

Dear members of the House Health and Social Services Committee and SB 24 sponsor Senator Gray-Jackson,

Although President Bellamy has already written in support of SB 24 on behalf of the Anchorage School Board, I wanted to alert your committee that the Board's strong support for embedding mental health education within the District's health curriculum was evidenced in its unanimous approval of Board Policy 5041, a new Health Education Policy for the Anchorage School District, during the Board's meeting on Tuesday April 9th.

This policy was attached to [Memorandum 131](#), which states that "The Anchorage School Board recognizes that the delivery of comprehensive, effective, and age-appropriate K-12 health education in all District schools plays a critical role in supporting academic outcomes and reducing adolescent health risks."

I'd like to draw the Committee's attention to the new policy's language, which asserts that mental health education is a key component within a comprehensive health curriculum:

"Key components of a comprehensive health curriculum include the following:

Injury Prevention & Personal Safety

Functions of the Body

Nutrition

Community Health and Safety (Violence Prevention)

Self-worth, Mental and Emotional health

Growth and Development

Substance Abuse Prevention

Diseases and Illness Prevention

Environmental and Consumer Health

Physical Fitness."

Although ASD can clearly take action without State support of the bill, the degree of student mobility between and among districts and the well-documented mental health challenges plaguing youth across this state create a strong rationale for your support in amending statute so as to mandate mental health education statewide.

Thank you for your support of SB 24.

Sincerely,

Kelly Lessens

Anchorage School Board