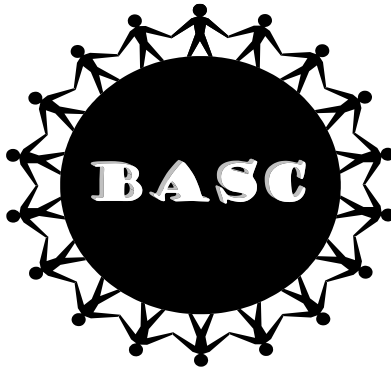


Beltrami Area Service Collaborative

2019 Annual Report



*A Recognized State of Minnesota Combined
Family Service and Children's Mental Health Collaborative*

Community Service Center
616 America Avenue NW, Suite 160
Bemidji, MN 56601
Telephone: (218) 333-8190
www.beltrami.org

BASC Mission, Vision and Values

Reviewed and Revised August 2019

BASC Mission Statement

Working together, we can help each family reach its potential through the collaboration of our resources and services.

Vision

BASC will strive to maximize the health, education and wellbeing of all families.

BASC Core Values

- to be as inclusive and representative of our county/communities as possible
- to develop programs with a commitment to cultural inclusion and sensitivity
- to be willing to improve on, or change existing systems to better serve the people of our county/communities
- to neither replace nor duplicate existing agencies but rather recreate relationships among them
- to have a commitment to cooperate rather than compete with each other for limited resources
- to integrate services and resources to the degree possible
- to develop projects based on collaboratively established values and priorities
- to govern ourselves in a way that promotes accountability
- to value and respect those we exist to serve
- to facilitate a **trauma-based** family approach to service development and delivery
- to maintain a commitment to a continuum of prevention and intervention services

BASC Project Priority Areas

1. Behavioral Health

Based on the belief that mental health and chemical abuse problems are at the root of many challenges our children and youth face, BASC will support research or evidence-based children's mental health and alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention and intervention programs that address family systems, and maximize available reimbursement for services.

2. Educational Success

Based on the belief that a high school diploma is essential for successful transition to adulthood, BASC will support research or evidence-based programs that help children come to school ready to learn, stay in school and graduate.

A History of Collaboratives in Minnesota

The Collaborative movement dates back more than two decades. In 1991, Governor Arne Carlson created the Action for Children Commission. This statewide task force, which included representation from nonprofit organizations, children's advocacy groups, the business community, and government, was asked to create a vision for Minnesota children and families. As part of its charge, the Commission agreed to recommend needed changes in service delivery systems.

As a result of the Commission's final report, "Kids Can't Wait," initiatives were planned. Governor Carlson created the Children's Cabinet at the Executive Branch level. Minnesota was also selected as one of five states to compete for funding from the Pew Charitable Trust, enabling communities to consider how to provide more support for families by reconfiguring and integrating service delivery systems. To initiate some of the collaborative planning that would be required in this competitive grant process, the state selected three communities as pilot sites: St. Paul, Cass County, and Becker County. Working with state agency representatives, these communities became engaged in an intensive and comprehensive planning process.

In 1993, the Minnesota Legislature provided funding to enable the state to reach more communities with these initiatives. These grant funds were intended to serve as incentives for communities to collaborate on behalf of children and families.

Three major sources of grant funds supported the implementation of the collaborative initiatives across Minnesota: Family Services and Community-Based Collaborative funds, Children's Mental Health Collaborative funds, and funds provided by the Pew Charitable Trust Children's Initiative. Implementation grants have helped establish Family Service, Children's Mental Health, or joint Family Service/Children's Mental Health Collaboratives throughout Minnesota

Communities receiving these monies are expected to plan and implement changes in their local systems to better service children and families. They are also required to establish measurable outcomes. Major stakeholders include a wide variety of private nonprofit agencies, school districts, county governments, and community action agencies.

The Evolution of BASC

BASC was established in 1994 with a Family Service Collaborative Implementation grant from the State of Minnesota. In 1998, BASC legally became a Joint Powers entity with an impressive list of engaged partners including: public school districts within Beltrami County (Bemidji, Blackduck and Kelliher), Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center (now Sanford Behavioral Health), Beltrami County, Sanford Health, Bi-County CAP, Minnesota Department of Corrections, and the Bemidji Area Council of Nonprofits. Other partners added later include: Red Lake Public Schools, United Way of Bemidji Area and Bemidji Regional Inter-District Council.

Representatives from these entities serve on the BASC Governing Board.

BASC is designated as both as an integrated Family Service and Children's Mental Health Collaborative.

Beltrami County has its share of challenging issues to overcome including one of the highest poverty rates in Minnesota. Service availability can be scarce and resources to address complex poverty-related issues are tight due to the county's low tax base and lack of charitable foundations that support outstate programs.

