



Alaska Association of Student Governments

Resolution #1

Mental Health Itinerant Counselors

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Be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments, that the State of Alaska provide traveling mental health counselors to each district in the state in order to supply mental health counseling to students in need.

- 1. Whereas**, the student government of Chugiak Highschool feels that each Alaskan School in the state of Alaska needs mental health counselors;
- 2. Whereas**, multiple students at Chugiak High school feel that this will be beneficial to our community as a whole because of the increase in depression rates due to COVID-19;
- 3. Whereas**, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), “one in five people have some sort of mental illness”;
- 4. Whereas**, COVID-19 has had a massive effect on mental health in the past few years;
- 5. Whereas**, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), “In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by a massive 25%.”;
- 6. Whereas**, the WHO also states, “the pandemic has affected the mental health of young people and that they are disproportionately at risk of suicidal and self-harming behaviours.”;
- 7. Whereas**, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), “high school students with depression are over 2x more likely to drop out than their peers.”;
- 8. Whereas**, according to NAMI in 2021, “62.9% of Alaskans age 12-17 who have depression did not receive any care in the last year.”;

9. **Whereas**, 12.7% of these adults reported an unmet need for mental health services in 2018, up from 5.1% in 2015;
10. **Whereas**, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, seasonal affective disorder and suicide rates in Alaska were already greater than the rest of the country;
11. **Whereas**, this data proves that there is a need for increased mental health care in Alaska;
12. **Whereas**, the number of traveling mental health counselors in each district should be in direct relation to the school with the highest student population in that district;
13. **Whereas**, there should be one mental health counselor per school by default and one more for every 400 students;
14. **Whereas**, a district with the highest population student count in a school being 1,700 should have 4 traveling mental health counselors;
15. **Whereas**, these counselors should work in week-long shifts at each school and should have weekends off;
16. **Whereas**, options should be provided for students to have video calls with counselors by request as needed;
17. **Whereas**, not all students have access to therapy or mental health resources outside of school;
18. **Whereas**, the amount of time a counselor spends at a given school is up to the district the school is within;
19. **Whereas**, the standards to which a counselor will be held should be determined by each school;
20. **Whereas**, a counselor's quality should be determined by student review;
21. **Whereas**, Mrs. Fullmer, a regular counselor employed at Chugiak High School, stated that having mental health counselors would help take the stress off of normal counselors to help students with mental health needs, so they can focus on their primary job of scheduling;
22. **Whereas**, Chugiak High school has a psychologist that primarily deals with special education testing;
23. **Whereas**, Special education testing is different from therapist counseling;
24. **Whereas**, The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority is currently working towards advancements in mental health resources for Alaska schools;
25. **Whereas**, we recognize and support the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority in their project;
26. **Whereas**, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority is working towards implementing school based clinics and itinerate and telehealth therapy sessions onsite at Alaska schools;
27. **Whereas**, after debating the budgeting situation as a student government class at Chugiak High School, we came to the conclusion that we do not have a current solution for budgeting issues and will keep working to find one;

- 28. Whereas,** we would like to partner with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and receive funding from them if possible;
- 29. Whereas,** during a survey taken during January through June of 2021, the CDC surveyed that 31% of high school students experienced poor mental health in the last 30 days and at least half of mental illnesses begin at the age of 14 according to the National Alliance of Mental Illnesses. Therefore the number of traveling counselors should be determined by the number of highschool students in a district, especially because of the lack of people with the experience to fill these position;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments, that we should have traveling mental health counselors for every district in Alaska.

Work Cited

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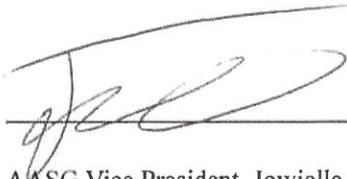
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