

From: [Claire Wilson](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:26:14 AM

I am writing in support of HB 105. Giving all students basic tools to deal with emotional situations and making mental health discussions as common as physical health discussions will make for a saner adult population. This especially applies to stress management and anger management.

Thank you,
Claire Wilson
Anchorage

Dena'inaq etnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu.

I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina.

Translation: S. Shaginoff-Stuart, J. Isaak

From: [Maureen Daher](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:26:02 AM

I am a resident of Homer AK and ask that this bill be passed. We have a growing need for mental health education and this bill introduces a simple and effective approach to

Thank you
Maureen Daher

From: [sharon.whytal](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:16:30 AM

Dear House Education Committee members,

I have done community work in several communities in AK for several decades now, and I urge you to support HB 105 to support our youth getting the information they need to make healthy choices and to know how to seek out different types of help when they become overwhelmed and need to learn new coping skills. It's normal for life to present challenges, and we all need new skills when these challenges require that we grow and expand beyond our most recent capacity. Having support and new options makes all the difference between healthy new integration and developmental regression-or even depression and suicide risk. Please support HB 105.

Respectfully,

Sharon Whytal, RN, BSN



From: [Robby Bear](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:18:25 AM

Greetings,

I am writing in support of HB 105.

In Alaska, 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness each year, and 43.1% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in February 2021.

In Alaska, 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness each year, and 43.1% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in February 2021. And, 8,000 Alaskans age 12–17 have depression.

High school students with depression are more than 2x more likely to drop out than their peers. 62.9% of Alaskans age 12–17 who have depression did not receive any care in the last year.

Source:

<https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/AlaskaStateFactSheet.pdf>

Enhancing Mental Health education and providing access to Mental Health resources, much like those of other health education materials, will be beneficial to all Alaskan students who then become Alaskan adults. The results of HB105 could help lower the statistics mentioned above, as well as do more good. Please support HB105.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Roberta Bear



From: [Poppy Benson](#)
To: [House Education](#); [Rep. Sarah Vance](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:57:12 AM

I am writing in full support of HB 105 increasing mental health education and assets in schools.

I have seen first hand the mental health struggles of our youth. I was a Scout leader for 9 years and I was shocked at the mental health issues of my girls. At one point in time I had 5 girls in residential treatment out of the 30 some girls I worked with over the years. As far as I could tell, most of this was due to things adults had done to them. I had cutters and one with several suicide attempts. And these were Girl Scouts!! As a volunteer leader without a background in mental health or education, I felt pretty inadequate in addressing their issues. I would like to see trained psychologists in all the schools.

Sick kids do not become productive adults. Our kids are in trouble. Please support HB 105.

Poppy Benson

[REDACTED]

Homer, Alaska

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:32:57 AM

Hello

I am writing in support of HB 105 to being mental health education to our [students.No](#) one can deny that there are increasing mental health issues in our population. I am not familiar with the specifics of the bill, but I believe it is essential to teach mental wellness skills starting early on. Skills such as emotional regulation, tolerating distress, effective interpersonal communication skills, and mindfulness skills. These are collectively known as dialectical behavior therapy, and have been proven through many studies to improve mental health in all populations, disordered or not. I work in mental health and teach these skills to clients and I often say that I wish EVERYONE could learn these skills in school. Self management and good communication skills are more essential to getting along in life that science or math even!

Thank you,
Peggy Flinnegan
Anchorage

From: [Christy McMurren](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:00:01 AM

I'm writing in favor of the mental health in schools bill, HB 105. The world that most parents/grandparents grew up in is vastly different than the one our children live in now. Age and developmentally appropriate information is needed to navigate this busy world. Remember, that knowing the risks of too much screen time is also mental health related. It's not just about depression and suicide. It's about emotion regulation, being able to make and keep friends, managing sleep. This will help destigmatize getting help for "mental/emotional" problems. I urge you to consider this bill carefully.

