

## Lewisburg Area contracts with new mental health provider

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LEWISBURG — The Lewisburg Area School Board approved a new mental health service provider for students in the district.

At Thursday’s public meeting, the seven attending school board members unanimously approved Cartwheel, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to serve as the district’s teletherapy provider at a cost of \$38,000. The agreement starts Feb. 1 and ends on July 31, 2026.

The platform is “very, very top notch,” Assistant Superintendent Joshua Hoover said. “I’m excited about this potential platform to get kids the help they need.”

Lewisburg is the second school district in the Valley in two months to adopt Cartwheel as a service provider. Mifflinburg in November also approved the company to provide mental health services.

The district will maintain its other two contracts with Concern, which provides in-person mental health services, and Gaggle, which also provides teletherapy. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) Increasing Mental Health Supports grant worth \$123,500 funds all three service providers, a social worker for the elementary school, a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Trauma in Schools program at the middle school and a Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit contract for a board certified behavioral analyst, Hoover said.

The service is for all grade levels. The district has up to 75 referrals with a maximum of five uninsured students.

Jim Vandy, of Cartwheel, discussed the contract with the board via teleconference.

“One out of every five students are dealing with some level of mental health concern,” Vandy said. “Of those students, maybe 25 percent are actually getting the care they need. That means kids are going untreated when it comes to some level of mental health condition.”

The reasons vary from lack of providers and ELS support; long wait lists; school supports being stretched thin; rural areas being far from support systems; or a lack of accepted insurance, flexible hours or parental engagement, Vandy said.

“Whatever the reason may be, it may be all of these or a few of these, kids simply aren’t getting the care they need,” Vandy said.

Cartwheel guarantees no waitlists, 1-1 group therapy, all languages and extended hours for students; 1-1 bilingual case manager for every family and educational community workshops; clinic program manager for the district; a portal to refer students, track progress, collaborate with clinicians and review real-time impact data, Vandy said.

Cartwheel employs child psychiatrists, licensed therapists, case managers and clinical program managers to work with students in K-12, Vandy said.

Superintendent Cathy Moser thanked the board for their endorsement of Cartwheel.

“Next meeting, we’re discussing goal two in our plan that references mental health and resources to support students,” Moser said. “This is a good piece and this will add to what we’re doing. We’re excited to see where this helps us go to meet the needs of the kids.”

The board also approved Buffalo Valley Fence Supply, of Lewisburg, for \$19,400 to construct galvanized fencing and protective toppers for the district’s softball field.