

My name is Theodore Lane and I am a teacher at Great Oaks Charter School in Bridgeport, and I have been a teacher for just under 2 years. I am writing today in support of increasing mental health resources for teachers. A lack of mental health resources is an obstacle teachers need to tackle everyday to help their students feel safe and secure in their learning environment. I have seen firsthand the impacts that a lack of mental health resources have on students.

I have noticed that students have a very hard time regulating how much they use their phones as an escape from stress since returning in person from quarantine. Our school does not have adequate resources to support students in developing healthy coping mechanisms for when they are met with stress. This has without a doubt impacted the academic success of students in our building.

Access to more funding would help our students bridge mental health gaps created by and during the pandemic. With additional funds, our school could implement services geared towards resilience and social-emotional learning as well as other support training for teachers and staff.

Social-emotional learning and mental health practices are vital to students' success, and the state needs to do everything in its power to best support students across Connecticut. That is why I am urging our state leaders to implement additional social-emotional learning and mental health programming and resources throughout Connecticut.

Without these changes, we are doing an immeasurable disservice to every student. We need to act now.

Thank you for your time,  
Theodore Lane