



*Building Bright Futures*

## *Press Release*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **State Awards Jeffco over \$800K of Marijuana Tax Funds for Student Social Emotional Health**

**Golden, CO (August 22, 2017)** -- The Colorado State Board of Education recognized a \$825,164 award to Jeffco Public Schools from the School Health Professionals Grant Program last Thursday. This state grant program utilizes recreational marijuana tax dollars to support an increase of school health professionals in districts across the state.

Jeffco Public Schools will use the funds over a three-year span to hire six elementary school social emotional learning specialists (SELS) and three full-time high school nurses; all new positions. The additional staff allows the district to build on the foundation created by the school board in social emotional learning and create a comprehensive K-12 system of prevention, with a focus on social emotional learning as a mechanism to prevent substance use. The addition of full-time school nurses dedicated to the high schools will provide more available resources for prevention and support; the new staff will serve 14 schools in the Wheat Ridge and Lakewood communities; the schools were selected because of their commitment to prevention programs and proximity to recreational marijuana dispensaries.

The evidenced-based work of the new school health professionals will target climate and culture, explicit instruction of evidence-based best practices related to social emotional learning, substance abuse prevention, and behavioral supports in a multi-tiered system of support. Although schools will be given the autonomy to choose interventions and programs that best suit their community, programs must be vetted and evidence-based. The full-time daily presence in schools will promote and encourage deeper social emotional learning and stronger nurse-family partnerships, while acting as a change agent for youth substance abuse prevention.

Another component of the grant is related to Jeffco Public Schools' commitment to the "Be a Healthy School" initiative. During the 2016-17 school year, 110 schools in Jeffco had healthy school liaisons and 65 schools had school health teams that submitted healthy schools goals. Out of the 14 schools the grant will support, nine have active teams and remainder have committed to having a team to support Jeffco Public Schools "Be a Healthy School" initiative. These teams will receive district support and professional development to select, implement, and sustain best practices and strategies.

The grant application was a collaborative effort between the Health Services, Healthy Schools, Student Engagement, and Student Services departments of Jeffco Public Schools. The Office of Student Services is also proud to announce the creation of a Student Support Coordinator, Micah Munro, whose duties will include leading substance abuse prevention efforts for the district, and helping direct the work of the school health professionals.

"Early, consistent intervention is critical to student physical and emotional health," explained Kevin Carroll, Chief Student Success Officer. "As educators we understand and value that the social and emotional well-being of our students, as well as their physical health, directly impacts their ability to fully access learning opportunities. We are very excited to have this additional support for Jeffco kids."

#### **About Jeffco Public Schools**

Jeffco Public Schools has been providing educational excellence for more than 65 years. Approximately nine percent of all the K-12 students in Colorado attend a Jeffco school. Our mission is to provide a

quality education that prepares all children for a successful future. The district serves over 86,000 students at 157 schools. Find [Jeffco Public Schools](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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