Local Collaborative Time Study

One of the major sources of funding for Collaboratives is the Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS). LCTS is a process of claiming federal revenue through Title IV-E (Adoption and Foster Care) and Title XIX (Medical Assistance). Selected public school, corrections and public health staff members are randomly sampled five times each quarter. The results of this random time study and cost reports completed by participating entities form

the basis of the federal claim made through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. By state statute, the revenue generated by LCTS must be deposited in the Collaborative's integrated fund and is intended to be spent on prevention and early intervention services. The BASC Governing Board is solely responsible for the distribution of these funds.

BASC Governing Board Members 2019

Denae Alamano, <i>Chair</i>	United Way of the Bemidji Area
Alexis Wilde, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Bemidji Public School District
Jeff Lind, <i>Past Chair</i>	Beltrami County Social Services
Brenda Story	Bemidji Regional Interdistrict Council
Trish Hansen	Minnesota Department of Corrections
Malcolm Wax	Kelliher School District
Barb Moran	Bi-County Community Action Program
Lisa Johnson	Sanford Bemidji
Dustin Hinckley	Red Lake School District
Tanya Adams	Children's Mental Health Representative
Sue Frank	Blackduck Public School District
Amber Larson	Stellher Human Services
Richard Anderson	Beltrami County Commissioner
Cindy Ness	Community Representative

2019 Program and Project Investments

BASC establishes and supports programs that are aligned with two Board-established priority areas: Children's Behavioral Health and Educational Success. The agency's integrated fund revenue sources include grants, Local Collaborative Time Study funds, county funding, contracts, and partner contributions. The key to success has been the partners' visionary leadership and shared values.

BASC Direct Service Programs

Direct Service Programs are those that are provided by BASC-employed staff or BASC contracted individuals. A summary of 2019 Direct Service Programs follows.

➤ **Truancy Programming**

Truancy Case Management

The BASC Truancy Case Manager carries a caseload of youth who have been referred to the court system due to unresolved habitual truancy. The truancy case manager works closely with area school districts, county social services, tribal representatives, probation, the county attorney's office, mental health providers, and chemical dependency treatment providers to address truancy and its causes. Their role is to communicate with all parties, work to address the barriers causing the youth's poor school attendance, and help to ensure the family can follow the court orders. Some of the challenges the youth and families face include homelessness, lack of transportation, poverty, mental health, chemical dependency and past traumas.

During the 2019-2020 school year, there were a total of 20 truancy cases that were open for court intervention. There were an additional four cases that were going to be referred to court; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency order they were unable to be filed with the court. As the school year is ending, there are seven cases currently open in court with the Truancy Case Manager.

As in previous years, cases have continued to be very complex and require a great deal of collaboration with the family, the school, social services, tribes, and area service providers to address the needs of the youth and family. Of the cases open during this school year, 70% were referred for mental health services. There were four cases (20%) that required chemical use interventions including regular drug testing and/or chemical dependency assessments. Only one case was recommended to participate in outpatient chemical dependency services as their drug use included pills, marijuana and alcohol.

During this 2019-2020 school year, there were four youth that were discussed with the county pre-placement committee due to increased concerning behaviors and mental health concerns. All four of the cases discussed with the pre-placement committee were recommended to complete a 35-day evaluation. A 35-day evaluation provides in depth information and recommendations based on behavior observations along with psychological testing and evaluation. Three of the four youth were ordered by the court to complete 35-day evaluations. The fourth was ordered to complete a psychological evaluation on an outpatient basis that was able to be arranged and completed within a week by the child's tribe. The truancy case manager continued working with the youth while they completed their evaluations. Upon completion

of the evaluation, the Truancy Case Manager worked with the family to ensure all recommended services were arranged and attended.

The last three months of the 2019-2020 school year have been difficult for many people as we have adjusted to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Truancy Case Manager worked with each of her cases to help ensure they had the necessary resources for distance learning whether that was internet and a computer or the information on paper packets. Monitoring attendance proved to be difficult during this time as each school system had slightly different methods of taking attendance and attendance expectations. The Truancy Case Manager worked with each family as much as possible and tried to focus on overall well-being during this pandemic and understands that distance learning has created additional barriers for many students in accessing their education and meeting requirements. These efforts will continue over the summer in monitoring any mental health needs and overall well-being. As we approach the 2020-2021 school year, the Truancy Case Manager will work with all parties involved on open cases and helping to ensure each youth has the resources needed to attend school in the fall, whatever that may look like.

In addition to the case management responsibilities, the truancy case manager has the role of lead case manager in the BASC office. The added responsibilities include weekly case manager meetings to review caseloads, discuss individual cases as needed, offer guidance on solutions for difficult situations and provide support for day-to-day activities.