Christy McMurren

From: [Joan](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 6:57:54 AM

Legislators: I support this bill because including information about about mental health in our regular school health curriculum will help destigmatize discussion and promote awareness and “reach-outs.”

Reaching out for assistance when experiencing common problems like depression and anxiety that persist, should be like seeking out assistance for any other health concern that persists.

Why not tell a school nurse or parent about a “cloud” just like a persistent sore throat? Or feel ok telling a school peer “you should talk to someone about that.”

We just had a remembrance gathering for a young cousin who took his life some years ago. I write for him, but also for all of us who could have happier daily lives and relationships if mental/emotional health were looked at, and cared for, like we do the rest of our bodies. Brush your teeth. Get appropriate vaccinations. Practice daily mindfulness and gratitude. Seek out expert assistance when needed.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Joan Clover, Anchorage

From: [Becky Germain](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 6:06:51 AM

Please support HB 105. Many of our students encounter challenging circumstances in life that are often stigmatized which can lead them to them feeling isolated, overwhelmed. As a lifelong educator, I can see how good mental health is essential for our children to learn. Please support this bill to keep resources available with local control for our children in schools.

Thank you,

Becky Germain

From: [Deb DeProspero](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 5:42:59 AM

I support this bill.

Debra DeProspero

From: [Deborah Ward](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:39:40 AM

Dear Members of the Education Committee,


I am writing to you in support of HB 105. When passed, this bill will enhance the education of our children and youth by including mental health education along with general health education. Mental health education helps students learn healthy coping strategies that can be used to prevent mental health crises such as depression, isolation, and suicidal ideation. All of these serious concerns are trending upward in Alaska, according to the data collected by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey for Teens 2011-2023, which are posted on the State of Alaska Department of Health website.

By providing a roadmap of best practices to school districts seeking to incorporate mental health lessons into their existing health education programs, HB 105 is a comprehensive educational approach. It seeks to destigmatize talking about mental health concerns, and support children/youth by offering school districts a menu of evidence-based and age-appropriate mental health resources. This approach empowers school districts to develop the most appropriate program for their communities, by maintaining local control and addressing their specific community needs.

In our state, which has the highest rate of suicide in the nation, HB 105 aims to teach students to understand and manage their mental health effectively; thereby, fostering lifelong wellness. HB 105 promotes mental health awareness and support to encourage students to seek help, when appropriate, always with parental input. As a retired school psychologist, I worked more than 40 years in urban and rural Alaska with students who experienced mental health crises. HB 105 would provide an important step toward empowering school districts to support children and youth by offering a framework of educational opportunities that meets the needs of each community. I urge you to support HB 105. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ward,
Anchorage, AK



From: [Gabrielle Laipenieks](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: *****SPAM***** Supporting HB 105: Mental Health Education
Date: Monday, March 17, 2025 8:33:51 AM

Dear House Education Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 105 in lieu of testifying at today's public testimony opportunity. As a lifelong Alaskan and semi-recent graduate of the Anchorage public school district, I am intimately familiar with the mental health struggles that many Alaskan youth face. I have been fighting for various versions of this bill for six years now, ever since I participated in Mental Health Advocacy Through Storytelling, a by-youth, for-youth program designed to educate and destigmatize mental health through radical vulnerability.

Just as sexual health education is a part of school curriculum, mental health education should be too. We need to empower youth to understand their mental health without stigma and offer them the information they need to get connected with resources. It's a step toward making Alaska a healthier, happier community. When people feel mentally well and supported, they have the energy to show up fully in other aspects of their lives—strengthening their connections with loved ones, moving their careers forward, and feeling at home in the place we all love. An investment in mental health education is an investment in the next generation of proud Alaskans. And there is no better time to invest—in a period of economic uncertainty and brain drain, we must do everything we can to empower Alaskan youth to create positive futures for themselves.

I hope you'll join me in supporting House Bill 105.

