



Unified Policy Agenda- 2019 General Assembly Session Results

Education: Increase support staff in schools such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses to help schools recognize and respond to trauma and implement trauma-informed interventions.

☑ The final budget includes **an increase of \$12 million to support additional school counselors**. While this is an important step forward, it is a third of what the Governor initially included in his budget. A bill also passed this session to limit the time counselors to spend on administrative duties to no more than 20% of their time. While a legislative commission to address student behavioral health did not move forward a request for the Children's Cabinet to look at school-based health centers passed.

Education: Provide training in trauma recognition and trauma-informed approaches to all school personnel.

☑ **All School Resource Officers (SROs) will be required to complete training in July 2020.** A bill passed to require minimum training standards for SROs specific to working in a school environment. The bill includes the provision that at least one administrator at each school must also complete training in safety procedures.

Child Welfare: Support the initial steps to implement the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) by increasing evidence-based and trauma-informed services to prevent children from being placed in foster care.

☑ Bills passed this session to allow Virginia to begin the implementation of the timeframes included in FFPSA. In addition, **\$851,000 was included in the final budget to kick-start the implementation of more evidence-based and trauma-informed mental health services** for children and families; these specific services are required to pull down federal resources for foster care prevention.

Mental Health: Improve access to children's mental health crisis services through the continued implementation of STEP-VA.

☑ **An additional \$7.8 million was included to create crisis services for children and adults at all 40 community services boards.** Funding to support specialized crisis services, like crisis stabilization units and mobile crisis services, is intended to help children avoid costly in-patient psychiatric stays.

Mental Health: Improve the integration of mental health services in primary care by establishing a pediatric mental health access program in Virginia.

☑ **The final budget included \$1.23 million to expand the Virginia Mental Health Access Program.** This program seeks to improve primary care providers' ability to address children's mental health needs through additional training, improved care coordination, and behavioral health consultation services.

Community- Level Prevention: Help parents and caregivers understand their role as a "buffer" -preventing exposure to, and mitigating the impact of, various forms of childhood trauma.

CONTINUED PROGRESS... While there was not a request to expand home visiting this year, thanks to on-going education many lawmakers recognize the importance of the home visitors' role supporting parents as their child's first teacher.

Community- Level Prevention: Provide support for communities to build trauma-informed networks.

NEXT YEAR... While no additional state funds were included to support community networks, FACT currently has resources to fund two networks out of the 20 communities where networks exist.

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