



Ohio Department of  
Mental Health

# LEGISLATIVE FORUM ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

## CREATING A SHARED AGENDA

OCT. 9, 2003



### MENTAL HEALTH IS CRUCIAL TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

### FACT SHEET

### SHARED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Federal and state requirements to educate all children put the spotlight on mental health issues, since behavioral problems are common, treatable and without good care often lead to academic failure.
- Children whose mental health problems are not addressed often fail in school. Children and adolescents with emotional disturbance have the highest rates of school failure; 50 percent of these students drop out of high school, compared to 30 percent of all students with disabilities.
- Children whose disruptive behavior problems are not adequately treated can negatively affect the academic environment for other children. When students disrupt lessons in class, learning and teaching are compromised.
- 62 percent of Ohio's students identified as having an emotional disturbance spend 60 percent or more of their school day in a regular education classroom — it is critical that the general education teachers are adequately prepared to address students' needs.
- The document that monitors goals and objectives for students with special needs, the individualized educational program (IEP), often overlooks students' mental health needs.
- A behavior plan can be developed by an educational team for any student, but such plans are rarely utilized.
- The best predictor of adolescent well-being is a feeling of connection to school.
- There is clear and compelling evidence linking mental health, family involvement and academic success, and indicating that emotional, social and behavioral health problems are significant barriers to learning. Schools addressing behavioral problems proactively have seen improved academic outcomes.
- In recognition of the significance of emotional and behavioral barriers to academic learning, the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators have jointly endorsed Ohio's Positive Behavior Support initiative — a broad range of school-based strategies designed to improve social and academic outcomes for all students.
- More than 75 percent of children and adolescents with mental health problems don't receive treatment.
- One in five high school students in Ohio report seriously considering a suicide attempt in the past 12 months. Mental illnesses including depression greatly increase the risk of suicide.
- Of Ohio's students with disabilities who are in correctional facilities, 41 percent are identified as having an emotional disability.
- Emotional disability is the fastest-growing special education designation in Ohio — currently more than 17,000 students.
- More than 1.8 million students attend 612 school districts in Ohio; more than 238,000 adults work in Ohio's schools. Combining students and staff, almost one-fifth of Ohio's population can be found in school — making schools the most universal, ideal setting for promoting the well-being of children and adolescents.
- Although there are children with behavioral problems in nearly every classroom, a vast majority of teachers received no college instruction about classroom mental health issues.
- Virtually all teachers believe that they should be involved in some way in helping students deal with their mental health problems.
- A vast majority of teachers are interested in obtaining additional meaningful training about mental health issues.
- Many effective strategies for youth violence prevention and school drop-out prevention in Ohio, such as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, and Positive Behavior Supports, depend on the central involvement of educators.