Best,

Gabrielle Laipenieks



From: [Tam Agosti-Gisler](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Rep. Alyse Galvin](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#)
Subject: HB 105 bill
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 2:32:10 PM

Dear House Education Committee:

I believe the HB 105 bill is beneficial for Alaska. As a retired educator, I know that providing students with essential mental health knowledge and resources is a pathway to a healthier Alaska.

Please support it.

Sincerely,

Tam Agosti-Gisler

[REDACTED]

Anchorage

[REDACTED]

From: [Susan Beesley](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105 support
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:42:55 PM
Attachments: [HB 105 letter.pdf](#)

Please see attached letter in support of HB 105

Susan Beesley MD

From: [Richard Fagnant](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105 support
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 6:11:15 PM

Honorable Alaska House Members;

Having served as Board Chair for NAMI Alaska for 6 years, I've seen first hand the unfortunate lack of support available in schools to our most vulnerable youth population. You are in a position to turn the tide on this crises we face here in Alaska. Please vote in favor of HB 105 Thank you!

Richard Fagnant
NAMI Alaska

From: [Julie K Wahl](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 7:36:46 AM

- I support HB 105 for the following reasons. Every student needs to be met where they are at so they can achieve their highest potential for a full fulfilling life. It's time to put education back to work for the students who need it most.
-
- **Comprehensive Health Education:** HB 105 enriches school health education by including mental health alongside essential topics like dental health and cancer prevention. This well-rounded approach destigmatizes talking about mental health and equips children with vital knowledge for healthier choices,
-
- **Implementation Support:** The bill offers school districts a clear roadmap for adopting mental health education, if they choose, allowing them to maintain local control while providing the necessary age-appropriate resources to address their specific community needs.
-
- **Addressing Educational Gaps:** Many adults wish they had more information about mental health resources in school. HB 105 aims to fill this gap, empowering students to understand and manage their mental health effectively and fostering lifelong wellness.
-
- **Early Mental Health Support:** With many mental health challenges surfacing during pre-adolescence, HB 105 promotes early awareness and support, helping students realize they are not alone and encouraging them to seek help, when appropriate. Families are communicated with and given participation choices.

Julie K Wahl

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99508
[REDACTED]

From: [Margaret McDonagh](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 6:15:37 PM

Dear House Education Committee,

I urge you to support passage of HB 105 - Mental Health Education Act. I am a 27 year career educator in the Anchorage School District. For the last 17 of those years I've worked as a School Counselor. Our students mental health struggles are real and they are on the rise. This started to happen prior to the Covid pandemic, but the pandemic just sent students' mental health concerns into overdrive. This school year has been the worst I've seen in my career. Already, this school year there have been 10 Suicide Risk Assessments at my school. In addition to that, there have been 7 Non-Suicidal Self-Harm interventions done. The most well-known example of this is cutting, most often to relieve anxiety. Of the 10 Suicide Risk Assessments, 4 of those students needed to be hospitalized, and 2 of the hospitalized students needed to go to a longer term treatment program to help them with their mental health. I consulted with my colleagues at other schools and learned that they were seeing similar rises in the number of risk interventions they were doing this year. We need to give our students support through education. They need to have language to describe their feelings. They need to know that mental health is not something to hide or be ashamed of, it is a part of health. They need to know that it is okay to ask for help. They need to know that it is okay to not be okay, and that it is okay to say something to try to make things better. We want all our young people to be healthy and to thrive. This includes their mental health. Please pass HB 105 for the health and safety of all young people in Alaska.

Thank you,

Margaret E. McDonagh
Spennard, Anchorage, Alaska



From: [Beverly Churchill](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 12:41:10 PM

Dear Committee Members,

My understanding is you are having a hearing today on HB 105 that would require and support information on mental health be available in our state schools.

Are youth are exposed to way too much through social media as it is. Exposing them to the facts on mental health issues can give them basic skills to identify their own as well as others warning signs and know how to take proper action.

I ask you to support this measure.

