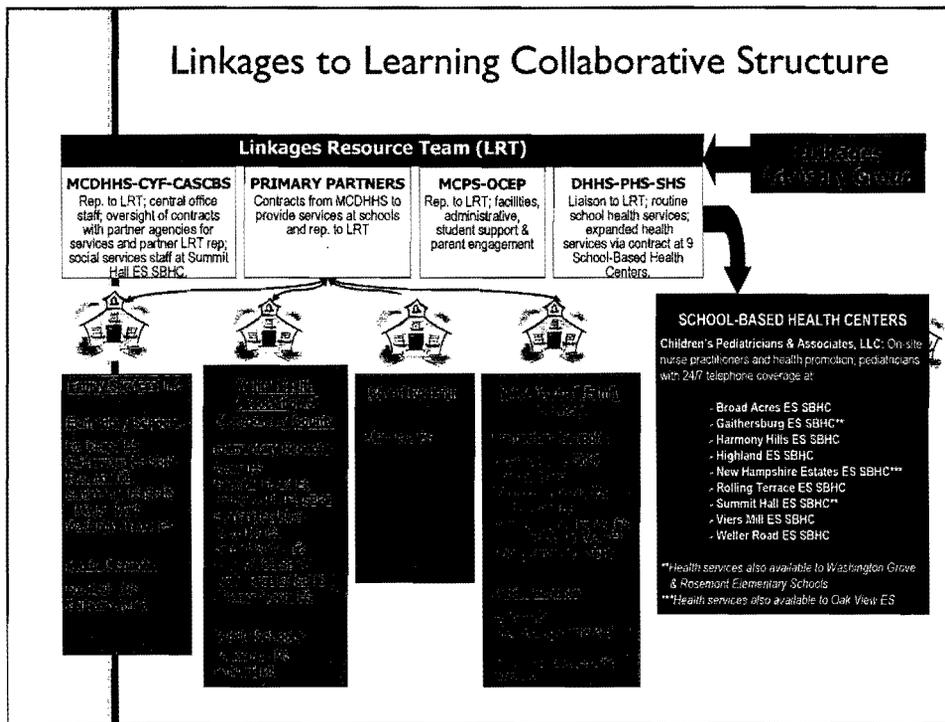
- 1999
 - Council asks that LTL expansion be done within framework of strategic plan
 - Multi-agency planning group convened to develop first expansion plan
 - Submitted by CE and BOE to Council
 - Plan approved for FY 2001 - FY 2006
- 2006
 - Second strategic plan submitted and approved for FY 2008 to FY 2013



Where We Are Today

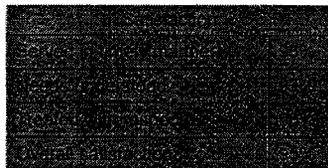
- 22 elementary schools
 - Nine are LTL School-Based Health Centers
- Six middle schools
- Many sites have reduced staffing patterns due to contractual cuts made during recession

Linkages to Learning Collaborative Structure

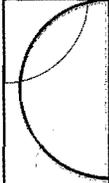


FY13 Data

- Served over 5,000 individuals
 - 3,700 received comprehensive mental health/social services
- 68,100 client encounters (over 2,600 client encounters per site)
- Parent Survey Feedback:

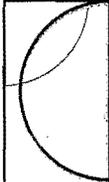


- 74% of children exiting behavioral health services maintained/ improved classroom behavior
- 71% of children exiting behavioral health services maintained/ improved psychosocial functioning
- 29% average increase in family self-sufficiency scores after 6 months of case management (pilot)
- Resource development efforts brought in 40 cents for every public dollar invested



Strategic Planning Process

- August 2011: LTL Advisory Group Program and Planning Committee retreat
- Re-evaluated vision & mission statements
 - Identified strengths, assets and challenges
 - Identified draft themes for plan
- August 2011 – 2012: LRT engaged stakeholders multiple venues throughout school year
 - LTL site staff survey
 - Parent focus groups
 - Meeting with principals of schools with LTL
 - Survey of school-based staff who collaborate with LTL



