

# **SUMMARY: MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT OF 2015**

## **Senator Al Franken**

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.

We know how to address these terrible facts. 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.

**THE PROBLEM.** With the right training and resources, school staff can play an important role in helping to identify and support children with mental health problems. But in a time of tight budgets for education, too often support services like school counselors, social workers, psychologists and nurses end up on the chopping block or are not available in the first place.

**THE MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT.** This legislation will expand access to mental health services in schools. It will establish a grant program to support schools that work with community-based organizations to expand access to mental health services for students. The grant program will also provide assistance to schools to train staff, volunteers, families, and other members of the community to recognize the signs of behavioral health problems in students and refer them for appropriate services. Under the legislation, SAMHSA will develop standardized quality measures and participating schools are required to collect and submit data on their programs and outcomes. The legislation authorizes \$200 million in grant funding per year over five years, and eligible local education agencies may apply for up to \$1 million per grant year, based on the size of their student population.

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## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT**

Alliance for Children and Families  
American Counseling Association  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/SPAN USA  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association (Ortho)  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychoanalytic Association  
American Psychological Association  
American School Counselor Association  
American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Child Welfare League of America  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies  
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
First Focus  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Mental Health America  
Mental Health Liaison Group  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Pupil Services Administrators (NAPSA)  
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

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National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Education Association (NEA)  
National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA)  
National PTA  
Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America  
School Social Work Association of America  
Therapeutic Communities of America  
Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.  
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association  
Latino Behavioral Health Institute  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology

### **STATE & LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT**

38th District Mental Health Consortium  
Arizona State University College of Nursing and Health Innovation  
The Ballas Foundation  
Barbara Schneider Foundation  
California Public Defenders Association  
California School Health Centers  
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota  
CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio)  
Education Minnesota  
Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District  
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
Minnesota Association of School Administrators  
Minnesota Coalition of Licensed Social Workers  
Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association  
Minnesota Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities  
Minnesota Psychological Association  
Minnesota Rural Education Association  
Minnesota School Counselors Association  
Minnesota School Psychologists Association  
Minnesota School Social Workers Association  
National Alliance for Mental Health Illness (NAMI) Minnesota  
PACER Center  
Pacific Clinics  
People Incorporated Mental Health Services  
Southeast LA County Workforce Investment Board  
Saint Paul Federation of Teachers  
TeenScreen National Center for Mental Health Checkups at Columbia University  
Wellstone-Barlow Mental Health Initiative  
Wilder Foundation