

**For Immediate Release**  
**September 21, 2018**



## **New Report Provides Guidance for School Districts and State Policymakers to Effectively Address Students' Trauma & Mental Health Needs**

**Farmington, CT** - Research highlighting the connection between mental health and educational outcomes has prompted school districts to increase integration of student mental health services and supports. School principals indicate that mental health is one of the most challenging unmet needs among their students and schools are increasingly seen as a critical setting for the delivery of mental health services.

A new Child Health and Development Institute IMPACT report developed in partnership with the national Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland provides a framework for policymakers and school districts interested in improving outcomes by addressing the mental health and trauma needs of students. The IMPACT report, "[\*Healthy Students and Thriving Schools: A Comprehensive Approach for Addressing Students' Trauma and Mental Health Needs\*](#)," uses Connecticut as an example of how states can promote collaborations within and across the behavioral health, education, and juvenile justice systems to provide an array of trauma-informed, evidence-based, and tiered services for students.

"Approaching student mental health with a comprehensive lens that integrates health promotion, prevention, early intervention, and more intensive treatments leads to better school, student and community outcomes," said Dr. Sharon Hoover, Co-Director of the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland and lead author of the report.

National prevalence rates indicate that approximately 20% of children meet criteria for a mental health disorder; however, many children's mental health needs are not identified and the majority of children with identified challenges do not receive services. Among those who do access care, approximately 70% receive services through their schools. Linking children to services through their schools reduces many traditional barriers to care. School mental health services are also associated with higher completion rates than treatment delivered in traditional outpatient community-based settings.

"Schools are well positioned to promote wellness and social emotional competence for all students, as well as identify and address mental health concerns for students in need," said Dr. Jeana Bracey, Director of School and Community Initiatives at CHDI and report co-author. "However, the responsibility is not on schools alone to integrate or fund these supports. This framework helps districts connect to and collaborate with Connecticut's robust network of trauma-informed state and community-based services and programs so all students can be successful."

The report includes:

- an overview of core components of a comprehensive school mental health framework, including its benefits to schools and students;
- examples of national best practices and consideration of relevant challenges;
- a model for a trauma-informed multi-tiered system of supports for school mental health; and
- recommendations for state-level policymakers, districts, and schools to advance a comprehensive statewide system of school mental health to improve outcomes for all students.

*For additional information, contact Julie Tacinelli at [tacinelli@uchc.edu](mailto:tacinelli@uchc.edu) or 860-679-1534. Visit [www.chdi.org](http://www.chdi.org) to download the IMPACT report or to read more about CHDI's work related to [school mental health](#).*

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