



RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Joint Inclusion Committee

Recommendation Number: [20260325-031] FY 2026-27 Budget for Supporting Mental Health Services in Schools

**Subject:** Recommendation to allocate an additional \$2 million to the Integrated Student Supports and Youth Services and Mental Health and Wellness grants for comprehensive integrated student support services and trauma-informed mental health services, early campus-based interventions for organizations such as Communities in Schools

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin is committed to ensuring that race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes; and the 2025 Austin Travis County Community Health Assessment identifies increasing access to mental healthcare as a critical goal

**WHEREAS**, there is a continued need for increased investment to support the growing mental health challenges faced by students in Austin area schools;

**WHEREAS**, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Initiative identifies food, housing and mental health services as primary pillars for community success; and

**WHEREAS**, students in the Austin area continue to face significant barriers to, including high rates of poverty and lack of access to culturally competent intensive mental health services; and

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 6 (89th) seeks to increase access to mental health services in public schools while also placing new implications for student discipline in the classroom, focused on proactive approaches to addressing student needs; and

**WHEREAS**, other recent legislative changes have placed new considerations on services offered to students through school systems when providing mental health services and supports; and

**WHEREAS**, Communities In Schools of Central Texas provides critical "safety net" services through multiple programs, including our campus-based Integrated Student Supports, Care Coordination and wraparound services, and intensive mental health & wellness services for students; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence-based services such as intensive mental health counseling provided by clinicians and social workers ensure students' unmet mental health needs are addressed through direct service to students and their families, with a family-centered, trauma-informed approach to connect students and their families to community resources; and

**WHEREAS**, these mental health services have shown decreases in clinical scales of depression and/or anxiety for student symptoms and improved scores in post-test evaluation assessments; and

**WHEREAS**, Results from a recently released Harvard-Cornell Study from Opportunity Insights and EdRedesign Lab showed that three years of involvement in Communities In Schools of Central Texas leads to significantly higher income earnings over a student's lifetime, increased yearly tax contributions, less reliance on public assistance and significantly reduced involvement or prevention of involvement in the criminal justice system and increased economic mobility leading to an increased tax base and stronger workforce

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends to provide essential mental health services for children and youth, ensuring continued, on-campus access to counseling and support services, as referenced in past council actions and recommends that the Austin City Council allocate an additional \$2 million in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget to sustain and expand:

- **Mental Health Services:** Individual and group intensive counseling for trauma and behavioral health, providing evidence-based early intervention.
- **Basic Needs Assistance:** Emergency financial aid for rent, meals, and clothing.
- **Attendance and Academic Support:** Case management to improve student engagement and graduation rates, post-secondary pathways, career and workforce readiness.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the JIC requests an annual report on the outcomes of this funding to ensure accountability and equitable distribution of services.

Date of Approval: March 25, 2026

Motioned By: Commissioner Parsons

Seconded By: Commissioner Chang

Vote: 10-0

For: Vice Chair Bondi, Commissioners Alvizo, Benson, Castaneda, Chang, Laake-Stanfield, Kanawati, Oliva-Martínez, Parsons, Thakkar

Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Off the dais: None

Absent: Chair Afifi, Commissioners Bullard, McNary, Melendez

Attest: *Ryan Sperling*

(Ryan Sperling, Staff Liaison)