

## School-Based Services

North Range Behavioral Health School-Based Services is a comprehensive youth program implemented in collaboration with School District 6, Weld County’s largest school district. The School-Based team, comprised of 12 full-time therapists, supports students with common behavioral health challenges, including depression, anxiety, truancy, anger management, substance use, and social skills across elementary, middle and high schools. Innovative in its collaborative, comprehensive, and funding approach, this program was recently named “Community Partner of the Year” by the school district.

**Collaboration is the cornerstone of this very successful program.** North Range has evolved from a traditional single-service provider role to forging a partnership of strong trust and collaboration—a synergy that came about because of regular joint expectation- and objective-setting discussions, consistent and clear communications, and superior performance by school-based therapists who have become integral members of the district community. This collaboration has strengthened year-to-year regardless of changes in district leadership.

Innovation is also a hallmark of the program, both in its funding and its comprehensive approach. Most school-based services rely on only one or two sources of funding and are often seen as direct services that are limited to providing treatment similar to the intervention work already done in the school counseling offices. Unlike others, the North Range program has used a “braided” funding approach, using dollars from School District #6, United Way, Medicaid, Office of Behavioral Health, and North Range to support a more comprehensive and cost-effective coordination of treatment that enhances students’ school performance, coping skills, and healthy functioning in many different ways. In collaboration with district teachers, counselors, and administrators, the program director and her team designed this program to have both breadth and depth, so that every school-based therapist provides Enhanced, Engagement, and Direct Therapy Services that reach not only the student, but also teachers, staff, and families:

Engagement Services	Enhanced Services	Direct Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Based Engagement Specialist*</li> <li>• Youth and family meetings*</li> <li>• Engagement groups</li> <li>• Caregiver workshops*</li> <li>• Screening for services</li> <li>• Linkage between school and mental health center*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation*</li> <li>• Education*</li> <li>• Training*</li> <li>• Classroom Observation</li> <li>• School planning and data meetings*</li> <li>• Mental health education*</li> <li>• Teacher support groups*</li> <li>• Mental Health First Aid*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Individual therapy</li> <li>• Group therapy</li> <li>• Safety planning</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• School meetings/IEP</li> <li>• Data collection and dissemination</li> <li>• Referral to other services as needed</li> </ul>

\*Available in all district schools

The team is involved in each school’s teacher training and engages teachers regularly to assist with issues. This year, one of the schools faced an aging and burned-out teacher population, and the team was asked to step in and provide groups and support to school staff. They also provide these trainings on request:

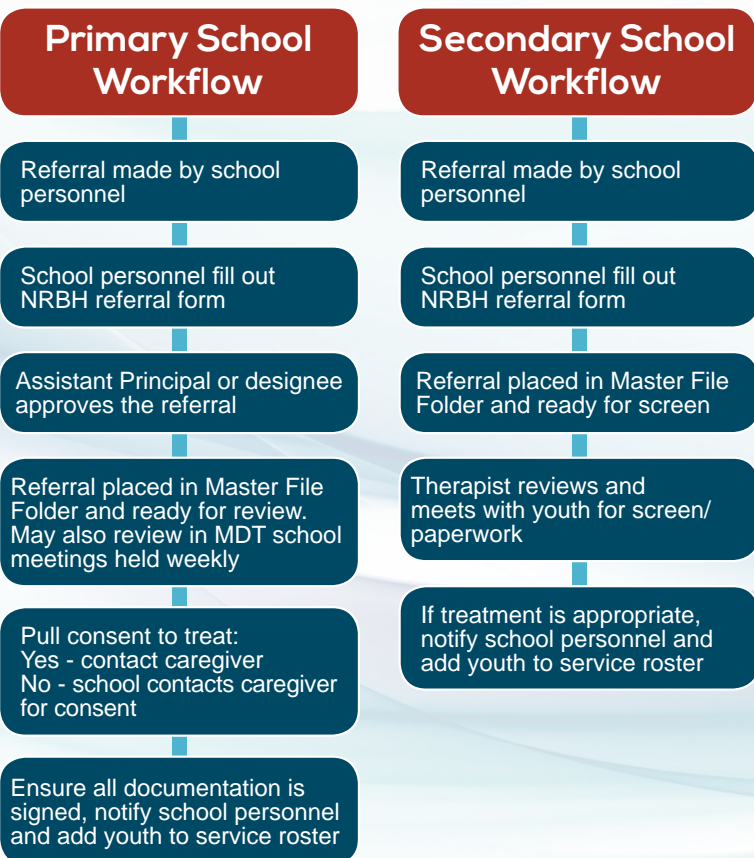
**Mental Health in Schools: “Students Come to School Each Day with More than a Backpack” | Executive Functioning and Mental Health Symptoms | Trauma in the Classroom | The Teenage Brain | Problem-Solving Strategies with High Mental Health Needs Kids | Resiliency and Emotional Regulation in Students with Mental Health Symptoms**

Additionally, the therapists offer year-round services, assisting with summer programming for students who are often most behaviorally and thus academically challenged in promotion to the next grade. The program also provided in-home services for those children and families appropriate for that level of treatment as well as services to secondary students who are not able to obtain parental consent.

School District 6 faces many challenges, including its large size and diversity—in fact, 18 languages are spoken in one of the high schools, and many of its schools work with a majority of children below or at the poverty level. This requires that school-based staff work competently and comfortably across many cultures and needs.

Often, students require more intensive services as well, and they can seamlessly be referred to our intensive youth programs such as Multi-Systemic Therapy, Boost Day Reporting Center, Functional Family Therapy, or intensive outpatient services for both mental health and substance use treatment. This team can also work closely with our integrated care team of medical providers if medical issues or questions arise during treatment.

The program’s workflows are consistent and well-understood by school staff.



Data about symptom and behavior improvement as well as academic promotion is collected throughout the entire duration of treatment for each student and has been collected since the inception of the program in 2006. This information is put into a secure database maintained by North Range. In addition, data that details each student’s school attendance, behaviors, and grades is provided to school-based therapists by high schools. Data for the 2014-2015 school year shows how this program affects these students’ lives:

- Outcome #1:**  
86% of students increased their rate of suspension and demonstrated improved grades (Goal: 80%)  
84% were promoted to the next grade level (Goal: 80%)
- Outcome #2:**  
86% exhibited less frequent behavioral problems (Goal: 80%)
- Outcome #3:**  
94% reported a better quality of life, increased satisfaction with school, and fewer emotional and substance use issues (Goal: 80%)

This program can be duplicated by other districts and providers once the groundwork is done to build the necessary collaboration. (This team has already advised other programs on implementation.) Because of the outstanding work that this team has accomplished with students and educators, more schools are clamoring for service; the school board values our relationship, and is willing to pursue more funding to support it.

While out in the community, our marketing team often hears from local teachers that they “can’t do their job without North Range.” One anecdote, shared by the program director, illustrates the growth of the program: “Our first office was a boiler room in one of the high schools and now we have our own offices.” The team’s “Community Partner of the Year” award is testament to the critical role the team plays in this school district and in our community.