



DEANS MILL SCHOOL

High expectations for all...

35 Deans Mill Road • Stonington, Connecticut 06378

dmsoffice@stoningtonschools.org

Phone: (860) 535-2235

Fax: (860) 535-1417

Jennifer L. McCurdy

Principal

Allison G. Hine

Assistant Principal

March 2015

Dear Sen. Bye, Rep. Walker, Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Dillon and Members of the Appropriations Sub-Committee:

My name is Jennifer McCurdy and I am a Principal in Stonington Public Schools. I am writing this letter to testify today on HB 6824. I write this letter to urge you to continue funding for school based health centers in CT. Stonington Public Schools is fortunate to have a School-Based Health Center in one of our schools (Pawcatuck Middle School) and this has been instrumental in helping students and families overcome obstacles that prevent them from getting the care that they need and deserve.

As we know, our society is faced with many stressors that impact families. High unemployment rates have put a financial burden on many families as finding sustaining employment is challenging. Therefore, many families are facing financial issues and are dealing with stress from this burden. As a result, these families often cannot afford care needed to maintain the health and mental health of those members of their families. School Based Health Centers provide another layer of support that communities and schools need to ensure that students are cared for, both physically and mentally.

Recently, we had a student who needed a healthcare provider to prescribe the need for physical therapy. For a family without the financial needs to afford health care and recently moving to CT, finding a physician was a challenge. The family recognized the need for their child to continue physical therapy but needed assistance to get someone to prescribe it. Our school based health center in district was able to provide this support as well as assist the family in what they will need to do to get health coverage in CT for their child. This student will now be able to have uninterrupted therapy that has been essential for him. This is a small example of how these health centers can provide support needed for students to be successful in school.

Having worked as a guidance counselor and school administrator for a number of years, I need to urge the State of CT to look for ways to increase these types of supports within communities. As a society we need to find ways to support students and families in the area of mental health without making families feel stigmatized. We have all seen the tragedies of untreated mental illness and its impact on a State. We need to work together to increase these supports to help provide ALL students the support they need despite where they live and/or their socioeconomic background. Please consider supporting Student-Based Health Centers in Connecticut. This is a powerful way to be proactive in our communities to address the growing need for supporting students physically and emotionally.

With regards,

Jennifer McCurdy, Principal