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Effective School Solutions Releases New National Polling of Administrators & Parents on Mental Health Care in Schools

90% of administrators and nearly 60% of parents believe that there is a growing youth mental health crisis, while about 60% of administrators say the problem is the same as or worse than a year ago

New Providence, N.J. — [Effective School Solutions](#) (ESS) – the leading provider of school-based mental health services for K-12 school districts – today released the results of [new nationwide polling](#), which found significant concerns from both parents and administrators about the state of youth mental health. While schools have made progress tackling the youth mental health crisis and 80% of parents believe that schools should play a role in the delivery of mental health, educators say that districts continue to face significant hurdles when it comes to early identification of students with mental health challenges (52%), staffing (50%), and funding (47%).

“Our first-of-its-kind polling reveals that administrators and parents see a significant, long-term problem with the mental health of young people that must be solved. Schools are positioned to play a powerful role in bolstering the mental health continuum supporting this population,” said Duncan Young, CEO of ESS. “We are partnering with school districts across the country to help them strengthen mental health support to reach every student in need, and to support the educators serving them.”

The trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health challenges of young people, as evidenced by increasing rates of anxiety, depression and [suicide](#). For the first time, a panel of medical experts has recommended that primary care doctors [screen](#) all children ages eight to 18 for anxiety and all adolescents ages 12 to 18 for depression.

The new polling shows both administrators and parents believe that young people’s mental health is in a crisis state, with over 90% of administrators and nearly 60% of parents reporting moderate to severe challenges in their schools. Additionally, about 60% of administrators say the problem is the same as or worse than a year ago, with this percentage significantly higher in rural areas.

Additional key findings from the polling include:

- While over 80% of parents believe that schools should have a role in supporting student mental health, only 16% of parents and 40% of administrators report a high level of confidence in their school’s ability to deal with mental health challenges.
 - In small city districts, the percentage of administrators drops to just 17%.

- While 75% of administrators say their schools are implementing best practices around student mental health, less than half (45%) of parents feel the same way. This suggests a gap between the two groups and an opportunity to bridge that gap with more support.
- Both parents (40%) and educators (50%) are concerned with districts having adequate staff to address student needs, as well as identifying students with mental health needs (44% and 52%, respectively).
- However, only about 60% of administrators report expansion of mental health counseling resources, and just over 40% report their schools have adopted broad-based mental health screening initiatives.
- Over 55% of administrators express that they do not have enough information about or are not aware of funding resources for mental health programs.

The findings show that school-based mental health services, like those provided by ESS, serve as a bridge between the realities of administrators and parents to create better mental health outcomes for students.

“These findings represent what I’m seeing in our schools,” said Jacqueline Coe, superintendent of the SAU 24 School District in New Hampshire. “We need innovative, holistic solutions to address this growing crisis, and give our schools and students the clinical mental health resources they deserve.”

“Our goal as educators is to cultivate safe and secure environments for our students to learn and do their best work. Providing high-quality mental health services for our kids is one of the most important issues facing our schools in helping our students succeed,” said Carrie Martin, director of special education and student services at Susquehanna Township School District in Pennsylvania. “This report only reinforces what we see every day around the challenges and what is needed to help our students and staff. Every student deserves to reach their greatest potential, and we’re grateful to our partners like Effective School Solutions who have empowered us to provide this critical support for our students.”

“Supporting a healthy learning environment and giving every student the opportunity to reach their full potential requires an accurate understanding of today’s youth mental health challenges,” said Margaret Young, PsyD., public schools director of school counseling and mental health services at Middletown Township School District in New Jersey. “These findings reflect many of the obstacles and opportunities educators are seeing firsthand in the classroom. Our partnership with Effective School Solutions has allowed us to increase access to high-quality mental health care and address these critical issues where students spend most of their time - at school.”

Effective School Solutions (ESS) is the country’s largest provider of school-based mental health care. The company partners with school districts to help them implement culturally-inclusive mental health and behavioral support programs proven to improve care, strengthen academics, address trauma, and maintain students in-district – helping every child reach their greatest

potential. In the 2021-2022 school year, ESS completed over 300,000 therapeutic interactions with students and their families.

ESS commissioned [John Zogby Strategies](#) to conduct the nationwide online polling of 200 school administrators and 1,000 parents with children enrolled in K-12. John Zogby Strategies conducted the surveys from October 25, 2022 through November 3, 2022.

To learn more about Effective School Solutions and its new national polling results, please visit: www.effectiveschoolsolutions.com/research.

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