

Fact Sheet: Building Bridges for Student Mental Health

Purpose: Building Bridges for Student Mental Health is a joint initiative of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) with the goal of establishing and enhancing productive, collaborative, and trustworthy relationships between state education leaders, medical experts, and families to improve student mental health.

Project goals:

- Establish a multi-state network of teams representing at a minimum state boards of education, state education agencies, and pediatricians who are committed to empowering families with information to support student mental health in and out of school;
- Build the capacity of these leaders to collaborate and develop shared goals for engaging families around student mental health; and
- Improve family engagement practices and policies or programs that address student mental health.

Why action is needed:

- Parents and families are eager to be engaged meaningfully in their child's schooling and are concerned about their child's level of stress and anxiety. [[Learning Heroes](#)]
- Mental health-related emergency room visits increased by 24% for 5- to 11-year-olds and 31% for 12- to 17-year-olds during the pandemic. [[U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)]
- 76% of schools have reported increased concerns about students exhibiting symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and trauma. [[National Center for Education Statistics](#)]
- The U.S. Surgeon General and medical experts nationwide have called for an all-of-society effort to address the youth mental health crisis. [[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)]
- Research confirms family engagement impacts children's lifelong health, developmental, and learning outcomes. [[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education](#)]

Benefits of participation:

- Collaboration with peers from around the country working toward a shared mission of empowering families and supporting students;
- Tailored professional development received during an in-person convening in Chicago, Illinois in Spring 2023 (expenses covered) and two virtual convenings held in Summer and Fall 2023.
- Ongoing technical assistance, research upon request, and connection to subject matter experts on effective parent and family engagement strategies;
- New or enhanced relationships between state education leaders and AAP state chapters; and
- Opportunities to elevate local successes and state leadership to a national audience.

Organizational background: As a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, NASBE elevates state board members' voices in national and state policymaking, facilitates the exchange of informed ideas, and supports members in advancing equity and excellence in public education for students of all races, genders, and circumstances. AAP's mission is to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. This project is co-managed by NASBE's Megan Blanco (megan.blanco@nasbe.org) and AAP's Stephanie Domain (sdomain@aap.org).

This initiative is made possible through the financial support of Kaiser Permanente.