The Truancy Case Manager attends the weekly case manager meeting with the Beltrami County Child Protection case managers. This is an opportunity to staff cases and learn updates on court procedures, ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) requirements, and other miscellaneous information. As part of the meeting, the Assistant County Attorney reviews and prepares for cases on the Court calendar for the following week.

A Story from the Truancy Case Manager

This case involves siblings that were both referred by their school for court intervention. One was a middle school age youth and the other was in high school. The girls and the family were always very polite and cooperative with the case manager and the court. However, their attendance failed to improve for several months. The case manager reached out to the family's tribe where they are enrolled members. The tribe's assigned case manager provided information and resources available to them. After failed attempts at two brick and mortar schools, and some concerns regarding peer and teacher issues, the family asked the court for permission to attend online school. The court allowed them to enroll in online school. For several months, both girls showed immense improvements in attendance and school engagement. The school reported that the girls were both meeting expectations in both attendance and work completion. After starting at the online school, both girls showed reduced anxiety at home as peer issues were no longer present in their school setting.

While online school settings are not always the best option for youth who are struggling with attendance, in this case it was exactly what was needed. Both girls were able to make significant changes to their school engagement and have a successful school year.

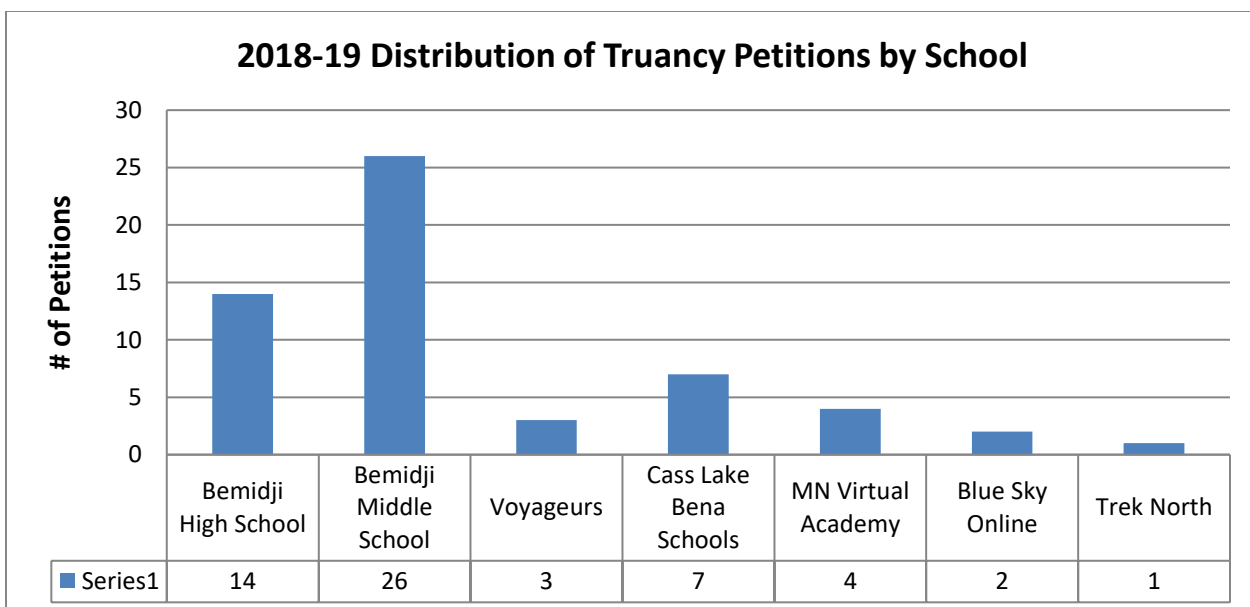
Truancy Screening Team

This marked the sixth year that a Beltrami County Screening Team met to review referrals of students ages 12–17 whose absences have reached a level where court action might be appropriate. The process begins with schools submitting to the County Attorney’s office a Petition to File with Beltrami County Courts. The Assistant County Attorney brings forth those Petitions to the Screening Team. Screening Team members include Beltrami County Social Services staff and administration; the Assistant County Attorney; and the BASC executive director, truancy and intervention staff members.

The home address of the student’s legal guardian determines which county or tribal authority will address the truancy. If the legal guardian’s address is in Cass County Hubbard County, Clearwater County, Red Lake or Leech Lake Reservation, the petition is forwarded to the respective entity. For each case where the student’s legal guardian resides in Beltrami County, a determination is made by the Assistant County Attorney (with input from the Screening Team and the school) as to the most effective, appropriate intervention. Options include a petition to the Beltrami County Court, Alternative Response Case Management (outside court through BASC direct services), or a response by Beltrami County Social Services. In some cases, the youth is already named in an open Social Service case and opening a court cases would be inappropriate and a poor use of scarce resources. Thus, the truancy concern is added to the open case with the County.