Thanks for your attention,

Beverly Churchill

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: House Bill 105
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 12:53:47 PM

Dear Alaska Legislators:

Please support this important bill. We live in a post-pandemic age from which mental health among Alaskans is also still in a fragile, and hopefully recovering status. Rep, Alyse Galvin and Rep. Elvi Gray have co-sponsored a significant piece of legislation to help our mental-health recovery as a state. Please support it!

Jean Anderson
Fairbanks, Alaska

From: [Yaso Thiru](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: In support of HB105
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 9:26:51 AM

I am writing in support of HB105 supporting mental health education youth. I support this bill for the following reasons.

Mental health education is preventative. The youth of today are facing very difficult social environments such as family interruptions, job loss of parents, poverty, homelessness etc. Mental Health education is important to help our children cope with these challenges. By providing this support we increase the potential for our children to become healthy and functioning adults as they grow up. Prevention of mental illness is also a way to reduce incidence of homelessness.

Yaso Thiru

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Ak 99507

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Pass HB 105
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 7:46:23 AM

Subject: Support for HB 105 – Youth Mental Health Education

Dear House Education Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 105, which takes an important step toward addressing Alaska’s youth mental health crisis. Alaskans aged 15–24 experience self-harm and suicide at more than twice the national average—this is a crisis we cannot ignore. HB 105 provides a crucial opportunity to equip young people with age-appropriate mental health education while ensuring family engagement and consent.

Key reasons to support HB 105:

- **Comprehensive Health Education:** This bill integrates mental health education alongside other critical health topics, reducing stigma and giving students tools to make informed choices.
- **Local Control with Implementation Support:** School districts retain the ability to decide how to implement the curriculum, ensuring it meets the unique needs of their communities.
- **Bridging Educational Gaps:** Many adults express that they wish they had learned about mental health in school. HB 105 fills this gap, fostering lifelong wellness.
- **Early Awareness & Support:** Mental health challenges often begin in adolescence. HB 105 promotes early intervention, helping students recognize when to seek support while keeping families engaged.

By passing HB 105, Alaska can take a meaningful step toward improving youth mental health and ensuring that our schools provide the necessary education and resources. Please support this bill and help create a healthier future for our students.

Sincerely,

Lila Johnson, Homer, AK

From: [Susan A](#)
To: [House Education](#); [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Testimony on HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:36:15 PM

Public Testimony on HB 105: "An Act Relating to Mental Health Education" with Expanded Concerns Regarding Religious Involvement

Members of the legislative body,

I respectfully submit this testimony regarding HB 105, an act aiming to enhance mental health education in public schools by requiring the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) to establish mental health education guidelines, in consultation with various stakeholders, including tribal health organizations. While the bill's goals are commendable, there are critical legal and constitutional concerns that need to be addressed, especially regarding the involvement of chaplains and religious leaders in taxpayer-funded educational institutions. This involvement may directly violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which prohibits the government from establishing or endorsing religion in public institutions.

Legal Concerns:

1. Loopholes and Implementation Ambiguities:

HB 105 outlines a broad mandate for the creation of mental health education guidelines, but it lacks specific language regarding how schools will ensure equitable and comprehensive access to mental health resources, particularly for marginalized groups. Moreover, while the bill suggests consultation with tribal health organizations, it does not include clear, enforceable processes for ensuring full, equitable participation by these communities in the development and implementation of mental health education.

2. Overlaps with Existing Law:

The bill overlaps with existing health education statutes, such as AS 14.30.360, which requires public schools to provide health education. Without clarifying how HB 105 integrates or supersedes these existing laws, there is potential for conflicting regulations and duplicative efforts, leading to confusion and inefficiencies.

3. Parental Rights and First Amendment Concerns:

HB 105 includes a provision allowing parents to withdraw their children from mental health education activities, which may trigger First Amendment concerns. The *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925) and *Troxel v. Granville* (2000) decisions affirm parental rights to direct their children's education. However, the breadth of this provision could hinder the state's compelling interest in providing comprehensive mental health education, particularly in public institutions. This could result in large groups of students being excluded from important mental health content, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities.

