



## Legislation Text

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### **Alachua County Students to Successful Citizens System of Care Program (B)**

**This item is a request for the City Commission to hear a presentation from Alachua County Schools and the Juvenile Justice Council requesting the City's support to include the Alachua County Public Schools System of Care in its Legislative Packet for FY 2017. \*\*Presentation Time: 20 Minutes\*\***

The System of Care is a local program that addresses the needs of at-risk youth and families. The program was developed by a network of local agencies, partnering with the School Board of Alachua County (SBAC). The SBAC and its partners are requesting funding for the pilot program in FY 2016. Data is collected to monitor the progress of at-risk youth and families, with a comprehensive approach to services.

The goals of the System of Care program are to assess and treat at-risk students according to their needs, train school personnel, improve classroom behavior and reduce suspensions, increase academic achievement and overall graduation rates, increase employment of positive student engagement strategies by School Resource Police/Deputies, and decrease juvenile arrests.

The Students to Successful Citizens/System of Care was created as a result of concerns from local agencies that at-risk youth and families were not receiving adequate services. There was a need for unified network of services to provide: intake, assessment, and assistance that is tailored to meet the individual needs of the youth in our community. The goal is to provide high quality, child centered, family focused, cost effective, community-based services to high risk youth and their families. State and local agencies, parents and providers work together to plan, share resources, and provide tailored services for our youth. These agencies included, but are not limited to: the School Board of Alachua County, Gainesville Police Department, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Alachua County Sheriff's Department, Florida State Attorney's Office, Meridian Health Care, and the Juvenile Justice Council.

Four elementary schools and three middle schools have been chosen to pilot the Students to Successful Citizens/System of Care program. Students and families benefit from a multi-tiered system of support services. These services are implemented as tiered supports, based on the school and individual student needs.

Tier 1 - Creating trauma-informed and emotionally responsive school cultures

Tier 2 - Behavior interventions and agency referrals

Tier 3 - Identification and Referral to System of Care

In late July/early August, leadership/student services teams at the identified pilot schools were required to participate in a full day of training. Principals, Assistant Principals, deans and counselors were included in this training. Appropriate school psychologists and social workers were also included. The training included:

- 2 - 3 hours of Trauma-Sensitive School training
- 2 - 3 hours of Restorative Justice training
- 2 hours of System of Care training, which included identification of students, the referral procedures, and the Students to Successful Citizens/System of Care processes and procedures.

In August/September, school-based training was provided to all faculty and staff. This training is ongoing throughout the school year.

Once a student is identified as a candidate for services through the Students to Successful Citizens/System of Care, the school counselor will communicate with the family to explain the referral process. Referral forms will be forwarded to the staffing office. The administrator will review all intake forms, assess needs, and schedule a staffing meeting with the family, school, and appropriate providers. A staff meeting will be held to discuss specific needs and develop an individualized student System of Care Action Plan. A case manager works with the family to assist them in accessing the services plan. The case manager works closely with the service providers to obtain monthly follow up and facilitate communication with all parties to ensure that the plan is implemented with fidelity.

Services under the Students to Successful Citizens/System of Care are available to students that meet at least one of the following:

- Is enrolled in a public school and may display emotional/behavior problems.
- Is under the supervision of the Juvenile Justice System or the Local Domestic Relations Court.
- Is a ward of the Department of Justice.
- May need additional educational services.

When all parties agree that sufficient progress has been made (i.e., there has been a reduction in school misbehavior, reduction in truancy, improvement in school grades, and/or improvement in self-concept as measured by the Pierce-Harris Self-Concept survey), the student will exit the Students to Successful Citizens/System of Care. Parents may also voluntarily discontinue their participation at any time. If progress is not made, a follow up staffing will be held to discuss barriers and adjust the Staffing Action Plan as necessary.

At this time no funds are being requested by the Alachua County Juvenile Justice Council to support this request for funding for a Pilot Program. In-kind Services from the City Department and Divisions are currently supporting the Alachua County System of Care Program.

The City Commission hear a presentation from the Alachua County Juvenile Justice Council and support their request to include the System of Care Pilot Program in the City of Gainesville's Legislative Packet or else to provide policy direction on how the City can directly assist and support the System of Care program.