SUMMARY OF PETITION REQUESTS:

- 46 youth were screened. Some cases were re-submitted or re-screened for a total of 51 screenings
- 13 cases went to Court (4 of these cases did not get into court before the COVID pandemic)
- 4 cases went to Alternative Response Case Management (diversion)
- 3 cases went to Social Services
- 1 case was already on supervised probation with school attendance court ordered
- 8 cases were not within our jurisdiction (Red Lake, Leech Lake, other counties)
- 2 youth were 17 years old
- 20 of the screenings resulted in the case being sent back to the referring school by the County Attorney’s Office because more information was needed, active efforts on the schools behalf were needed, or information on the petition request was not sufficient to proceed with a court action.



PASS K-12 Meetings

Three times during the school year, BASC facilitates a PASS K-12 meeting. Attendees include school administrators and staff; Indian Education staff; school attendance liaisons; County Intake, Child Protection and Children's Mental Health representatives; homeless program liaisons and others. During the meetings, participants share information about their attendance initiatives, trends, and barriers. The County Attorney's office provides guidance to refine school reporting of active efforts in the Request to Petition and clarification of Court procedures. The two meetings that were held this school year were well attended and positive feedback was received from participants on the structure and effectiveness of the meeting. The last meeting of the year, which was scheduled in March, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Truancy Tracking at Bemidji Middle School (BMS)

This school year has been anything but typical. After a two month stay-at-home order, thinking about how things were at the beginning of the school year seems more like a surreal dream than reality.

During the months of September through February, active efforts were carried out as usual.

First Intervention: 491 letters were mailed

Second Intervention: 48 continuing truancy letters were mailed

Third Intervention: 35 letters were mailed requesting doctor's notes in order for absences to be excused.

On Truancy Intervention Contract: 21 families volunteered to work with the Tracker on addressing family barriers and setting family goals to make improvements for themselves and their children.

The Bemidji Middle School filed a total of 17 Truancy Petitions this school year. BASC's Truancy Tracker assisted BMS by gathering information about school interventions (also called active efforts) that must be documented in the Request to Petition.

The fourth term of this school year was very different from those past. Instead of being concerned with what active efforts have or have not been attempted, the Attendance Review Team at the Bemidji Middle School focused solely on staying in contact with families and students during the distance learning process.

A Story from the Truancy Interventionist

While I enjoyed being able to completely focus on maintaining relationships with the students and families on my caseload during distance learning, the reality of maintaining weekly contact with them ended up being far more difficult than I had anticipated. Many of the students that I worked with no longer had their own cell phones. Phone numbers of parents and guardians had been disconnected. I had gone from being able to see the students daily during the week to not seeing them at all and only being able to talk to them, at most, once a week. The unprecedented times of COVID-19 definitely presented many obstacles and challenges.

Although there are many things about this school year that will forever be remembered, there is one story that makes me smile and warms my heart when I think about it. One of the girls who I meet with regularly was having a particularly difficult time with one of her teachers. The student was feeling

frustrated and angry with this particular teacher. So much so, that she had concluded that “all teachers were mean and didn’t care about students, especially Indian students.” I asked her what had happened between her and this teacher. She said that the teacher had been very short with everyone and had not had any patience. I asked the young lady if she had ever taken the time to ask this particular teacher “how are you doing?” She asked, “Why would I ever do that?” I replied, “Well, I know this may be hard to believe, but perhaps her being short with students and not having any patience is because she is struggling with some things in her own life.” I explained that we all experience different hardships in our lives. Sometimes when we are feeling pain it comes out in a hurtful way toward others, even when that is not our intent. The student looked at me and said, “So you think I should ask her how she is doing?” I answered, “Yes, but only if you are comfortable doing so. And ask in a respectful manner.” The student left my office and went to class.

After class, she came running back to my office with a big smile on her face and asked “Guess what?” I said, “Did you talk to your teacher?” She closed my office door and said, “I feel so bad now. I went into class and my teacher asked me how I was. I told her that I was fine. I then asked her how she was doing. Mrs. L looked at me and said, ‘No student has ever asked me that.’ Mrs. L then told me that she was really having a hard time and was very worried about someone in her family.” The student said she tried to comfort her teacher by saying “that must be really hard for you.” Mrs. L chose to share with this student that she was feeling very sad and frustrated and apologized for being short with everyone lately.

The student then shared with me that some of the students in class had not been very nice or respectful to Mrs. L. Having this one moment with this teacher, the student realized that we all have difficulties and hardships in life. She also realized how one simple gesture and act of kindness can help another. For the remainder of the school year, this student continued to communicate not just with Mrs. L, but with all of her teachers and asked them how they are doing. She had also decided that not all teachers were “evil and hateful, but people with feelings.”

Re-Engagement Case Management

In 2016, BASC received Community Crime Prevention (CCP) funding through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to add Re-Engagement Case Management. A two-year *renewal* grant was awarded to fund this program from January 2020 until January 2022. BASC employs one staff member to take on the activities and objectives of this project.

