



**Embrace Advocacy for  
Every Child**

A recent New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS) survey found two-thirds of chief school officers identify mental health services as a top funding priority, up from 52% the previous year. Improving mental health services was overwhelmingly the most widely cited priority for educators.

Thankfully last school year, mental health was added to the current mandated health education curriculum. NYS PTA proudly continues to serve on the Mental Health Advisory Council, who worked on guidance for implementation of this new mental health curriculum.

However, schools cannot accomplish this task alone. Our students and educators need support.

## Support School-Based Mental Health Services for Students

**We call on policymakers to include at least \$5 million for direct support of school-based mental health programs in non-competitive funding. We also support the inclusion of funding for non-competitive student mental health services in the \$16 million block grant.**

Further, adequate increases in Foundation Aid could support critical personnel like school counselors, health professionals such as school nurses, school psychologists and clinical licensed social workers – who work not only to address mental health concerns, but also identify behavioral issues, develop individual child plans, and can be a positive support system for the academic setting, family and community.

We must support adequate and equitable funding for mental health services and appropriate student to educator ratios for these critical areas. The ideal ratio is 1 school counselor for every 250 students. Very few schools achieve this support level, with ratios averaging 1 counselor to 400 students. Some of our schools in New York don't even have a counselor at all.

School districts continue to use available resources to implement new measures to keep students physically safe and support their mental, social and emotional health. Schools also seek to strengthen other programs, but don't have the resources to do it all.

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