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Finding Budget for

Student Mental Health Programs

2022 EAB
Executive Brief

72%
Teachers are stressed

1 in 3
Students suffer depression

51%
Increase in emergency visits for suicides in girls aged 12-17

CDC
Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data

22%
Students seriously considered suicide in the past year

K-12 students and teachers are stuffering

The statistics are so alarming, the President has dedicated funding called Stronger Connections. Crucially, this needed funding can be used to create or improve mental health programs, add staff, and adopt supporting technology.

Student safety and wellbeing are the number one concerns but equally important is finding funding for student and teacher mental health programs. **63% of educators** stated budget concerns as an additional challenge toward safeguarding and wellbeing.

The pandemic highlighted mental health issues, naturally. But it also created an additional emotional strain on everyone, with children suffering the most. The CDC reported **245,000 children** in the United States lost a parent or guardian to the virus.

Combining that fact with the standard turmoil that goes on in children's and teens' daily lives, it makes sense the statistics are so concerning.

Between 2007 and 2018, the national suicide rate among persons age 10–24 increased by 57.4% and reports are coming post pandemic showing alarming further spikes. 22% of high school students in the recent CDC survey said that they had seriously considered suicide over the past year. While we can't say what triggered the increase, we do know it started a few years before the virus hit.

Between 2000 and 2020, there were 928,000 incidents of intentional ingestion of toxic substances by 6–18-year-olds. From 2012 on, researchers observed a suicidal overdose spike. The most notable statistic lies in **children ages 10-12**, where suicidal incidents went **from 1,058** in 2010 **to 5,606** in 2020.

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Suicide: 2nd leading cause of death

for 15- to 24-year-olds

1 in 15

High school students report attempting suicide yearly

"The reasons for increased suicidal ingestions among younger age groups are unclear. Suicidal ideation or intent is complex, particularly in young children. However, we have been seeing steadily increasing numbers of pre-teens and adolescents in our emergency department annually for suicidal thoughts and attempts."

David Sheridan, M.D., OHSU School of Medicine co-author and associate professor of emergency medicine and co-director of Innovative, Disruptive, Emerging Applications for Emergency Medicine

Source: **US Dept. of Education**

Getting the help everyone needs

Professionals can't pinpoint the reasons for such high suicide rates. However, everyone agrees, students are spending more time learning online which creates even greater exposure to harmful content and subsequent self-harm.

The issue has become so severe, President Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) last June. $1 billion has been added to the act to establish safer and healthier learning environments. This legislation expands vital mental health services by providing more state and district funding. It includes the support to create or improve current initiatives that promote safe, positive and inclusive learning environments for both students and staff. It's also meant to support the prevention and response to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact schools and communities overall. The grant couldn't come soon enough as current mental health statistics speak volumes.

Funding for the Stronger Connections Grant Program is available for obligation by SEAs and LEAs through September 30, 2026. This timeframe includes an additional one-year period of fund availability provided under section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ("Tydings Amendment").

How to access funding

The BSCA requires a SEA to define "high-need LEA" to be eligible for Stronger Connections Grant Program funding.

The leading criteria are based on the poverty level within the district. State and local education agencies can access funding if they have high poverty rates and one or more of the following:

1. Student-to-mental health professional ratio is overwhelming and more staff is needed

2. High disciplinary issues, referrals to the juvenile justice system, bullying/harassment, community and school violence but also student homelessness, foster care, or substance use

3. Students recently experienced a traumatic event with at least a 40% poverty rate

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40%
overall increase in incidents

26%
Increase student safety incidents

156,000+
Suicide and self-harm references

36%
Increase in violent incidents in elementary grades

58,000+
Incidents flagged for nudity and sexual content

Realize your funding potential and make technology part of your district's mental health program

Young students experience both social and emotional chaos. Teens in particular face several potential threats to their wellbeing; from thoughts of suicide, drugs or alcohol to bullying, sexual assault, and violence. As teachers are best equipped to spot the signs, they carry a great deal of responsibility and emotional drain. This means they need their own mental health strength and support system.

Additionally, they need the right tools to do their job efficiently which would, by extension, reduce stress and anxiety.

The grant provides further assistance to help school districts meet the escalating mental health needs of students and educators. School districts would be allowed to use the grant funds to purchase supporting technical solutions such as offline reporting and web filtering. Offline reporting systems support teachers in identifying the physical signs of distress or abuse.

Educators can intervene to protect their students from these potentially harmful behaviors, but only if they know what's happening and when. There are some truly innovative solutions in the market that can support proactive intervention.

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Learn more

Many edtech solutions can detect when students might be discussing or searching for information about suicide, self-harm, bullying, anxiety, depression, violence, hate speech, or other signs of harmful behavior. Impero Wellbeing is one product that provides an integrated view of a student's online and offline behavior. It enables a comprehensive, at-a-glance view of any student in an online system that can be easily shared with appropriate staff members. Wellbeing provides an opportunity for a timely response that can protect students from causing harm to themselves or others. Combine Wellbeing behavior reporting with Impero ContentKeeper web filtering solution, and you have the beginnings of a truly proactive mental health approach.

ContentKeeper reporting offers an in-depth view of live searches. Administrators can monitor student search terms in real-time with the ability to generate comprehensive awareness and understanding through contextual analysis, better known as Behavioral Intent Alerting. This function enables intervention, if needed, positioning the school to better support students effectively and proactively.

The Stronger Connections Grant Program along with the tools and support it covers could absolutely save student's lives across the US. And ultimately reduce the tragically high numbers of self-harm, suicide and violence rates the country's students are experiencing.

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