



March 23, 2022

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
California State Senate
1021 O St., Ste. 7630
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 387 (Portantino) Behavioral Health: Training — SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write in support of your SB 387, which ensures that 75 percent of employees on school campuses complete an evidence-based behavioral health training program — guiding school staff on how to provide referrals to mental health services, substance use disorder services, or other support to individuals struggling with mental health issues.

The adolescent mental health crisis is an urgent matter that demands action. Between 2007 and 2017, suicide rates for people aged 10-24 increased by 56 percent, increasing from 6.8 suicides per 100,000 to 10.6 per 100,000. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for teenagers in the US after accidents. By equipping school staff with the tools necessary to help teenagers access the mental health services available to them, more California students can receive the help they need.

According to a report released in October from the CA Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, one in three California high school students report feeling chronically sad or hopeless. More than half of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students reported suicidal thoughts. The data found in the report yielded the Commission's broader conclusion that the State should respond to this imperative by establishing a leadership structure, investing resources, and helping expand community capacities for providing mental health support to students and school communities.

SB 387 would require the California Department of Education (CDE) to ensure that 75 percent of classified and certificated employees on school campuses complete an evidence-based behavioral health training program. This expands upon existing law SB 14 (Portantino, Chaptered 2021), which requires the CDE to identify evidence-based training programs to address youth behavioral health but does not indicate who should receive training and does not mandate schools establish a training program. By requiring school staff to complete a

behavioral health training program, California schools are better equipped to assist students with mental health challenges.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 387 and would like to thank you for your authorship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yoder", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Chair & Members, Assembly Education Committee
CC: Chair & Members, Assembly Public Safety Committee