

Chester County School Board Legislative Council

**RESOLUTION PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
TREDYFFRIN/EASTTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

#04-25-2022

WHEREAS, all children deserve the right to get the mental health care they need to be safe, happy, and healthy; and,

WHEREAS, providing mental health services is one of the most important things we can do to address our students' overall wellbeing and ensure a healthy and hopeful future for our children by meeting students where they are - in schools, at home and in the community; and,

WHEREAS, mental health includes children's mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being; and,

WHEREAS, mental health and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents have serious effects in the way children learn, behave, and manage their emotions, thereby causing distress and problems getting through the day and,

WHEREAS, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, approximately 30% of school-aged children in Pennsylvania will experience a behavioral, mental or developmental condition in any given year; and,

WHEREAS, according to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency 2019 PAYS Survey, one in five students in Pennsylvania have self-reported seriously considering suicide at one time; and,

WHEREAS, an increased shortage of mental health professionals was acknowledged by the general assembly in the 2020 report, *Pennsylvania Mental Health Care Workforce Shortage: Challenges and Solutions*; and,

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has only 422 child psychiatrists for its 2.7 million children and youth; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Maryland's Center for School Mental Health (CSMH) has found that educating staff, students and parents in the signs and symptoms of mental illness is key to both early intervention and dismantling the stigma surrounding mental health; and,

WHEREAS, schools that have the support of comprehensive, community mental health care systems see improved academic performance, fewer special education placements, decreased disciplinary actions and higher graduation rates; and,

WHEREAS, children and youth are in school at most eight hours a day, but are at home and in the community 16 hours a day; and,

WHEREAS, one in five children and youth experience mental health disorders but five in five children deserve mental health support.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chester County School Board Legislative Council (CCSBLC) requests our federal, state and county officials prioritize working together with our schools and mental health professionals to ensure that our students get access to the mental health services they need and deserve; and,

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the CCSBLC requests its representatives to the United States Congress to prioritize passing the *Mental Health Access Improvement Act* (S.828/H.R.432) and the *Promoting Effective and Empowering Recovery Services* (PEERS) in Medicare Act (S.2114/H.R.2767).

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the CCSBLC requests the Pennsylvania general Assembly prioritize implementing the recommendations of its own 2020 report, *Pennsylvania Mental Health Care Workforce Shortage: Challenges and Solutions*, including encouraging the use of integrated care models; developing additional psychiatric residency programs; increasing funding and availability of post-secondary tuition repayment programs; and incentivizing higher educational institutions to recruit students to their programs from communities lacking mental health facilities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the CCSBLC requests our state and county elected officials to prioritize collaborating with schools to embed county-employed crisis counselors in schools that are available after the school day and on weekends; to open in-county inpatient care centers for children and youth experiencing mental health and behavioral disorders; and to create family partnerships for continuation of care in the community.

Adopted on this day, _____ by the Chester County School Board Legislative Council, effective immediately,

Signed by the CCSBLC Chair

President of the Board, Dr. Roberta Hotinski

Secretary to the Board, Arthur J. McDonnell