Strategic Planning Process

- 2012-2013: LRT gathered and synthesized information
 - Due to recent economic climate placed more emphasis on a simple, flexible system for making decisions and creating success
 - Worked to propose plan focused on deepened collaboration and ability to be flexible
 - Adopted perspective that initiative should capitalize on goal congruencies and move forward on multiple priorities over the next six years simultaneously
- June 2013: LRT presented findings and draft plan to Linkages Advisory Group
- Summer 2013: Linkages Advisory Group reviewed and approved plan



Implementation of the Strategic Plan

- Plan provides activities that are both cost-neutral and require new resources
- Cost-neutral activities will be implemented
- All other elements will be dependent on the budget process and available resources through a phase-in approach
- Diversified funding opportunities continue to be pursued

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Strategic Plan Priorities

FY2015 – FY 2020:

- ✓ Develop and implement new evaluation plan to measure impact of Linkages across initiative
- ✓ Maintain quality services to families by strengthening partnerships within collaborative
- ✓ Build capacity through County support to meet needs of residents
- ✓ Strengthen fundraising capacity of Linkages to bring in new revenue from diverse sources

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Priority:

Develop & Implement New Evaluation Plan

- **Goal: Devise a New Logic Model to Guide Services, Data Collection and Future Expansion**
 - **Recent Activities:**
 - Pilot and implementation of family self-sufficiency measures
 - Assessment of existing data sources
 - Assessment of technical/resource barriers
 - Technical assistance from Casey Family Programs
 - MCDHHS Process Technology Modernization planning for electronic integrated case management system



Goal: Devise a New Logic Model to Guide Services, Data Collection and Future Expansion (continued)

- **Cost Neutral Strategies:**
 - Logic modeling session
 - Utilize existing research and best practices
 - Continue Process Technology Modernization efforts
 - Decide on data elements critical to an electronic “partner dashboard”
- **Resources Needed:**
 - Data/evaluation specialist
 - Administrative specialists in LTL site funding formula to support data collection efforts (preserving direct service time at LTL sites)
 - Resources to implement and maintain electronic “partner dashboard”



Priority: Maintain quality services for families by strengthening partnerships

- **Goal: Strengthen school and community partnerships by decreasing staff turnover**
 - **Recent Activities:**
 - Salary studies
 - Incorporated “minimally reduced work year” staffing option Reduced intake paperwork
 - MCDHHS Process Technology Modernization planning
 - Utilize consultant to provide database technical assistance
 - Support adequate facilities for work space via DHHS CIP plan



Goal: Strengthen school and community partnerships by decreasing staff turnover

(continued)

Cost Neutral Strategies:

- Build on reduced/flexible work year model (effective hourly wage increase) as incentive to reduce staff turnover
- Recruit ex-military (work force population that may not have same salary requirements)
- Continue Process Technology Modernization planning

Resources Needed:

- Administrative specialists in LTL site funding formula to ensure effective management and oversight of the program
- Increase in base budget to make site staff salaries more competitive
- LTL site funding formula that ensures supervisor/staff ratio no greater than 1:12



Goal: Build stronger ties among MCPS, MCDHHS, primary service partners, and families

- Recent Activities:
 - LRT work with Site Coordinators and school administrators to align School Improvement and LTL Program Plans
 - Implemented new standards and improvements to LTL's yearly school/ community needs assessment process
 - Conducting site MOU meetings yearly
 - Implemented yearly anonymous electronic survey for school staff feedback directly to the LTL central office



Goal: Build stronger ties among MCPS, MCDHHS, primary service partners, and families (continued)

- **Cost Neutral Strategies:**
 - Conduct annual briefings to Council and BOE
 - Use new logic model to be explicit about purpose and benefits of LTL and communicate these to multiple audiences to build broader support
 - Integrate with Excel Beyond the Bell initiative at middle schools
 - Increase shared professional development opportunities among LTL site and school staff
 - Make explicit program connections with new MCPS strategic plan, framework and social/emotional learning goals
 - Align LTL site staff into Collaborative Problem Solving process at each school
 - Require LTL participation on School Improvement Teams across the initiative
 - Update LTL site and system MOU to further address/align processes

Goal: Build stronger ties among MCPS, MCDHHS, primary service partners, and families (continued)

