



California Department of Education

Tony Thurmond, *State Superintendent of Public Instruction*
1430 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
916-319-0800

California Health & Human Services Agency

Dr. Mark Ghaly, *Secretary*
1215 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-654-3454

May 5, 2023

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and Middle and High School Principals:

Student Mental Health Awareness Week: May 8–12, 2023

As educators, you understand the impact that mental health and wellness have on our students' ability to learn, grow, and thrive both inside and out of the classroom. We want to recognize and celebrate the incredible work that you do every day that supports youth and family wellness so that California's students can achieve academic success and thrive.

These remain difficult times for children, youth, and families in our state and across the country. The ongoing trauma from the pandemic has been compounded by natural disasters and continued disparities in our health, education, and economic systems. We want to acknowledge the many challenges you and your staff face as school site and system leaders. We are proud to uplift the increasingly important and more widely recognized central role schools play in supporting student mental health and social–emotional well-being. That's why the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) are collaborating to expand the programs and services at both schools and in communities that strengthen the assets and deepen the resiliency of our students, their families, and our school communities. And that is why we are reaching out to you at the beginning of May, a month where we highlight these efforts even more.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and Student Mental Health Awareness Week takes place from May 8–12, 2023. This week is a vital reminder that mental health and well-being are critical to student learning.

California's schools already have a wide array of efforts, strategies, and programs underway to address the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and their families. The CDE and CalHHS value the opportunity to work in partnership with you through a range of statewide efforts, from CDE-provided learning supports (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/mh/>) to California's Safe Schools for All Hub (<https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/>) and the CalHOPE Schools Initiative (<https://www.calhopeschools.org/>), which supports local educational agency communities of practice to strengthen social–emotional learning.

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As part of this year's Student Mental Health Awareness Week, we are excited to highlight a dynamic set of resources for students, families, and staff through the CDE Mental Health Resources Hub (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/mh/mhresources.asp>) and the CalHHS Youth Mental Health Resources Hub (<https://www.chhs.ca.gov/youthresources/>). We encourage schools to participate in and document wellness activities throughout May and then share them with us through wellness@cde.ca.gov or by posting with #GoldenStateOfMind. By sharing, we can celebrate and learn from one another how to better support our students' and staff's mental health.

Thank you for your partnership and leadership in elevating our collective work during Student Mental Health Awareness Week. Together, we can eliminate stigma, accelerate access to services, and elevate the importance of mental health and wellness throughout California.

We are inspired by your dedication and look forward to continuing to work together to make our schools and communities healthier and happier places for all children and youth.

Sincerely,



Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education



Mark Ghaly, M.D., MPH
Secretary
California Health & Human Services Agency

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Attachment