



Case Study

# Ferguson- Florissant School District

Transforming Student  
Wellbeing and Attendance



Hazel Health



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We have students who need help today—not six months from now.



**Dr. Jane Crawford**

Assistant Superintendent  
Ferguson-Florissant School District



## Challenge

Ferguson-Florissant School District (FFSD), located in the St. Louis area, faced a growing attendance crisis—one that intensified after COVID-19. Chronic absenteeism had become a systemic issue, and district leaders realized attendance was not just a standalone problem but a symptom of deeper barriers impacting student success.

Many of these barriers fell into two core categories: **health-related issues and unmet mental health needs**. Access to timely, quality care—especially in behavioral health—was severely limited in the region. Waiting periods for services often stretched six months or more, even as students urgently needed support.

## Solution

To meet these challenges head-on, FFSD implemented Hazel Health as a district-wide solution to expand access to physical and mental health care.

Previously, the district relied heavily on partnerships with local organizations. While these programs were well-intentioned, their scope was narrow and insufficient for meeting the growing needs of FFSD’s diverse student population.

Hazel Health stood out as a "**plug-and-play**" system, ready to deliver immediate, school-based care at scale. According to Dr. Crawford, Hazel was the only RFP respondent that came to the table with a **fully developed and scalable system**, rather than a proposal to build one from scratch.

## Implementation & Integration

Hazel Health was seamlessly integrated into FFSD’s existing Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), offering services across both **physical and mental health domains**. The model enabled school nurses to quickly escalate care, and for students to access therapists without leaving school grounds.


This model reduced the stigma often associated with therapy—especially important in communities where mental health is not openly discussed.

“Scan a QR code, get support in a few days, and do it from school—that’s a game-changer,” said Assistant Superintendent Brent Mitchell.



# Impact

Hazel Health’s impact on FFSD has been both **immediate and measurable**, across multiple dimensions:




### Behavioral & Emotional Health

50%

decrease in discipline referral rates for students referred to Hazel’s teletherapy program.

2x

Referred students had **2x the referral rate** of the control group prior to starting services—indicating Hazel is reaching high-need populations.



### Attendance & Instructional Time

91%

of severely absent students improved their attendance after starting Hazel therapy.

17

Students with moderate to severe anxiety or depression missed, on average, **17 more school days** than their peers before starting Hazel.

60%

Nearly **60% of elementary, high school**, and male students improved their attendance after being referred.

These students were able to **return to class more quickly**, saving hundreds of hours of instructional time across the district.

## Student Resilience & Growth

Students shared stories of learning strategies in therapy that helped them avoid fights, manage emotions, and stay in school—reflecting real-time application of coping skills that promote long-term resilience.

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One student told us, ‘I used the breathing strategy I learned with Hazel and walked away from a fight.’ That’s a win.

**Dr. Jane Crawford**  
Assistant Superintendent  
Ferguson-Florissant School District

# Keys to Success

Barrier-Free Access for All	Hazel removes barriers across transportation, cost, and stigma.
Trust & Participation	Over one-third of the student population is enrolled, with parent-to-parent referrals increasing organically.
System Readiness	Hazel provided a ready-to-go model aligned to FFSD’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), allowing FFSD to focus on student needs instead of program design.

# Looking Ahead

FFSD leaders are focused on **sustainability**, pursuing funding to maintain and expand the program. They aim to **track outcomes longitudinally over 5–6 years**, from referral to graduation, and serve as a **model for national impact**.

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This is our chance to get it right—for our kids, our community, and the future.



**Brent Mitchell**  
Co-Acting Superintendent / Assistant Superintendent of Support Services  
Ferguson-Florissant School District



Hazel Health is the nation's largest and most trusted provider of school-based telehealth. By partnering with districts and health plans across the country, Hazel transforms schools into the most accessible front door to pediatric healthcare.

Today, Hazel's licensed providers deliver teletherapy and virtual care (in school or at home) to over four million K-12 students, regardless of their ability to pay. Hazel aims to remove all barriers to the mental and physical health care that children need to thrive: in school, at home, and in life.

For more information, email [research@hazel.co](mailto:research@hazel.co) or visit [www.hazel.co](http://www.hazel.co)

