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MOSES TAYLOR FOUNDATION AWARDS \$349,360 TO SCRANTON SCHOOL DISTRICT TO SUSTAIN LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER PROGRAM THROUGH 2018

*Four Positions in the District's Elementary Schools
will Continue to be Funded for Upcoming Calendar Year*

SCRANTON, PA. – The board of directors of Moses Taylor Foundation voted to award \$349,360 to the Scranton School District to continue the services of four Licensed Social Workers (LSWs), as well as implement a Second Step Social-Emotional Learning curriculum, in its elementary schools through December 31, 2018.

The LSW program was initially funded in 2014 through the federal Office of Safe and Healthy Students, allowing the district to hire four LSWs to reduce barriers to learning through individual and group counseling, social emotional learning opportunities, referrals to outside agencies, truancy prevention, home-school engagement and collaborating with community stakeholders and administrators.

During the 2015 school year, the first year of the project, **78 students were served** in four elementary schools: John Adams Elementary School, John J. Whittier Elementary School, Frances Willard Elementary School and Charles Sumner Elementary School. During year two, the program grew quickly and significantly – from **78 students to 147 (an 88% increase)** – who were served via individual or group settings in the same four schools.

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“It’s no secret that significant connections exist between poverty and poor academic performance. Since it began, the LSW program has proven so beneficial for our students. More than 80% of families in our district are classified as economically disadvantaged and we know the services the LSW team provides are vital. Children who live in poverty come to school every day without the proper tools for success. Receiving this award from the Moses Taylor Foundation presents the opportunity for us as a district and as a community to positively affect our kids. We are exceptionally grateful to be recipients of this grant,” stated Alexis Kirijan, EdD, Superintendent of Schools, Scranton School District.

“While the Scranton School District continues to face significant financial concerns, every day it educates over 10,000 of our community’s children. School social workers provide vital supports and connections to resources that help meet families’ fundamental needs so children are able to focus on learning. Moses Taylor Foundation is proud to partner with Dr. Kirijan and her team in their ongoing efforts to support the health and well-being of the District’s children,” stated LaTida Smith, President and CEO of Moses Taylor Foundation.

The Second Step Social-Emotional Learning curriculum will allow the LSWs to increase their ability to serve students in a group format. Second Step is a highly rated, evidence-based curriculum that teaches students self-regulation, empathy and tips to manage anxious thinking and negative thoughts.

About Moses Taylor Foundation

Moses Taylor Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to building healthy communities and providing opportunities for people in Northeast Pennsylvania, especially the most vulnerable, to lead healthier lives. The Foundation was endowed in 2012 with the net proceeds from the sale of the Moses Taylor Health Care System to Community Health Systems of Franklin, Tennessee. Information on the work of Moses Taylor Foundation is available on the Foundation’s website: www.mosestaylorfoundation.org.

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