Re-Engagement Case Management has three objectives: 1) Reduce court involvement for truant youths and families by increasing family engagement and utilizing effective case management; 2) Reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions and court involvement related to student conduct and conflicts through the implementation of Peace Circles; and 3) Develop community awareness regarding the importance of school attendance and engagement.

The Re-Engagement Case Manager accepts referrals from two teams: Beltrami County Truancy Screening Team and Weekly Student Support Team at Bemidji High School (Grades 9-12). The Re-Engagement Case Manager develops a case plan with the family, meets with the student at least weekly, advises and refers to any needed services, advocates for educational needs of the youth (possible class schedule changes or referrals to the Lumberjack High School, for instance), helps the student and family devise strategies for overcoming barriers, and provides incentives for students to achieve goals. Participation in

Re-Engagement Case Management is voluntary, but families are cautioned that if they choose not to participate and the attendance concerns are not addressed, the school may file a Request for Petition with the County Attorney.

A total of 38 Bemidji High School students were referred to the Re-Engagement Case Manager to address attendance issues and the underlying causes of truancy. For 24 of these students, a face-to-face intake was held with a parent or guardian to accept services from the Re-Engagement Case Manager. For the remainder, either the intake was completed by telephone or the student was served informally without an intake due to the inability to reach the parent or guardian. Two cases were eventually sent to the court system.

Each student took a MAYSI-2 assessment of mental health and also a Children's Hope Scale Assessment to give a sense of their mindset about their future. Several mental health referrals were made by the Re-Engagement Case Manager. The case manager also provided referrals for summer school, Lumberjack High School, and after-school programming. Some students worked through interactive journals such as *Handling Difficult Feelings and Relationships* and *Communication*.

In addition to case management services, this position has been trained to facilitate Peace Circles. A **Peace Circle** is a Restorative Justice model that, like other Restorative Justice practices, can be used to address conflict holistically and solve problems. The case manager attended Restorative Justice trainings on two different occasions. Five Peace Circles were conducted at Bemidji High School with a total of 18 students participating. Each circle had positive outcomes resulting in conflict resolution and zero discipline referrals for the rest of the school year for participants. The BHS assistant principals are becoming more and more knowledgeable about when a Peace Circle referral is appropriate and have expressed how having this resource available has been a positive option for their students. The RCM will attend an additional Restorative Justice training in the summer of 2020.

Through BASC's CCP grant, "Mini" Attendance Incentive Grants were offered to schools to help them with their own attendance incentive programs. Thirteen schools submitted applications to BASC and received grants in amounts varying from \$500 to \$1,000. Schools applied for the grant funds, attended PASS K-12 meetings to update everyone on how their incentive program worked or did not work, and submitted a final outcomes report at the end of the school year. Incentive programs consisted of pizza parties, movie tickets, raffles, board game day, perfect attendance tags, student recognition, school store rewards, gift cards, and more. Each school was able to cater to their own population and families.

The third and final goal-- developing community awareness regarding the importance of school attendance and engagement--focused on teaching youth and families about the effects of excessive "screen time." Local students starred in a Public Service Announcement that was shared through social media. Daily social media posts by the RCM on this topic were well received by people of all ages. Finally, BASC partnered with other organizations to host a training called "Wired Kids." About 75 attendees learned about how device use is impacting brain development of young children.

➤ Intervention Programming

The BASC Delinquency Intervention Program collaborates with the Beltrami County Attorney's Office, Minnesota Department of Corrections, Beltrami County Health and Human Services, schools in Beltrami County and local service providers to reduce the rates of recidivism and advancement of young people in the juvenile justice system by providing restoratively focused interventions for youths engaging in harmful behaviors.

The program is primarily funded through a Title II Juvenile Justice grant from the State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety (with funding originating from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and awarded by the MN Juvenile Justice Advisory Group). This grant was originally awarded in October 2014 and has been renewed annually with some gaps in funding due to the state's RFP timing.

The goals of the grant in 2019 include:

- Goal 1: Reduce the rate of recidivism and advancement into the Criminal Justice System for petty misdemeanor, status, and delinquency level offenses.
- Goal 2: Reduce court involvement for truant youths and families by increasing family engagement and utilizing effective case management.
- Goal 3: Reduce court involvement for minority youths committing petty-misdemeanor and/or delinquency level offenses, and/or engaging in truancy.

