

May 25, 2022

Resolution: On Recognizing Mental Health Issues for Educational Staff and Promoting Support Services

Whereas, the DKG mission is to promote educational excellence through actions that advance the professional interest of women in education and inform members of current economic, social, political and educational issues so that they may participate effectively in a world society; and

Whereas, youth mental health issues have risen over the last decade to the point of having been declared “a national emergency”¹ for which U.S. Surgeon General Admiral Murthy has called for “a swift and coordinated response”²; and

Whereas, the current state of mental health among children, youth and educators in this nation imperils goals for educational excellence and the professional interests of women educators; and

Whereas, mental health concerns are not restricted to students, though their needs are significant, but also impact school-based staff, administrators and school board members; and

Whereas, school-based services account for the sole treatment to over 35% of adolescents diagnosed with mental health disorders³ and 70-80% of services to students of color,⁴ the youth mental health crisis has placed increased demands on educators, resulting in over two-thirds feeling emotionally exhausted and noting negative impact on job performance⁵; and

Whereas, COVID precautions, school closures, on-line teaching, cancellation of extra-curricular and motivational activities, and other pandemic related demands have placed tremendous stress on educators, with data showing 37% of educators have generalized anxiety disorder symptoms as compared to pre-pandemic levels of 12%⁶; and

Whereas, 73% of teachers report frequent job-related stress compared to 40% of other working adults and 27% of educators have symptoms consistent with a diagnosis of clinical depression (compared to 10% of other adults)⁷; and

Whereas, only 6% of teachers received counseling support from their schools⁸ and only 16% report school or district mental health benefits as adequate⁹; and

Whereas, gun violence in schools continues to place mental and physical stress on educational staff (and students) with documented impact long after the actual tragedy resembling secondary traumatic stress and even post-traumatic stress disorder¹⁰; and

Whereas, the proliferation of misinformation and politicizing of curriculum decisions and instruction has led to a sharp increase in bullying, threats, assaults and other violence aimed at educators, administrators and school board officials¹¹; and

Whereas, the cumulative effect of mental health stress has caused a significant rise in the number of educators considering leaving the profession with 57% of educators seriously worried about burnout¹² and 53% thinking more about leaving the profession than they did before the pandemic¹³; and

Whereas, the decline in the number of available educators will have serious negative impacts on student achievement and well-being for years to come; and

Whereas, legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress to increase mental health-supports for students (HR721/SB1841; HR1475/S1795; HR4198, HR3572/S1811), but none has addressed such support for educators;

Therefore, be it

Resolved that the key women educator organization, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, U.S. Forum members (1) educate themselves on the issues and needs related to mental health for educational staff through study, workshops, and other avenues; and

Resolved that the key women educator organization, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, U.S. Forum members (2) inform members of current legislation related to mental health services for educators so that they may take appropriate actions; and

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Resolved that the key women educator organization, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, U.S. Forum members (3) promote destigmatization of mental illness through dissemination of information on successful school-based treatment programs, supports and other resources; and

Resolved that the key women educator organization, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, U.S. Forum members (4) engage in a wide range of activities that demonstrate emotional support for educators;

Be it further **resolved** that the US Forum Steering Committee monitor implementation of the activities stated above and issue a report summarizing activities at the next US Forum meeting (2024).

References

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