- Resources Needed:
 - Upgrade “Site Coordinator” job description and salary range to attract and retain staff with more experience/ abilities in creating school/community partnerships
 - Reinstatement of program manager position in LTL central office with communications duties
 - LTL site funding formula that ensures supervisor/staff ratio no greater than 1:12
 - Resources for new collaborative website with updated communication tools for all partners

Goal: Build on family involvement practices to formalize youth/family leadership structure

- Recent Activities:
 - Parent focus groups for input into strategic plan decisions (50 parents participated)
 - Ongoing parent empowerment groups, volunteer roles and other involvement/leadership opportunities
- Cost Neutral Strategies:
 - Allocate LTL operating dollars for consultant to work with Site Coordinators and parents to build on current family involvement strategies and co-design formal parent/youth leadership model
 - Invite parent “graduates” of LTL to become presenters at LTL parent events, formalizing their role (monthly community meeting – train/certify as community advocates)
- Resources Needed:
 - Family involvement/leadership funds in LTL site funding formula to support parent/youth leadership structures



**Priority: Build capacity through
County support to meet needs of
residents**

- **Goal #1: Expand to new school sites and restore current sites which have the highest levels of poverty**
 - **Driving Criteria: % Ever FARMS, with following exceptions:**
 - Priority qualification for middle schools with 3 feeder LTL elementary schools
 - Space considerations



Goal: Expand to new school sites and restore current sites with highest levels of poverty (continued)

- Annualize operations at Arcola and Georgian Forest ES
- Fund full staffing at sites with Ever FARMS > 85%:
 - New Hampshire Estates ES SBHC, 90.4%
 - Harmony Hills SBHC, 90.4%
 - Highland ES SBHC, 88.4%
 - Wheaton Woods ES, 86.4%
 - Weller Road ES, 86.1%
- **New Site at South Lake ES, 85%**
- Fund full staffing at sites with Ever FARMS > 79.4%:
 - Summit Hall ES SBHC, 83.7%
 - Kemp Mill ES, 79.7%

Based on 2012-2013 Ever FARMS

Goal: Expand to new school sites and restore current sites with highest levels of poverty (continued)

- New Site at Clopper Mill ES, 79.4%
- New Site at Col. E. Brooke Lee MS, 78.3%
- New paired site team at Cresthaven ES, 77.2% and Dr. Roscoe E. Nix ES, 74.3%
(one K-5 population)
- New Site at Jackson Road ES, 77.1%
- Fund full staffing at site with Ever FARMS rate \geq 75.7%:
 - Washington Grove ES, 75.7%
- New Site at Francis Scott Key MS, 75.7%

Based on 2012-2013 Ever FARMS

Goal: Strengthen availability of School Community Health Nurses to participate on LTL site collaborative teams

- Resources Needed:
 - Increase school nursing time at each LTL site that is not a School-Based Health Center to meet ratio of 1 SCHN per 2 LTL sites



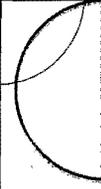
Goal: Implement evidence based practices (EBPs) across initiative

- **Recent Activities:**
 - American Psychological Association's Violence Prevention Office's "Effective Providers for Child Victims of Violence Community Workshop"; an overview of evidence-based assessments and practices for children exposed to trauma provided to staff
- **Resources Needed:**
 - Staff Development dollars to support training of LTL staff in EBPs and ongoing implementation



Priority: Strengthen capacity to bring in new revenue from diverse sources

- **Goal:** Expand capacity at LTL central office to obtain and manage outside grants
 - **Recent Activities:**
 - Despite LTL central office reductions, re-aligned central office staffing to devote part of one position to resource development via private and corporate donations for seasonal drives
 - Deepened partnership with MCPS Educational Foundation to examine new opportunities for grants, apply for more grants, and obtain additional funding in traditional grant partnerships
 - **Cost Neutral Strategies:**
 - Continue working with MCPS Educational Foundation and MCDHHS Grants Resource & Acquisition Unit to identify and pursue grant opportunities
 - **Resources Needed:**
 - Grant writer/implementation specialist at LTL central office



Thank you for your continued support for
Linkages to Learning:

- County Executive
- County Council
- Superintendent and MCPS
- School Board
- Linkages Partners
- Parents and Community Partners

*This collaboration is only successful with
your support.*