



# Sweet Home Family Support Center

A partnership of school, home and community

# What is a Family Support Center?

- Sometimes called Family Support Center, Family Resource Center, Family Help Center, Family Support Services, Full Service Schools
- Designed specifically to your district & community's needs and/or resources available
- Collaboration with community members, community organizations, area service providers, parents, students and school personnel



## What other communities have them?

- Sweet Home-25 years
- Hamburg- 24 years
- East Aurora- 20 years
- Lancaster- 19 years
- Cheektowaga-Sloan-24 years
- Lakeshore- 23 years
- Kenmore-Tonawanda- 15 years
- Iroquois- 1 year
- Grand Island- 2 years
- Springville-Griffith- 8 years
- Charter School for Applied Technologies - 3 years
- Buffalo Public

# History of Sweet Home

- Est. in 1993, planning for 2 years
- First program in New York State of its kind
- One stop shopping for families' needs
- Created out of needs identified by staff unable to meet growing mental health needs, unable to access appropriate community resources, little to no collaboration between school and therapists



# Collaborative Partners

- Amherst Police Department
- Amherst Task Force for Healthy Communities\*Healthy Youth
- Amherst Town Court
- Amherst Youth and Recreation Department
- BestSelf Behavioral Health
- BryLin Hospitals
- Catholic Charities
- Erie County Dept. of Social Services
- ECCPASA

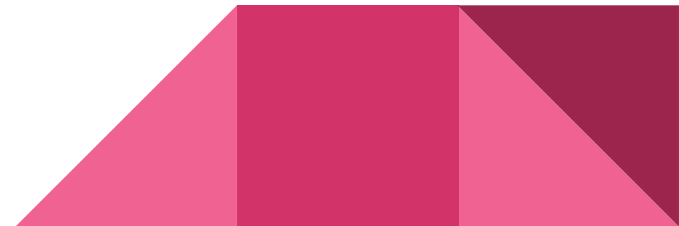
- Horizon Health Services
- Mental Health Association of Erie County
- People, Inc.
- Williamsville Wellness Center

## Expansion for 2018-2019

- Autistic Services
- Buffalo Centre for Eating Disorders

# Sweet Home Family Support Center Program

- Staff: One full time coordinator(school counselor certification), One full time clerk typist . Both employed by school district
- 12 month program: Coordinator works 15 days in summer
- Assessment, linkage and referral to community resources
- On site clinical services: Gateway-Longview Behavioral Health Clinic (3days a week); BestSelf Behavioral Health (1 day/week); Catholic Charities (2 days a week); Williamsville Wellness Center (1 day/week)
- School Supply Program
- Hygiene Closet



## Location

- District office
- Meeting area, two offices, two counseling rooms, confidential hallway and entrance to parking lot
- Also houses Central Registration



# Role of the Coordinator

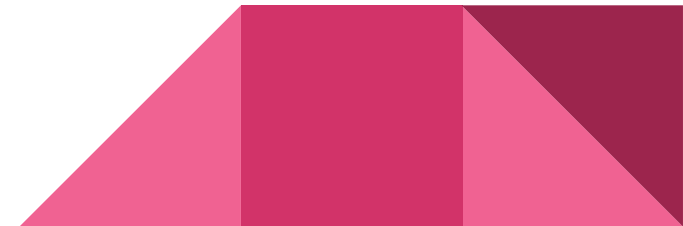
- Process referrals for outside services
  - Assess student and family needs
  - Determine and locate most appropriate interventions
  - Assist with navigating community resources
  - Case management to insure linkage occurs and communication between school and provider (if appropriate)
  - Requires good knowledge of community resources, building and maintaining positive working relationships with community
- Crisis Intervention
- Consultation for other counselors
- Member of Student Support Team
- Parent Workshops





## Other responsibilities

- Professional Development for Staff regarding mental health issues
- Central Registration PreSchool-12
- Employee Assistance Program
- Homeless Liaison



# Benefits

- School Counselors spend less time on long term crisis intervention and case management. Devote more time to more kids
- School and treatment providers can communicate more effectively and work together to help the student and family
- School based clinical services increases access to timely mental health treatment for students
- Strong collaborative relationships with community resources increase response time and meeting needs of family
- Families/students feel more connected to /supported by the school
- Reduces stigma of mental health support



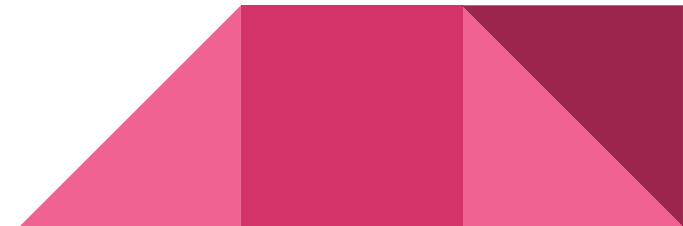
## Benefits continued

- Increase student attendance and academic performance
- Decrease requests for home instruction due to mental health issues
- Reduce out of district placements
- Address needs of whole family, preventing problems for other children
- Provides additional support to SRO/Police Department
- Increase awareness of school process and culture to community service providers (decrease in inappropriate referrals to CSE/home instruction)
- Proactive approach to solving problems



# Benefits for addition of other programs

- Additional funding streams
- Central Registration
  - Build positive relationships from the moment families enter the district
  - Identify and address needs immediately
  - Streamline information gathering
- Homeless Liaison
  - Connects seamlessly with registration
  - Families have other needs that can be met through family support center
- Employee Assistance Program
  - Expands options for staff
  - Increased utilization but reduced cost to district



## Cost

- One program coordinator
- One clerical
- Office Supplies
- Dedicated space

## Possible Funding

- UPK grant
- Title I
- District office funds for general office supplies
- United Way Donor Designated Dollars offset counseling expenses for families
- On site clinical services paid through families' health insurance
- EAP designated funds

# Components of an effective program

- Start with a realistic vision of the program (staffing/funding/services)
- Do not start something that you cannot sustain.
- Dedicated position to oversee program-Do not add responsibilities onto someone else's full plate
- Dedicated position who has knowledge of community resources, strong networking skills, mental health/counseling background, knowledge of school system dynamics.

