

Policy memo

Lately, I have noticed that mental health issues among students have gotten worse and progressed towards concerning levels of extremity. The issues that have been festering greatly affect the social development, academic performance, and the well-being of our young people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 6 school-aged children in the United States has a mental health disorder, such as anxiety, depression, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This problem primarily true is rural areas/low-income areas where the access to mental help is limited and lowly funded. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequences of untreated mental health became too swollen to hide anymore, further becoming more irritated by layers of social media and academic pressure. More and more students are having repeated absences, dropping out of school, and even suicide. Not only do these hurt individuals, but this also has large impacts on the social and economic parts of the country. Policy makers need to put more of the public focus on details in these critical issues.

A policy that targets the issue of student mental health is incorporating school based mental services such as counseling, psychological assessments, and crisis intervention. The goal is to prevent, and help the students learn to tackle their mental health every day. Making it more accessible and giving them a way to use it in their daily lives. While this policy is inherently focused on the good, there often isn't enough funding to keep the number of qualified mental health professionals required to be enough. In addition, there can be lots of stigmas against

people who do seek help for their mental health, but despite all of this, schools that have put large funding into their mental health services see improvements in student behavior, well-being and academic performance. Another side of this policy could be integrating classes of comprehensive mental health in the school curriculum. This could help reverse the stigma that mental health issues are bad. This educates not only the students but the teachers as well. Parents will be included in this education, learning more about warning signs and learning the best ways to help. Implementing this policy would help educate the educators to properly deliver mental health education to best help the students. This approaches both the issues of prevention and treatment for mental health issues and offers students a more supported environment.

Adopting either of these policies highly increases the chances of less severe mental health for students. Mental health education will reduce those stigmas and the bullying that comes with it, and help students be more open about their struggles and when they need help (without judgment). Educating students about mental health can also equip them with coping strategies and resilience skills, reducing the likelihood of developing severe mental health issues.

Furthermore, by ensuring that schools have sufficient mental health professionals, students who need help can receive timely and effective support. Therefore, ensuring that we integrate mental health education and increase funding for school based mental health prevention is increasingly necessary towards addressing the mental health crisis in schools.