4. Alaska Native Sovereignty and Tribal Rights:

The bill provides for consultation with tribal health organizations, but it fails to grant these organizations decision-making authority, which undermines Alaska Native sovereignty. Under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), tribes are entitled to greater involvement in educational decisions affecting their communities. The bill should include stronger provisions for meaningful tribal input, ensuring that Alaska Native communities are fully engaged in shaping mental health education that respects their cultural perspectives.

5. Equal Protection and Educational Disparities:

The bill's provision allowing parental opt-out could disproportionately affect marginalized communities, particularly in rural Alaska, where mental health education could be vital to addressing longstanding issues such as trauma, suicide, and substance abuse. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment mandates that all students have access to a comprehensive, equitable education. Any provision that leads to unequal access to mental health education could violate this principle.

Additional Concerns Regarding Religious Involvement in Public Education:

A critical issue that must be addressed is the inclusion of chaplains and religious leaders in taxpayer-funded educational institutions. Allowing religious figures to have any role in the creation or delivery of educational curricula, including mental health education, constitutes a clear violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which prohibits government entities from endorsing or promoting religious activities.

1. Violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment:

The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment prohibits government entities, including public schools, from establishing religion or endorsing religious practices. By permitting chaplains or religious leaders to play a role in the educational process in taxpayer-funded schools, HB 105 would violate this constitutional prohibition. This is clearly reflected in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), where the Supreme Court held that the establishment of a state-sponsored prayer in public schools violated the Establishment Clause. Furthermore, in *Lee v. Weisman* (1992), the Court ruled that even a non-coercive prayer led by a religious leader at a public school event could violate the Establishment Clause, emphasizing that public institutions must remain secular to avoid the appearance of government-endorsed religion.

2. Precedents from U.S. Supreme Court Cases:

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962): The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is unconstitutional for public schools to compose official prayers, affirming that prayer and religious activity cannot be a part of state-sponsored school programs.

Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992): The Court ruled that a school-sponsored prayer by a religious leader at a public school graduation violated the Establishment Clause because it represented an endorsement of religion by the state.

Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290 (2000): The Court struck down a policy allowing student-led prayers at school events, noting that even voluntary prayers in

public schools violate the principle of government neutrality toward religion.

3. Violation of Alaska's State Constitutional Law:

Alaska's constitution further enshrines the separation of church and state in Article I, Section 4, which states, "No money shall be drawn from the treasury for the benefit of any religious or other private educational institution." Allowing religious leaders or chaplains to be involved in the mental health education of public school students would directly violate this provision, as it would constitute a use of public funds to promote religious views within public schools.

While the intention behind HB 105 is noble in its effort to improve mental health education in Alaska's public schools, the bill's provisions pose significant constitutional, legal, and practical challenges. Most notably, the involvement of chaplains or religious leaders in any capacity within taxpayer-funded educational institutions violates both the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and Alaska's own constitution, which mandates a clear separation between church and state. Additionally, there are concerns regarding the adequacy of funding, the scope of parental rights, and the protection of Alaska Native sovereignty that need to be addressed.

It is imperative that this legislation be amended to ensure it complies with constitutional protections, respects the rights of all students, and upholds the principle of government neutrality on matters of religion. I urge the legislature to carefully reconsider the bill's provisions and make the necessary changes to safeguard Alaska's public education system from any unconstitutional overreach.

References:

U.S. Constitution, First Amendment – Establishment Clause.

Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925).

Troxel v. Granville, 530 U.S. 57 (2000).

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. § 5301 et seq.

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962).

Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992).

Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290 (2000).

Alaska State Constitution, Article I, Section 4.

AS 14.30.360 – Health Education in Public Schools.

U.S. Department of Education, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Thank you for your time and attention.