BASC employs a full-time Intervention Specialist to deliver these services:

- Alternative Response Case Management
- RESCU (Restoration, Education, Skills, Change and You) Pre-adjudication Diversion Program
- Traffic Refresher Course
- Dually Involved Youth alternative case management and collaborative conference facilitation
- Truancy Alternative Response Case Management
- Sexting Diversion
- Restorative Practices: Restorative Group Conferencing, Victim-Offender Mediation, Peacemaking Circles and Conflict Mediation

The Intervention Program received an average of 25-30 referrals for diversion programming per quarter. Recidivism rates for program participants were calculated for the July-September 2019 reporting period. Per the program work plan, success was to be considered when the six-month recidivism rate was 15% or less, and the 12-month rate was 25% or less. Results were promising.

During this reporting period, the six-month recidivism rate for youth participating in an alternative response to court (RESCU, Traffic Refresher and/or ARCM) **was 0% (0/52)**. The twelve-month recidivism rate was **4.8% (2/41)**. Each program was evaluated individually and the success rate for RESCU was 100% out of the subset screened, a recidivism rate of 0% over a twelve-month period. Traffic was 11% (1/9) and ARCM was 7.7% (1/13). Again, per our work plan, success is to be considered when the twelve (12) month recidivism rate is 25% or less.

The Beltrami County Dually-Involved Youth Project serves Beltrami County youth between the ages of 10 and 17 who have allegedly committed a delinquency level offense (whether or not they are presently on

probation for a former offense) *and* have an open Beltrami County and/or Tribal social services case. The youth is identified through communication initiated by the County Attorney's office with social services.

As a part of the Dually Involved Project, youth who are involved in both social services and juvenile justice system are eligible to participate in a collaborative conference, if ordered by the Court. The purpose of the collaborative conference is to discuss the current risks, needs, and strengths of the youth and family. With that context in mind, conference participants create a list of recommendations for the Court to consider as the youth's probation requirements. Dual case management roles and responsibilities are also established in order to avoid confusion among the professionals, youth and family/guardians.

In 2019, five collaborative conferences for Dually Involved Youth were held. The recommendations that were agreed upon by all parties were received well and were considered in Court.

➤ **Students First**

BASC is the administrative agency responsible for Students First, a community effort to help students reach their full potential by pursuing goals with support from caring adults. During the school year, youth participants meet with Students First Strength Educators during the school day to participate in activities that focus on each individual's strengths. The students create Success Plans that will evolve as they move from the 6th through the 9th grade. Each student is paired with a volunteer Success Coach from the community to support them in reaching personal, academic, post-secondary and career goals.

The community group called "Bemidji Leads" envisioned the Students First program in 2009 and made its development and implementation a top priority. A community advisory team made up of charter and district school administration, teachers, counselors, parents, county government, business, and youth-serving organizations developed the Students First Operations Plan through an unprecedented collaborative process led by BASC and Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC). Funds contributed by Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Blandin Foundation, George W. Neilson Foundation, District 31, and Kelliher Public Schools have been instrumental in the development, implementation and ongoing support of this program.

In 2019 (the program's ninth year), BASC again contracted with three professional consultants to carry out the Students First program. Participating students attend Bemidji Middle School, Bemidji High School and Kelliher Public Schools. The "Kelliher Model" is a hybrid version of the program where the school recruits Adult Coaches and Peer Mentors, while Students First consultants deliver programming and communication with mentors. Program evaluation is ongoing and informs program development.

This academic year brought about some great challenges, amazing accomplishments and opportunities for program growth.

During the 2019-2020 academic year:

- 489 students in grades 6th–12th participated in Students First in Bemidji Area School and Kelliher Public Schools (including students and peer mentors)
- 99 student and coach sessions were scheduled to be facilitated by Strengths Educators who contract with BASC. Due to COVID-19 and the closing of schools, 70 sessions were held.

- 312 community members volunteered as success coaches in Bemidji Area Schools and Kelliher Public Schools
- The program began transitioning to serve 6th-9th grade students in Bemidji.
- Approximately 95% of the 9th grade Students First students, decided to stay and complete the program, along with a vast majority of 10th-12 grade participants.
- Numerous orientation sessions were held for coaches in both group and one-on-one settings.
- Students First worked with the LINC group to recruit new coaches and build program awareness.
- Bemidji High School continued to utilize Students First to facilitate Strengths Assessments for mainstream 9th grade students. Students First also provided monthly supplemental Strengths activities to be used in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade homerooms throughout the year.
- Lumberjack High School decided to partner with Students First to provide Strengths Lessons for its students during the 2020-2021 academic year.
- During COVID-19 pandemic, Students First focused on relationship building with coaches, students and the community, which included creating a Facebook page.
- A video was created to celebrate the class of 2020 at Bemidji High and Kelliher Public Schools.
- Students First was present with signage at the Bemidji High School Graduation Procession and success coaches and seniors were acknowledged in the graduation program.

Students First is currently planning for the 2020-2021 academic year and continues to look at funding opportunities and modifications to keep the program strong, relevant, and sustainable.

