



TO: P-12 Education Committee
Professional Practice Committee

FROM: Jhone M. Ebert 
Doug Lentivech 

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendment to Sections 135.1 and 135.3 of the
Commissioner's Regulations Relating to Health Education

DATE: April 26, 2018

AUTHORIZATION(S):  

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents amend §135.1 and §135.3 of the Commissioner's regulations relating to health education?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by statute (Chapter 390 of the Laws of 2016 and Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2017).

Proposed Handling

The proposed amendment is presented to the P-12 Education and Professional Practice Committees for recommendation and to the Full Board for adoption at the May 2018 Board of Regents meeting. (Attachment A is a copy of the proposed amendment).

Procedural History

A Notice of Proposed Rule Making was published in the State Register on February 7, 2018 for a 60-day public comment period. Public comments were received from two separate commenters. An Assessment of Public Comment is attached (Attachment B). Permanent adoption is recommended at the May 2018 Regents meeting. If adopted at the May meeting, the proposed amendment will become effective on July 1,

2018 to timely implement the provisions of Chapter 390 of the Laws of 2016 and Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2017.

Background Information

Education Law §804 was amended by Chapter 390 of the Laws of 2016, and Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2017 to clarify that required health education in schools must include instruction in mental health, including the multiple dimensions of mental health. The statutory amendments further state that instruction shall be designed to enhance student understanding, attitudes and behaviors that promote health, well-being and human dignity. An equally important part of this conversation is to help students identify risk and protective factors, as learning and resiliency can result in positive decision-making and life-long success, which are the primary goals of health and education.

In addition to the adoption of the amendments necessary to conform the regulations to Chapter 390 of the Laws of 2016 and Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2017, the purpose of this item is to present to the Board of Regents the work of the New York State (NYS) Mental Health Education Advisory Council in providing recommendations and resources to assist schools in successfully incorporating Education Law §804 and the corresponding provisions of Commissioner's regulation §135.1 and §135.3 relating to instruction in mental health into the health education curriculum.

We recognize that the coordination of professional practice and educational needs are well served within SED, which is comprised of offices that oversee both P-20 education as well as the licensed professionals. In that regard, the partnerships between the various offices within SED will ensure that all facets of the development of an effective plan for instruction in mental health are utilized.

Mental Health Education Advisory Council

In August of 2017, the New York State Education Department (Department), with the support of the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS), established the New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council to inform and guide the important work of implementing the amendments to Education Law §804 made by Chapter 390 of the Laws of 2016 and Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2017. The Mental Health Education Advisory Council includes over 75 expert cross-disciplinary and cross-sector partners (see Attachment C) working collaboratively with a goal of assisting schools to effectively maximize students' knowledge and understanding of the multiple dimensions of health, including mental health wellness.

Additionally, the Department and the MHANYS conducted a brief survey of stakeholders across the State, to gauge perspectives on current education in mental health wellness, and its various related components. Over 850 responses were received, further informing the work of the Mental Health Education Advisory Council. The Mental Health Education Advisory Council has met four times to date - September 2017, November 2017, February 2018 and April 2018 - to further inform, and delineate their work collectively as a Council, and individually through five Workgroups, as more fully

described below, which were established to support the various components of enhancing mental health wellness in schools.

The charge to the Council was to develop a list of recommendations (see Attachment D) for consideration to continue supporting instruction in mental health and wellness in schools. Additional efforts include the creation of an instructional guide for classrooms, and evidence-based and best practice resources to build capacity for enhancing mental health wellness for schools, students, families, and communities. The Department expects schools to utilize these resources to develop or adopt their own curriculum aligned with the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards and to tailor instruction and programs based on needs identified at the local level. Resources will be inclusive, as schools can – and should – go beyond providing only classroom instruction on mental health and focus efforts on developing a positive school climate and culture.

NYS Mental Health Advisory Council, Workgroups, and Resources

Research has shown that the quality of the school climate may be the single most predictive factor in any school’s capacity to promote student achievement.¹ When young people are educated about mental health, the likelihood increases they will be able to effectively recognize signs and symptoms in themselves and others and will know where to turn for help. Health education that respects the importance of mental health, as well as the challenges of mental illness, will help young people and their families and communities feel more comfortable seeking help, improve academic performance and, most importantly, even save lives.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “focusing on establishing healthy behaviors during childhood is more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood.”² In April 2018, the Department provided a memo to the field releasing an informational one-pager, and accompanying power point presentation to assist schools in understanding their obligations to expand instruction in mental health and to use as a teaching tool for other stakeholders. The NYS Mental Health Education Advisory Council continues to work diligently to develop mental health related resources and tools for supporting student mental health instruction, and anticipates releasing such materials in June 2018.

- **Workgroup #1: Mental Health Resources for Classroom Instruction**

This workgroup was charged with identifying the skills and functional knowledge students should acquire, along with tools to address stigma and to promote best educational practices.

Resources:

1. *Development of an instructional guide for health education in the classroom reflective of skills and functional knowledge, and scope and sequence for all levels (K-12) focused on health-related outcomes.*

¹ Shindler, J., Jones, A., Williams, A.D., Taylor, C., Cardenia, H. (2016). The school climate-student achievement connection: If we want achievement gains, we need to begin by improving the climate. *Journal of School Administration Research and Development* 1(1), 9-16.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>

2. *Inclusion of an Instructional Resource Section.*

- Workgroup #2: Multiple Dimensions of Mental Health

This workgroup was charged with introducing the concept of mental health as something more than an illness, on a continuum of wellness, and an integral part of overall health (i.e., physical health, social-emotional health, nutritional health).

