

2022 PTA CAPITOL HILL DAY ASK: YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Because all children deserve strong mental health support and services!

Congress must include in any mental health package this year language that:

- Ensures all students have access to mental health resources at school and in their community, including targeted support for underserved populations and children experiencing trauma
- Encourages schools to adopt practices that establish safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments for all students
- Promotes social and emotional learning, including resources for families to support this critical practice at home
- Extends the pipeline of school-based mental health professionals and allows for schools to be reimbursed for services through Medicaid
- Provides support services for whole families impacted by addiction.

Issue Overview

The trauma, disruption, stress and isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have acutely impacted the mental well-being of our nation's youth. Over 140,000 U.S. children have lost a primary or secondary caregiver due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 40% of children will experience a mental health concern by seventh grade, and one in five students experience a mental and behavioral health concern each year.
- Unfortunately, the vast majority of students do not receive the mental health care they need, and of those who do, most receive it at school.
- Schools play an integral role in promoting resiliency, wellness, school connectedness and in facilitating protective factors among students in collaboration with community partners.
- At the universal level, schools can work to create safe and supportive school climates so that all students have the chance to experience school success.

PTA's Recommendations

As our nation shifts towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress must act now to address the current youth mental health crisis, inclusive of coordinated, comprehensive, culturally competent and effective mental and behavioral health services in the school setting and invest in our nation's future.

HILL DAY EXPERIENCE

at the 125th Anniversary Convention

PTA urges members of Congress to co-sponsor the following bills:

- Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act (S.1811, H.R. 3572)
- Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act (S.3356, H.R. 6214)
- Safe Schools Improvement Act (S. 2410, H.R. 4402)
- RISE from Trauma Act (S. 2086)
- Family Support Services for Addiction Act (S. 485, H.R. 433)

Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act (S. 1811, H.R. 3572) would establish a grant program to increase the number of mental health professionals at low-income schools by supporting partnerships between institutions of higher education and local education agencies to support teaching, training and employment of school counselors, social workers and psychologists.

Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act (S. 3356, H.R. 6214) would direct the Department of Education to award formula grants to state educational agencies and, through them, subgrants to local educational agencies to increase access to school-based, mental-health-services providers at high-need public elementary and secondary schools.

Safe Schools Improvement Act (S. 2410, H.R. 4402) would establish federal standards to protect every student from bullying and harassment in K-12 schools, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and religion.

Resilience Investment, Support and Expansion (RISE) from Trauma Act (S. 2086) would increase funding for community-based efforts to prevent and mitigate the impact of trauma on children and youth as well as expand training and workforce development efforts to support health care, education, social service, first responders and community leaders to foster resilience and deliver services to heal the impact of trauma.

Family Support Services for Addiction Act (S. 485, H.R. 433) would award grants to family community organizations to enable such organizations to develop, expand and enhance community and statewide evidence-informed family support services to build resilience and a strengths-based approach to the prevention of, and living with, addiction in the family.

Questions? Email National PTA Director of Government Affairs Kate Clabaugh (kclabaugh@PTA.org).