



MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION LITERACY IN SCHOOLS LINKING TO A CONTINUUM OF WELL-BEING

New York State Education Department (NYSED) Amendments to Commissioner’s Regulation (CR) Part 135 regarding Health Education

May 2018 the NYSED Board of Regents Permanently Adopted Proposed Amendments to Sections 135.1 and 135.3 of the Commissioner’s Regulations; Education Law §804 was amended by Chapter 390 (Laws 2016) and Chapter 1 (Laws 2017) clarifying that a satisfactory program in health education in accordance with the needs of pupils in all grades that includes the several dimensions of health, is now required to:

- include mental health and the relation of physical and mental health; and
- designed to enhance student understanding, attitudes and behaviors that promote health, well-being and human dignity.

Schools may already be providing “mental health” education as previously stated in CR’s Part 135, however this new legislation formalizes these new requirements in law.

To view the amendments, the NYS Mental Health Education Advisory Council’s Panel Presentation to the Board of Regents, the Advisory Council Membership and the twenty-six recommendations please click on the following [NYSED Board of Regents Mental Health Education May 2018](#)

Mental Health Facts

Mental health is a critical part of overall health and *well-being* and is important throughout the life cycle; affecting thinking and learning, feelings and actions, influencing healthy decision making.¹

According to the World Health Organization “there is no health without mental health” with health being a state of complete physical, mental and social *well-being*; not only absence of disease.²

Education on the importance of the mind-body connection,³ and the several dimensions of health including mental health and the relation of physical and mental health, will enhance student understanding, attitudes and behaviors that promote health, well-being and human dignity.

“In childhood and throughout adolescence, mental health means attaining developmental and emotional milestones, learning healthy social skills and coping with challenging situations. Mentally healthy children/youth have a positive quality of life and function well at home, in school, and in their communities”⁴

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “focusing on establishing healthy behaviors during childhood is more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood.”⁵

NEW YORK STATE MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (ADVISORY COUNCIL)

In August of 2017, NYSED, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), and the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS), established the Advisory Council of over 75 expert cross-disciplinary and cross-sector partners, to develop resources, and recommendations supporting mental health education in schools.

Mental Health classroom resources developed by the Advisory Council identify skills and functional knowledge students should acquire, and tools to address stigma and promote best educational practices. These resources include an instructional guide, aligned with New York State (NYS) Learning Standards for health education in the classroom. The guide is reflective of skills and functional knowledge, scope and sequence for all levels (K-12) focused on health-related outcomes; and includes an instructional resource section.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Review and assess current K – 12 health education curricula for alignment to new mental health education requirements;

Build capacity and strengthen relationships between educators and pupil personnel services (school psychologist, social worker, counselor, nurse);

Develop school-community partnerships with mental health professionals and organizations;

Identify strategies to engage families and students in supporting mental health and well-being;

Support a school climate “Culture of Care”; and

Leverage partnerships and build upon existing resources to develop a sustainable infrastructure for mental health.

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NYSED'S NEXT STEPS

Continue a multi-prong, transparent, timely approach to address next steps.

Be supportive of, promote, and engage the [School Mental Health Resource and Training Center](#) developed by the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc., to assist schools implement mental health instruction as part of the health education program.

December of 2018 - Advisory Council Meeting for a debriefing opportunity, and to discuss any lessons learned to improve ongoing implementation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NYSED's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#):
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/health/>

[NYS Center for School Health](#):
<http://www.schoolhealthny.com>

NYSED's [Office of Student Support Services Social Emotional Learning](#): <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sel>

[Mental Health Association in NYS, Inc.:](#)
<https://mhanys.org/>
<https://www.mentalhealthdnys.org>

NYS [Office of Mental Health](#):
<https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/about/>

NYS [Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services](#):
<https://www.oasas.ny.gov/>

¹ <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>

² http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/

³ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/p/physical-health-and-mental-health>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/basics.html>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>