

My name is Caroline Schweyer and I am a teacher in Shelton. I have been a teacher for 12.5 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.

Students in my school are struggling emotionally as a result of the pandemic. We have seen an increase in behavioral issues in school due to unaddressed emotional needs. There is not enough mental health staff in the school to sufficiently support all students.

Access to social-emotional learning and mental health resources will ensure that students in my school receive the emotional support that they need to be able to focus in my math classroom! Addressing emotional needs will help to improve students' behavior so that they will not need consequences such as suspensions, which once again pulls them out of the classroom.

Social-emotional learning and mental health practices are vital to students' academic success, and the state needs to do everything in its power to best support students across Connecticut. In order to improve academic gaps that exist as a result of the pandemic, we must first care for students' social-emotional needs. That is why I am urging our state leaders to implement additional social-emotional learning and mental health programming and resources throughout Connecticut.

Thank you for your time,
Caroline Schweyer