



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** [Michael Yaple](#)

**Date:** February 9, 2022

(609) 376-9072

## **NJ Department of Education Announces Release of Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Resource Guide**

**Trenton, NJ** – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today released its Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Resource Guide to help districts address the mental health needs of students throughout the state.

“The mental health of our young people and educators is absolutely critical,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “Providing all students with access to the resources they need to be successful requires the support of entire communities and this guide demonstrates our commitment to ensuring all students have access to safe and secure school environments. We also must acknowledge the mental health challenges faced by our educators during these unprecedented times. This guide will help ensure they have the resources they need to provide a high-quality education for our students.”

“The mental health of our students and educators is a top priority in New Jersey and we have seen a growing need for holistic mental health support in our schools,” **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “We are committed to ensuring that schools have the actionable resources they need to provide mental health support for staff and students.”

The Guide is one part of an ongoing initiative that began in February 2020, when Governor Phil Murphy [announced](#) a comprehensive campaign to address mental health needs among young people. He called upon the NJDOE to convene a Statewide Mental Health Working Group and to develop resources, including best practices for schools and mental health providers to support student needs. The working group consisted of stakeholders such as psychologists, school counselors, teachers, physicians, parents, researchers, and many mental health experts.

The NJDOE approached the initiative by first collaborating with the working group to release the Mental Health [Quick Guide](#), which provides fundamental tools that schools can use to build an array of supports in an organized and systemic manner. The ensuing 223-page Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Resource Guide that is being released today – which can be found on the NJDOE’s [Mental Health Resources](#) webpage – provides schools with a roadmap for developing, implementing, and evaluating mental health supports and services.

The comprehensive resource contains 11 chapters that address a variety of issues such as Suicide Prevention and Intervention, Substance Use Prevention, and Funding Mental Health Supports in Schools. An entire chapter is devoted to Staff Self-Care. Each chapter has a “school spotlight” with examples of a school or district implementing the highlighted concept. The framework also includes a model for proactively providing equitable access to mental health supports and services, while emphasizing the need for family and community engagement.

Although the Guide was designed for school staff, parents and guardians may also find helpful resources in the document, such as hotlines and community agencies.

Moving forward, the NJDOE will collaborate with the Northeast and Caribbean Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) at Rutgers University, which has been a partner throughout the creation of the resource Guide, to use the document as a springboard for training programs, webinars, and other outreach programs that can benefit school districts.