➤ **Project Connect at Bemidji High School**

Project Connect is a program that was funded by an organization called Bemidji Area Prevention Alliance (BAPA). Project Connect uses multiple strategies to reduce risk factors and build protective factors for students. BASC serves as the program planning coordinator, facilitator of partner meetings, contracting entity and financial manager.

In its inaugural year of 2010, Project Connect established a weekly homeroom program for more than 1,400 students at Bemidji High School (BHS) and Lumberjack High School (LHS). Students are assigned to a teacher/advisor when they enter the high school as freshman, and they keep that same advisor throughout their high school years. All licensed staff and administrators in the building assist as advisors for students and meet with their group once a week. This arrangement is designed to build student connection to adults and to fellow students in their homeroom. Connectedness and engagement in school has been shown to boost resilience in teens. Project Connect focuses on enhancing the success of the homeroom program, encouraging student attendance, and supporting endeavors that help students engage at BHS.

In 2019, Project Connect funded the Freshman Orientation program for all 9th grade students at BHS. This will be the final year for this program, as the organization that was the source for this revenue no longer exists.

➤ **Family Group Decision Making**

BASC assists Beltrami County Social Services with applying for the Minnesota Department of Human Services grant for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM). Beltrami County is the applicant agency and BASC coordinates referrals and evaluation. Clearwater County and Red Lake Children and Family

Services were also eligible to access the funds. In total, 19 FGDM sessions were held in 2019, with Beltrami County holding 14 and Polk County five.

Family Group Decision Making is a strengths-based process whereby an extended family (including non-family members who are supportive) gathers to address an issue or problem. The issue might be creating a safety plan in a home where there is a history of substance abuse, agreeing upon a visitation schedule between estranged parents, or finding a permanent home for a child who can no longer live with his or her biological parents. After speaking with the family, referrals are made by county case managers to an independent, neutral FGDM coordinator and facilitator. That coordinator speaks with extended family members who will participate, explaining the process and listening to their concerns. On the day of the session, a meal is shared by all participants. Professionals who work with the family share what they see as family strengths and concerns they have regarding the issue at hand. The family discusses options for addressing the issue and independently creates a plan that they present to their case manager. It is an empowering and skill-building process that usually ends with all parties signing on to the family's plan. The county case manager follows up with the family to see if the plan is working, and can refer them for another FGDM session if needed.

During 2019:

- 19 FGDM sessions were held
- All sessions ended with participants signing off on a family-created plan to address the issue that brought them to the meeting
- 52% of the cases involved minority races
- In 75% of the cases, the father participated in the session. Those who did not participate were incarcerated, unable to have contact due to court orders, or unidentified. Facilitators ALWAYS ask for clarification from the case manager if no father contact information is listed and pursue any openings with the family in case preparation.
- Nearly 100% of the participants would recommend FGDM to others
- 99% of participants said their family was treated well during the session and 99% said that the professionals involved in the session care about them.

A sample of the comments shared by family participants on the evaluation forms:

- “Very helpful. Good to remind each other we can either be supportive of the children or be hurtful and destructive.”
- “Was nervous at first but felt comfortable after meeting everyone.”
- “Felt some encouragement about the way things are going with (family member).”

Contracted Projects

BASC utilizes integrated funds to support projects that are aligned with one or more of the organization's focus areas. These projects are carried out by BASC partners. Fiscal reports and narrative reports are required from all contracted project partners

2019 Contracted Project Descriptions and Allocations

- **Crisis Beds/Shelter** **\$20,000**
Provides 24-hour residential stays for children who are in crisis for a variety of reasons (family trauma, running away, mental health issues). The services include individual and group support, school services, case management, family crisis intervention and shelter. Staff assists youth and families with parent/child communication, relationship issues, setting consistent standards for behavior at home, and more. According to program reports, 32 youth were served. *Provider:* Evergreen Youth & Family Services

- **Children's Therapeutic Supports and Services for Special Education Students** **\$40,500**
Provides mental health support services to children under the age of 18 with SED diagnosis within the school setting at District 31 and Blackduck Schools. Staffing for CTSS consists of mental health professionals, practitioners and behavioral aides who meet state requirements for licensing, education/experience and continuing education. While the funding goes directly to the school districts, community-based agencies provide the services. According to program reports, 82 students were served. *Providers:* Stellher Human Services (Blackduck Schools), North Homes Children & Family Services (District 31)

- **Family-Based Services** **\$12,750**
Evergreen offers parent coaching at their shelter site. This is open to all with the cost being defrayed from the families who seek help. *Providers:* Evergreen Youth & Family Services

- **Med Management Consultation** **\$250**
Psychiatric/Medication Management consultation provided to the Bemidji Interdisciplinary Review Team (IRT) twice per year at the monthly meeting of this group. *Provider:* Tami Lindell, CNP

