



## **INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY**

### **Stanislaus County**

**Name of Innovative Project: Quiet Time**

**Total Requested for Innovative Project: \$139,684**

**Duration of Innovative Project: Two Years**

**Staff Recommends: APPROVAL**

#### **Review History**

County Submitted Innovation Plan: May 11, 2015

Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) vote on Innovative Project: June 25, 2015

#### **Innovative Project Summary**

Stanislaus County is seeking MHSOAC approval for Quiet Time, an Innovative Project that intends to bring about mental health and related outcomes for children with an autism spectrum disorder who have a co-occurring serious emotional disturbance (SED). This Innovative Project is an adaptation of an evidence-based school-based stress reduction and wellness model based on Transcendental Meditation that has demonstrated success, including wellness and academic outcomes, with students who do not have a SED. This project is designed to increase the quality of services, including better outcomes, by complementing existing educational strategies for the SED population through the improvement of the physiological underpinnings of emotional wellness, learning, and behavior.

Four decades of research on Quiet Time as a complement to existing educational strategies in public school populations have demonstrated the benefits of strengthening communication between the brain's prefrontal cortex and other areas of the brain. As a result, students and staff are more centered, calm, and alert, with enhanced focus, wellness, and readiness to learn and reduced stress-related violence and anti-social behavior. Quiet Time has not been offered in a non-public school setting with SED children. The goal of this Innovative Project is to learn if positive outcomes – including but not limited to those achieved in traditional school settings – can be demonstrated in two non-public schools serving children on the autism spectrum who have a co-occurring SED.

Students with an Autism Spectrum generally have co-occurring disorders and receive mental health services in the milieu of treatment and during individual counseling sessions. Most commonly these secondary diagnoses include anxiety disorders, depressive disorders and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Children receiving services are reviewed every twelve months to ensure medical necessity, and the original referral for mental health services is coordinated with the county's Children's System of Care. Training will be provided to teachers and administrators at two participating schools that serve these children.

**Evaluation:**

The county intends to address the following learning questions through its formative and summative evaluation:

1. Will students on the Autism spectrum with co-occurring SED be able to effectively participate in Quiet Time for the allotted time period, without disrupting the rest of the class?
2. Will Quiet Time effectively impact SED student's mental health outcomes, as measured by the Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale, as well as their behavior, ability to focus and stay on task, and their positive interactions with their peers, teachers, and parents?
3. Will Quiet Time positively impact SED students' social-emotional competencies?
4. Will there be a difference in results between the two schools?
5. Will the Quiet Time implementation strategies used for traditional school settings work well for the SED school setting?
6. Will SED student results mirror those of students in a traditional school setting?
7. Will Quiet Time positively impact teachers' and administrators' levels of stress?

The County will employ several different methods of data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, including but not limited to:

1. Daily observation and documentation of behaviors.
2. Tracking of key disciplinary actions and attendance.
3. Self-administered questionnaire.
4. Stress measurement tool.
5. Social-emotional assessment tool.
6. Qualitative IEP and academic progress narratives.