

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

April 9, 2019

The Los Angeles County Community School Initiative

On January 15, 2019 the Board unanimously voted to direct the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to identify funding for the Department of Mental Health to develop and enhance mental health and well-being services in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and in other school districts countywide. As a result of this motion, DMH has proposed a plan that would expand youth access to critically needed mental health and well-being services.

According to a recent study by the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, rates of major depressive episodes among adolescents aged 12-17 increased 52% between 2005 and 2017. The study found a similar increase in rates of major depressive episodes among young adults aged 18-25, which increased 63% between 2009 and 2017. When examining the rates of suicide attempts between 2008-2017 the study found that rates among young adults aged 18-19 had a 22% increase, young adults aged 20-21 had a 87% increase, and young adults aged 22-23 had a 108% increase. These statistics are alarming, and clearly demonstrate the immediate need for expanded access to mental health and well-being services for our young people.

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DMH has conducted broad stakeholder outreach to develop a community driven plan to action. The proposed initiatives were presented to over 100 stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, psychiatric social workers, providers, and other community members to get feedback and input on the development of a comprehensive initiative. As a result of these efforts, DMH has proposed a series of recommendations, which will be collectively referred to as the Community Schools Initiative.

The Community Schools Initiative will integrate evidence-based practices on school campuses, and improve the connectivity of students and their families to service providers and holistic programs. The initiative will achieve these goals through dedicated school based mental health social workers, and regional mental health teams that will provide an array of school based services, including but not limited to community outreach, peer support, crisis response, screening, triage and linkage for students and families in need. Additionally, the initiative will provide education and training to school staff and administrators on the impacts of trauma and how to improve student achievement by creating a trauma informed learning environment.

The Community Schools Initiative will significantly improve our ability to effectively identify and address trauma and emotional distress among our young people. By eliminating socio-emotional barriers we can expect to see improved learning outcomes and wellbeing among our young people.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Department of Mental Health, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, to move the recommended actions in the report titled "Report Response on School Based Mental Health Services" which will allocate \$9,695,935 in one time funding to LAUSD identified pilot sites and \$7,720,348 in one time funding to LACOE identified pilot sites using existing Department of Mental Health resources for the Community Schools Initiative, and report back to the Board with quarterly progress updates;

2. Direct the Department of Mental Health, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, to identify additional funding needed to expand the Community Schools Initiative to include five additional pilot school districts and report back to the Board in 60 days;

3. Direct the Director of the Department of Mental Health, in coordination with the Chief Executive Officer, to hire forty-five (45) positions to develop and deploy ten (10) regional mental health teams countywide at a cost of \$4,270,487 to implement DMH's Community Schools Initiative Teams and report back to the Board with quarterly progress updates on hiring status; and

4. Direct the Department of Mental Health to develop a Mental Health First Aid pilot program that would educate students on how to support a friend or loved one that is experiencing mental health challenges and report back to the Board in 60 days with a proposed pilot program to be included in the Community Schools Initiative.

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