- **Parenting Support – SAFE-FIT** **\$41,690**
Families involved in the child welfare or child protection system who are experiencing complex, multiple barriers such as poverty, addiction, and domestic abuse participate in an innovative class called SAFE-FIT (Support and Family Education for Families in Transition). Facilitated by a contracted licensed parent educator and a licensed mental health provider, these sessions provide families with a stable and consistent means of support and education. Sessions address community resources and a plethora of parenting topics in an environment of positive and safe support. Childcare, transportation assistance, and lunch are provided. This program served 31 adults through 40 sessions. *Provider:* Bemidji Early Education Collaborative

- **School-Based Interventionist – Kelliher Public Schools** **\$17,100**
Provides emotional and educational support through direct intervention so that students can improve classroom and academic performance. Served 290 youth. *Providers:* Kelliher Public Schools

- **School-Linked Mental Health Services** **\$16,580**
Provides access to mental health services at Bemidji District 31 schools, TrekNorth Junior and Senior High, Voyageurs Expeditionary School, Schoolcraft Learning Community, Blackduck and Kelliher Schools. A two-year grant from the State of Minnesota covers various expenses not funded through third party billing. BASC funding supplements the grant. According to program reports, 331 students were served. *Providers:* Sanford Behavioral Health, North Homes and Stellher Human Services

- **Social-Emotional Learning Bemidji Schools** **\$20,000**
Provides social emotional learning (SEL) lessons for kindergarten and first grade classes presented by trained SEL educators. Teaching staff are present during the classroom lessons to learn these techniques along with their students. Supplemental Professional Learning Communities are provided as follow-up training and support for teachers. Approximately 840 students were served by this project. *Provided by:* Peacemaker Resources.

- **Social Emotional Learning Red Lake Schools** **\$15,000**
Approximately 200 kindergarten students and their teachers learned new skills through SEL lessons as a part of a broad, innovative initiative. *Provider:* Red Lake School District

- **Social Emotional Learning at Bi-County CAP Head Start** **\$3,260**
More than 40 Blackduck and Kelliher Head Start children and their teachers learned SEL skills through ten lessons. They then incorporated those skills into their school days. Lessons were presented by Peacemaker Resources. *Provider:* Bi-County CAP

- **Social Emotional Learning at Blackduck and Kelliher Schools** **\$13,000**
Kelliher School's Kindergarten through 6th grade students and Blackduck's 2nd-4th grade students and their teachers learned SEL skills from Peacemaker Resources staff. Approximately 540 students benefitted from this program. *Provider:* Peacemaker Resources

- **Suicide Prevention Program** **\$25,250**
Provides prevention level services to youth and families in Beltrami County. *Provider:* Evergreen Youth & Family Services

- **Uninsured Professional Services** **\$500**
Provides professional level mental health services to uninsured and underinsured children. *Providers:* Sanford Behavioral Health, Stellher Human Services, North Homes Children & Family Services, others as requested

Respite Funding

Beltrami County Social Services contracts with BASC to manage a State of Minnesota respite grant. In turn, BASC receives an administrative fee from the County. The 2019 Beltrami County respite grant award was \$20,311. The award amount was set through a formula rather than a competitive application process. Forty-eight children were served with this funding.

The grant provides respite to families/guardians dealing with intense behavior and mental health issues in their homes. Participating youth must be diagnosed with a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) and be working

with Rule 79 Case Management. Services include overnight stays at foster care licensed homes or Evergreen Shelter, summer camps, recreation for families, participation or lessons in athletic or artist activities.

Providers: Various

Summer Programming Respite grant funds are also allocated for summer Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) programs in Beltrami County. These programs address treatment goals through structured group learning and community activities. In 2019, summer CTSS programming served 27 youth.

Provider: Sanford Behavioral Health

In 2019, BASC also fulfilled its mission . . .

- Coordinating Local Collaborative Time Study and Multi-County LCTS to maximize funding available for projects
- Facilitating School Linked Mental Health Partners monthly meeting during school year
- Facilitating Interdisciplinary Review Team in Red Lake and Bemidji (three meetings total per month)
- Serving on Bemidji Early Childhood Collaborative Governing Board (a maternal and child health nonprofit)
- Participating on the region’s Crisis Advisory Team
- Partnering with other agencies to plan the “Bridges Out of Poverty” training
- Partnering with other Collaboratives across the state to hold a Community Conversation about resiliency. Moving the goals of that gathering forward by creating a Resiliency Team that began meeting in 2019.
- Leading program development, enhancement and fund-seeking efforts with partners
- Writing grants, carrying out program evaluations and reporting to stakeholders
- Disseminating information about trainings, programs, research and other topics to partners
- Upholding financial duties related to BASC-funded projects
- Developing and coordinating contracts and contracting process
- Monitoring and communicating community needs to various systems that might address those needs
- Meeting with other Collaborative leaders across the State of Minnesota