Susan Allmeroth

Two Rivers

From: [Cora Porter](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Support for HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:57:09 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 105, which seeks to include comprehensive mental health education in Alaska's school curriculum. As someone who values the well-being of our youth, I believe this bill is an essential step toward equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate mental health challenges.

Mental health education is as crucial as physical health education. By providing students with tools to understand and manage their emotions, recognize signs of mental health struggles, and seek help when needed, we can foster resilience and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Early education on this topic can empower students to develop healthy coping strategies, improve their overall well-being, and contribute positively to their communities.

Alaska faces unique challenges when it comes to mental health, including high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide, particularly among young people. Implementing comprehensive mental health education in schools is a proactive approach that will give students the skills to manage these challenges and improve long-term outcomes.

I urge you to support HB 105 and prioritize the mental well-being of Alaska's students. Investing in their emotional and psychological health is an investment in the future of our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cora Porter


Anchorage, AK

From: [Jan Caulfield](#)
To: [House Education](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Rebecca Himschoot](#); representative.maxine.dibert@akleg.gov; [Rep. Ted Eischeid](#); Representative.jubilee.underwood@akleg.gov; [Rep. Rebecca Schwanke](#); representative.bill.elam@alaska.gov
Subject: SUPPORT HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 2:20:11 PM

I strongly support HB 105 and its purpose of enhancing Alaska's health education system to provide mental health information to students K-12. Tragically, Alaskans aged 15-24 years old experience more than twice the national average number incidents of self harm and death by suicide. As leaders and policy makers, I am asking that you take this step to save lives. HB105 will help address Alaska's mental health challenges by providing age-appropriate education and family engagement and consent.

I volunteer regularly with an organization that focuses on educating gun owners to store their firearms securely, so they cannot be accessed by children, youth and others in crisis. When we speak to this need, we are often told that it is essential to also address the root causes of suicidal ideation and suicide. HB 105 will work to address the root causes of suicide by strengthening our students' mental health and raising the awareness of other youth and family members to recognize warning signs.

Please support HB 105.

Best regards,

Jan Caulfield



From: [Sally Rue](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Rep. Alyse Galvin](#); [Rep. Sara Hannan](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#)
Subject: Support HB 105-Mental Health Education
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:12:11 PM

Dear Co-Chairs Himschoot and Story, and Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 105, Public Schools: Mental Health Education.

We are in a crisis of adolescent mental health needs, too few treatment options, skyrocketing suicide rates, and the need to support students and families with education and early support for addressing these issues.

Incorporating mental health education into health education programs in our public schools is a reasonable and effective way to offer schools, families, and students information, support, and will help normalize mental health as one of many legitimate aspects of health education.

I urge you to support HB 105. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sally Rue
Juneau

MINDFUL GROWTH

To: House.Education@akleg.gov

Subject: Support for HB 105 – Mental Health Education in Schools

Dear House Education Committee,

As both a mother of three children in Alaska public schools and a behavioral pediatrician on the front lines of the youth mental health crisis, I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 105.

Alaska's youth face alarming rates of self-harm and suicide—young Alaskans aged 15–24 experience more than twice the national average. We cannot afford to ignore this crisis. HB 105 takes an important first step by integrating mental health education into our schools' existing health curriculum. With age-appropriate lessons, family engagement, and local control, this bill offers a thoughtful, balanced approach to a deeply urgent issue.

Every day, I see the impacts of unrecognized or unaddressed mental health struggles in children and adolescents. Many of these challenges begin early, often in middle school or before. HB 105 gives students the language and tools to understand their emotions, seek support when needed, and know they are not alone.

This legislation also helps close a long-standing gap in health education—many adults I speak with say they wish they'd learned more about mental health when they were young. HB 105 can be the turning point for future generations.

Thank you for considering this bill and for your commitment to the wellbeing of Alaska's youth. I am also grateful to Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson for her leadership in advancing this critical work.

Sincerely,



Susan Beesley, MD
Mother of three
Behavioral Pediatrician

