



February 26, 2018

The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano
United States House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Katko
United States House of Representatives
1620 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Napolitano and Katko:

On behalf of our three million members and the 50 million students they serve, we are pleased to support the Mental Health in Schools Act (H.R. 2913/S. 1370), which would expand access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs nationwide.

One in five children in America suffers from a mental or brain-based illness, according to the [U.S. Surgeon General](#). Data from the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) show that over the last two decades, suicide rates have doubled among Americans age 10 to 14. Among 2.2 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 who reported a major depressive episode, [nearly 60 percent did not receive any treatment](#). Most go untreated because they either cannot afford care, lack access, do not know anyone they can turn to for help, or are too embarrassed and ashamed to ask for help.

School staff can play an important role in helping to identify and support at-risk children, but they need training and resources too often in short supply. This vitally important legislation would provide grants to encourage schools to work with community-based organizations to expand access to mental health services and train school staff to recognize the signs of mental illness and refer students for appropriate services.

Every child deserves the chance for a healthy start in life, including treatment for mental illnesses that impact the ability to learn and succeed in school. We are pleased to help make that happen by supporting the Mental Health in Schools Act.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association