

Dear Members of the Mental Health Subcommittee

The Counselor Education Department at Fairfield University strongly suggests that the State of Connecticut mandate that certified School Counselors be placed in every elementary school in our state.

School Counselors today are highly trained clinicians and developmental specialists who work with ALL of the children. They go into classrooms and teach coping skills, social skills, study skills and bullying prevention. They also provide individual and group counseling for a wide range of issues. School Counselors work with teachers and parents to help children with their academic and emotional development. They identify children who are academically or emotionally at risk.

Presently, less than one in four towns in Connecticut has School Counselors in their elementary schools. This is the time for our state to mandate elementary school counselors for all school districts. This is the time for our state to show that we care for our children's emotional and social development as well as their academic development. There are many states that are less affluent than Connecticut that mandate elementary counselors in the schools. Every mental health professional will agree that the sooner a problem is identified and addressed the better the chances are for overcoming the problem.

Sincerely,

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