

## Student-Centered Newsletter

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Greetings from Assistant Commissioner Kathleen R. DeCataldo, Esq.

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present “Student-Centered,” the newsletter from the Office of Student Support Services at NYSED. I want to begin my commentary with a “thank you” for your unwavering commitment to our students, families, communities, and colleagues during the COVID pandemic. Whether you were distributing food to families, checking in with struggling students, getting instructional technology into the hands of students, cleaning off desks and other high touched areas, delivering personal protective equipment, or cheering up a colleague in need, it made a difference. As a result, today, our schools are open, and students are enjoying rigorous academic instruction and developing the social-emotional competencies necessary for their long-term success.

Navigating the realities of this health pandemic has not been easy for anyone. The pandemic reminded us of our responsibility to care for the whole child, their family, ourselves, and our communities. Sadly, more than 13,000 children enter schools and classrooms without at least one primary caregiver due to coronavirus. Moreover, this doesn’t account for the many other losses our students have experienced these past two years. Many of us have also experienced our own personal and profound losses. I want you to know that student and adult mental health and well-being remain a top priority for NYSED. We begin this newsletter recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month, an opportunity to have important conversations with students, families and staff.

We are pleased to celebrate School Nurses Week May 6th to May 12th! School nurses have been invaluable to our success in reducing the transmission of COVID in schools. Additionally, many of our school nurses treated patients in hospitals during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, administered vaccinations, and did whatever they could to support their schools and communities. School nurses work proactively to prevent illness and promote well-being while responding to medical and mental health emergencies as they arise. School nurses are vital to our caring for the whole child. I wish all the school nurses across the State a Happy School Nurses Week!

May is also Foster Care Awareness month. Throughout my career, I have worked on behalf of so-called at-risk children and youth, those in foster care and juvenile justice systems. We often talk about the importance of normalcy for youth in foster care – this cannot happen without school personnel supporting youth through transitions, implementing trauma-responsive practices, and ensuring equitable access to services such as academic and social/emotional interventions. Thank you for the supports you provide them!

Gratefully yours,  
*Kathleen R. DeCataldo*  
Assistant Commissioner



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### Awareness Dates

May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Teacher Appreciation Week**

May 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day**

May 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>  
**School Nurses Week**

May 25<sup>th</sup>  
**Missing Children’s Day**

May 31<sup>st</sup>  
**World No Tobacco Day**

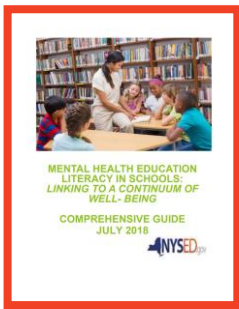


## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

We recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month! The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the importance of mental health. The United States Surgeon General, the Nation's doctor, issued an advisory related to youth mental health titled [Protecting Youth Mental Health](#). The advisory's ecological framework provides comprehensive and tangible recommendations to improve youth mental health.

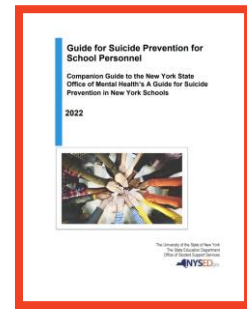
### Mental Health Statistics in New York

- More than 1 in 5 New Yorkers experience symptoms of a mental health disorder.
- 1 in 10 adults and children experience mental health challenges serious enough to affect their social and occupational functioning.
- Approximately 180,000 children ages 2-17 have one or more mental, behavioral, and/or developmental conditions.
- An estimated 264,000 children ages 9-17 have a serious emotional disturbance that significantly limits their ability to function.
- 1,700 New Yorkers die by suicide each year and it is one of the leading causes of death among youth.



### Mental Health Education

NYSED has provided two resources to promote and improve access to mental health supports in schools. The [Mental Health Education Literacy in Schools: Linking to a Continuum of Well-Being](#) and the [Guide for Suicide Prevention for School Professionals](#), provide evidence-based and best/promising practices to prevent and respond to student mental health needs.



### School Mental Health Resource and Training Center

The School Mental Health Resource and Training Center was established to support all public and private schools across New York State. There is information for educators, school mental health professionals, and families. [Learn More](#)



### Our State Partners in Mental and Behavioral Health

As NYSED continues to provide guidance, resources, and support to schools to meet the mental health needs of students, families, school personnel, and entire communities, this is a collaborative effort with our partners at New York State [Office of Mental Health \(OMH\)](#), and the [Office of Addiction Services and Supports \(OASAS\)](#).



Office of  
Mental Health

Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports

OMH is a large, multifaceted mental health system serving more than 700,000 New Yorkers through its regulatory oversight of more than [4,500 programs](#) operated by local governments and nonprofit agencies. OMH operates [psychiatric centers](#) across the State. OASAS operates the nation's largest substance use disorder systems of care with approximately [1,700 prevention, treatment, and recovery program](#) serving 680,000 New Yorkers annually. This includes [12 state operated Addiction Treatment Centers](#) across New York State.

## FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

May is National Foster Care Month! We celebrate the strength, resiliency, and tenacity of more than 407,000 children and their families involved in the foster care system throughout the nation. We owe an outstanding debt of gratitude to the kinship foster families, non-kinship foster families, and dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to promote children's health, safety, and well-being while in foster care. But we also recognize you! Educators, school mental health professionals, education leaders and other staff are usually the first to recognize signs and symptoms of child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, and often support the children's mental health as they navigate the realities of the foster care system. In many instances, schools offer the most consistency for children in foster care as they experience disruption, disconnection, and heartbreak. Time and again, school personnel show up in extraordinary ways for our children. We thank you for your unwavering commitment to ensure positive academic, social, and emotional outcomes for the 15,000 children in foster care across New York State!

Earlier this year, NYSED partnered with the Office of Children and Family Services to produce the [Students in Foster Care: Tool Kit for Local Education Agencies and Local Social Services Agencies](#). The revised comprehensive toolkit provides information on special circumstances, further explains the role of the Local Education Agencies and Local Department Social Services, along with the following resources:

- Flowchart on the Educational Placement process;
- New School Notification Letter;
- Revised LDSS 2999 – Child in Foster Care – School Notification Form;
- Section on Transportation Costs; and
- Dispute Resolution Process.

For more information related to foster care, visit [NYSED Foster Care Webpage](#).

## SCHOOL NURSES WEEK

May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022

*"...we can't educate children who are not healthy, and we can't keep them healthy if they are not educated..."*  
~ Dr. Jocelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General



To celebrate National School Nurses Week, May 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, we encourage you to get to know your school nurse and thank them for all they do!

In New York State (NYS), the title *school nurse* may only be used by a registered professional nurse (RN) in accordance with Education Law Article 19. Additionally, nurses are required to adhere to best practice and standards of nursing. The nursing standards of practice are a model for nurses to follow as they work. These standards are based on the latest nursing literature, research results and

scientific data.

A school nurse serves in a pivotal role that bridges health care and education. Grounded by the standards of practice, services provided by the school nurse include leadership, community/public health, care coordination, and quality improvement<sup>1</sup>. The school nurse is the health care representative on site and typically the only person in a school who has healthcare training and expertise. Nurses enter the school nurse position typically from a clinical setting, so they view the student and family from a different perspective than a pedagogical framework. The training required of the nursing profession teaches them to look holistically at multiple factors to address the immediate needs presented by students and staff.<sup>2</sup>

This is of great value to a school community since there is a recognized relationship between health and learning. School nurses' expertise and support can reduce absenteeism, address healthcare needs regarding communicable diseases and chronic healthcare issues and support the academic environment for all students. The role of the school nurse has become more visible and valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools can utilize nursing leadership and expertise to improve student health and wellbeing, social emotional learning, and student behavioral and academic outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nasn.org/advocacy/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-role>

<sup>2</sup> [Health and Academics | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)

## 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

- On April 12, 2022, Commissioner Betty A. Rosa [announced](#) that the New York State Education Department awarded nearly \$95 million to 136 programs to expand or establish 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC). Each year, thousands of students benefit from the robust and diverse academic and enrichment programs offered at 21st CCLC sites during non-school hours. Subgrantees include school districts, not-for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and other community organizations committed to serving under-resourced communities. To learn more about 21st CCLC, please visit the [NYSED's 21st CCLC website](#). See [list of subgrantees](#).



## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- The Wallace Foundation created the [Let's Talk Social Emotional Learning Podcast](#) to increase awareness of the knowledge and practice of SEL through a three-episode series.
  - Episode 1: "What is SEL and How has it evolved?"
  - Episode 2: "High Quality SEL and the New Navigating SEL Guide"
  - Episode 3: "The Intersection of SEL and Equity"
- The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the Coalition for Career Development (CCD) Center, and CIVIC collaborated with 8 states to create a [developmental framework](#) to support states working to integrate evidence-based SEL with career and workforce development efforts.
- Training Opportunity!** The New York State Center for School Safety, a NYSED partner, will be providing a two-part training series titled [Moment of Mindfulness 3R](#) on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 and Wednesday, May 25, 2022 from 9:00am to 11:00am. [Register Now](#).



## SCHOOL SAFETY & CLIMATE

- Training Opportunity!** NYSED and the New York State Center for School Safety (NYSCFSS) will present a series of 2-hour workshops, titled [School Safety and Climate Workshop Series 2022](#), designed to support schools and districts with creating safe and supportive school learning environments. NYSCFSS is a technical assistance center supporting schools and districts in creating and maintaining safe and healthy learning environments.
- As we experience a warmer climate, school personnel are encouraged to review [Understanding the CROWN Act](#) guidance and resources to discuss the individual and cultural importance of one's hair. School personnel may observe students of color wearing their natural hair out, in a protected hairstyle, or covered. It is critical to respect a student and family's hairstyles as they are a non-verbal representation of pride, confidence, and culture. Schools should encourage conversation about hair and other unique identifying characteristics of a student's culture while being clear about anti-bullying and discriminatory practices and policies.
- Reminder: [New York State's Dignity for All Students Act \(The Dignity Act\)](#) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus, and/or at a school function. [The New York State Center for School Safety \(CFSS\)](#) developed a [sample DASA complaint and investigation process](#) that outlines possible ways to work with both students effected by DASA incidents and students who may have caused an incident.