



# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bellevue Schools Foundation | March 17, 2023 | Media Contact: Michael C. Smith, [info@bsfdn.org](mailto:info@bsfdn.org)

## Dean Witter Foundation Donates \$25,000 to Bellevue Schools Foundation's Mental Health Initiative

The program reached over 6600 students last year in the Bellevue School District

BELLEVUE, Wash. – The [Bellevue Schools Foundation](#) announced it received a \$25,000 donation from the [Dean Witter Foundation](#) to support mental health and suicide prevention in the Bellevue School district. This gift is offered as a competitive match to encourage another \$25,000 in donations to the program. The funds will support the continued training of counselors and assessments of student mental health.

In December 2021, the US Surgeon General listed an advisory about a youth mental health crisis. Even before the pandemic, student mental health issues were on the rise and more students have been reporting suicidal thoughts. Bellevue School District's Department of Counseling decided to be proactive in response, developing the Mental Health Assistance Team (MHAT).

According to Dr. Jared Taylor who designed and oversees the program, "The mission of the Mental Health Services Team (MHAT) is to identify students with mental health needs and to provide greater access to a full spectrum of evidence-based mental health services delivered by highly trained and skilled staff in order to enrich student well-being." As a result of this program, mental health assessments reached over 6,600 middle and high school students last year. Those in immediate crisis are referred to emergency care. Approximately 370 students received therapy from district staff in the 2021-2022 school year.

A student who received counseling via the program said, "I feel like if I hadn't had access to counseling at school, I don't know if I would have someone who could help me."

Allison Witter Frey, President of the Dean Witter Foundation, noted "It's imperative to provide access to mental health support for all our students – not just in crisis, but in an ongoing, sustainable, impactful way. At the Dean Witter Foundation, we are impressed at the proactive commitment of the BSD to provide these services, enabling nurturing environments and clearing away obstacles that impede learning. We are excited to support BSF and MHAT now and in the years to come."

Foundation Executive Director, Juliet Buder said, "It's an honor to ally with the Dean Witter Foundation to expand opportunities for the students and families of Bellevue. This partnership embodies the creative solutions possible when multiple nonprofits build upon one another's strengths and position in the community."

To register for the event and [donate](#) to the Bellevue Schools Foundation, visit [www.bsfdn.org](http://www.bsfdn.org).

**ABOUT THE BELLEVUE SCHOOLS FOUNDATION:** Established in 1979, Bellevue Schools Foundation (BSF) is the 1st foundation dedicated to supporting public K-12 initiatives in Washington State. Its mission is to promote and fund the best possible learning opportunities for all students in Bellevue's public schools. This year, the Foundation is supporting \$800,000 of programming in the Bellevue School District.

**ABOUT THE DEAN WITTER FOUNDATION:** The mission of The Dean Witter Foundation K-12 education grant-making program is to help all students develop their full potential and to invest in innovative initiatives to enhance and improve student learning.