

## **FRANKEN MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS PROVISIONS IN THE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013**

One in five youth in the United States experience mental illness, and **70 percent of adolescents with mental health problems do not receive care**. Over the last two decades, suicide rates have doubled among Americans between the ages of 10 and 14, and 40 percent of currently unemployed parents say they have seen behavioral changes in their children due to their unemployment. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, **behavioral and emotional problems decreased among 31 percent of youth with mental health issues after 6 months of receiving mental health care**. Within one year of entering a mental health program, the school attendance rates of youth and their grades increased significantly. In addition, **the number of students involved in violent incidents decreased by 15 percent within three years of a school implementing a mental health program**. But despite this comprehensive evidence showing the importance of access to mental health and substance use disorder services, **many students struggle to access the care they need**.

School staff can play an important role in helping to identify and support children with mental health problems. But in a time of tight state budgets for education, too often support services like school counselors end up on the chopping block. While the American School Counselor Association recommends employing one school counselor for every 250 students, in the 2010-2011 school year, the national average was only one counselor for every 471 students.

The **Franken Mental Health in Schools provisions** contained within the Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act of 2013 make several changes to federal education law to help improve school-based mental health programs. Specifically, Senator Franken's provisions:

- Create a new use of Safe and Drug Free Schools National Programs funding in order to support the development of school-based mental health partnership programs to build partnerships between schools and community-based mental health providers;
- Clarify that school districts can use their federal Title I dollars to implement school-based mental health programs;
- Clarify that school districts can use their federal Title II dollars to train school staff in developing mechanisms to improve the mental health of students;
- Require states to report on the number of school districts that implement school-based mental health programs;
- Require school districts and schools to provide information to school staff and parents of students about the use of school-based mental health programs;
- Clarify that school-wide reform strategies can include school-based mental health programs;
- Require school districts to provide technical assistance to low-performing schools to help such schools implement school-based mental health programs; and
- Require school districts and schools to specify whether they will implement school-based mental health programs as part of their school improvement plans.