



HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BARBARA NAKAOKA, Ed.D., Superintendent

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March 14, 2011

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
322 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Napolitano and Murphy:

The 38th District Mental Health Consortium applauds your re-introduction of the Mental Health in Schools Act, and pledges our strong support to enact this initiative. We share your vision for expanding the availability of comprehensive school-based mental health services for students across America.

According to the America Academy of Pediatrics, one-in-five U.S. children and adolescents have some form of mental health issue. Furthermore, we know that suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24-year olds, as well as for 10 to 14-year olds. Children with mental health issues are among the most vulnerable members of our society, but shame and stigma surrounding mental health make many afraid to seek help. The number of children affected by mental health issues is vast. With the Mental Health in Schools Act, thousands of children can be assisted, opening up new possibilities for themselves and their families.

The Mental Health in Schools Act will provide \$200,000,000 in grant funding for schools to partner with licensed mental health professionals to provide on-site mental health care services for students across the country. This legislation is modeled after a Pacific Clinics run program that operates in ten local schools in the 38th Congressional District. Since 2001, this program has proven to be tremendously successful, helping student overcome mental health issues and improving quality of life for them and their families.

We commend you for re-introducing the Mental Health in Schools Act. The Mental Health in Schools Act recognizes that mental disorders are prevalent among our nation's youth and the introduction of this legislation is a key step in addressing our nation's mental health crisis among youth. We strongly urge the House to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Barbara Nakaoka, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Vision Statement:

The Hacienda La Puente Unified School District is a community committed to developing lifelong learners who value themselves and the diversity of all people; apply decision-making skills leading to responsible actions; and use creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving in meeting the challenges of a changing society.