



# Monroe County School Boards Association

## Position Paper: Supporting the Emotional Well Being of Students and Staff

Our schools are on the front lines of a youth mental health crisis, but our ability to respond is being undermined by systemic failures. We believe that resources to support the emotional, social and physical needs of all children and staff is necessary in order to meet the mission of public education.

**MCSBA requests:** Our membership calls on the state legislature to provide the critical funding needed to help all school community members achieve their potential. MCSBA members support increased mental health funding and believe that schools should have the option to offer on-site mental health services for families and staff.

- **Soaring Demand for Services:** Recent data shows one in five children may suffer from a mental health-related issue.
- **A Failing Funding Model:** Districts are being forced to choose between academic programming and meeting students’ social-emotional needs.
- **Gaps in the Safety Net:** Limits on social service agencies’ budgets—hit by rising minimum wage and recruitment costs—impede their ability to partner with schools.

ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
<p><b>Soaring Demand for Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>demand</b> for mental health services for both students and staff has dramatically increased.</li> <li>● Recent data shows <b>one in five children</b> may suffer from a mental health-related issue.</li> <li>● Educational <b>staff</b> must also prioritize their own well-being to effectively serve students, but districts lack resources to support them.</li> </ul> <p><b>A Failing Funding Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Districts are being <b>forced to choose</b> between academic programming and meeting social-emotional needs, leading to inequities throughout the state.</li> <li>● Pressures from the <b>tax levy cap</b> have forced schools to limit the number of counselors, school psychologists, and social workers they can hire, at the same time NYS has highlighted the importance of mental health support.</li> <li>● Recent cuts to <b>federal grant opportunities</b> and funding for behavioral intervention models further limit available resources.</li> <li>● <b>Gaps exist</b> for families not eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus.</li> <li>● Barriers impede districts and agencies trying to coordinate services for families accessing <b>early intervention</b> services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gaps in the Safety Net</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On-site mental health clinics are <b>underfunded by NYS</b> and rely on insurance-based models, creating gaps for families not eligible for Medicaid but who cannot afford services or high co-pays.</li> <li>● Limits on social service agencies’ budgets—hit by rising minimum wage and recruitment costs—<b>impede their ability</b> to partner with schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Districts need a <b>permanent funding source</b> to maintain mental health support. This dedicated funding must be sufficient for mental health services, staff training, and coordination for families in crisis.</li> <li>→ Community Schools need a <b>sufficient, long-term, and viable funding source</b>. This model should be available at the school building level for all districts where demographics meet the criteria.</li> <li>→ We support increased mental health funding so schools can have the option to offer <b>on-site mental health services</b> for both families and staff. This helps overcome the insurance and access gaps that plague the current system.</li> <li>→ We request that NYS gather data on the impact of the "bell-to-bell" smartphone ban in public schools to show <b>potential benefits to student mental health</b>.</li> </ul>