



POLICY ISSUE BRIEF

Mental Health Resources for Schools

In 2018 the NYS Assembly invested \$1 million in the School Mental Health Resource and Training Center to ensure that schools succeed in complying with legislation requiring schools to teach about mental health. MHANYS used this funding to develop the infrastructure of the Resource Center, including state-wide staff available for technical assistance and training, and a dynamic interactive website. This has positioned the Resource Center to support a school's efforts in sustaining K-12 mental health instruction and providing professional development to school personnel. After the first year, the Executive has provided \$500 thousand every year to continue to support the work of the Resource Center. MHANYS is committed to helping schools succeed in developing curricula necessary to comply with mental health education requirements and provide mental health training for school personnel.

Although legislation signed into law in 2016 requires all schools in New York State to teach students in grades K-12 about mental health, teachers and other school personnel are not currently required to have any training in mental health. As students begin to learn more about mental health it is vital that teachers, administrators and school support personnel have similar training. A shared knowledge of mental health across the school community helps promote a school culture and climate of wellness that benefits everyone in schools as well as families and the community at large.

The Resource Center is also positioned to support schools that have been negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic, which has effected entire school communities including the mental health and well-being of school personnel, students and families.

Recommendation

MHANYS is seeking \$1 Million in the Executive Budget for 2022 for the Resource Center. An additional \$500 thousand dollars above previous years' funding would support the Resource Center's ability to respond to the mental health impact of the COVID pandemic on schools. In addition, MHANYS supports the passage of A.2136 (Fernandez), which would require all certified teachers, certified teaching assistants, and certified educational leaders to receive three hours of mental health training annually. MHANYS will advocate for a sponsor of the bill in the New York State Senate.