Resources:

1. *Narrative, along with lists of evidence-based resources and best-practice curricula regarding the connection between mental health, social emotional learning, wellness/well-being, health education, nutrition, physical education, and physical activity.*
2. *Definition of mental health.*

- Workgroup #3: Mental Health Resources for Schools, Students, and Families

This workgroup was charged with developing resources for facilitating relationships between schools and communities within school-based structures, county resources, staff and parent education, and topics to discuss when collaborating with community agencies.

Resources:

1. *Guidance for fostering school and community collaborations.*
2. *Development of a 'Resource Toolkit' for cultivating partnerships.*

- Workgroup #4: Supporting a Positive School Climate and Culture

This workgroup was charged with describing how a school "Culture of Care" can decrease stigma and increase mental health awareness, knowledge, and understanding.

Resources:

1. *Checklist schools can use for a needs assessment evaluating a positive school culture and climate as it relates to mental health wellness.*
2. *Definition of school climate as it relates to mental health.*
3. *List of evidence-based frameworks promoting positive school climate and culture.*

- Workgroup #5: Implementation

This workgroup was charged with exploring how to leverage partnerships and build upon existing policies, structures and resources to build capacity and a sustainable structure.

Resources:

1. *Sample mental health and well-being school policy with emphasis on positive mental health with links to related policies, and documents to prevention and linking to care.*
2. *Guidance, and/or resources on identifying policies related to mental health and well-being.*

Schools should utilize resources to develop and/or adopt their own curriculum aligned with the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards, and tailor instruction and programs based on local level needs.

Panel Presentation by NYS Mental Health Education Advisory Council Members

NYSED has invited the following Mental Health Education Advisory Council representatives to participate in a panel presentation on State and local perspectives regarding mental health, and to share recommendations with the Board of Regents relating to instruction in mental health. The presenters are:

- Ellen Pendegar, MHANYS Chair of Board of Directors, and Chief Executive Officer of Ulster County Mental Health Association.
- Dustin Verga, NYS Certified Health Educator, Shenendehowa High School, New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance;
- Pat Breux, Coordinator of School and Youth Initiatives, Suicide Prevention Center, NYS Office of Mental Health;
- Ebony Bullock, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Shared Accountability, Buffalo Public Schools; and
- Amanda Davidson, Youth Engagement Specialist, Youth Power!.

Coordination of Some Overlapping Department Themes and Initiatives

At least two important themes have become evident through the work of the New York State Mental Health Advisory Council coupled with the work of the Department's NYS Safe Schools Task Force which directly relate to instructing and supporting mental health wellness in a school environment.

First, the promotion and measurement of a positive school climate and culture, rather than a focus exclusively on measuring school violence is essential. Next, it is important to understand and promote social emotional learning to teach students the essential skills that affect every area of one's life, including understanding how to manage emotions, and how to establish and maintain positive relationships. To that end, the Department continues to be actively involved in the following initiatives to continue to support the importance of positive mental health, including but not limited to:

- A partnership with the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services in implementation of a three-year pilot program within three school districts to promote positive mental, emotional, and behavioral health (MEB) through MEB evidence-based programs.
- A social emotional learning initiative and the successful work with other states, school districts and the national organization Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).
- The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and the DASA Task Force guidance and resources for promoting mental health and well-being through bullying prevention.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan – supporting the mission of the New York State Board of Regents ensuring every child has equitable access to the

highest quality educational opportunities, services, supports, and positive learning environments.

Related Regent's Items

[January 2018](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/118p12d2.pdf): Proposed Amendment to §135.1 and §135.3 of the Commissioner's Regulations Relating to Mental Health Education in Schools
(<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/118p12d2.pdf>)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That subdivision (j) of §135.1, subdivision (a) of §135.3, and paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of §135.3 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education be amended, as submitted, effective July 1, 2018.

Timetable for Implementation

If adopted at the May 2018 Regents meeting, the proposed amendment would become effective on July 1, 2018.

Attachment A

AMENDMENT OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Pursuant to Education Law sections 101, 207, 305, 308, 804, Chapter 401 of the Laws of 1998, Chapter 390 of the Laws of 2016, and Chapter 1 of the laws of 2017.

1. Subdivision (j) of section 135.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education is amended, effective July 1, 2018, to read as follows:

(j) *Health education* means instruction in the understandings, attitudes and behavior in [regard] relation to the several dimensions of health, including but not limited to [. This instruction relates to] the misuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the prevention and detection of certain cancers, safety, mental health, nutrition, dental health, sensory awareness [perception], disease prevention and control, environmental and public health, consumer health, first aid, and other health-related areas.

2. Subdivision (a) of section 135.3 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education is amended, effective July 1, 2018, to read as follows:

(a) Provision for health education. It shall be the duty of the trustees and boards of education to provide a satisfactory program in health education in accordance with the needs of pupils in all grades. Such program shall include the several dimensions of health, including mental health and the relation of physical and mental health, and shall be designed to enhance student understanding, attitudes and behaviors that promote health, well-being and human dignity. This program shall include, but shall not be limited to instruction concerning the misuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and the prevention and detection of certain cancers.

3. Paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of section 135.3 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education is amended, effective July 1, 2018, to read as follows:

(b) Health education in the elementary schools.

(1) The elementary school curriculum shall include a sequential health education program for all pupils, grades K-6. In the kindergarten and primary grades, the teacher shall provide for pupil participation in planned activities for developing attitudes knowledge that contribute to their own sense of self-worth, respect for their bodies and ability to make constructive decisions regarding their social and emotional health, [as well as] physical[,] health and mental health. Personal health guidance shall also be provided according to the individual needs of pupils. This guidance shall include the development of specific habits necessary to maintain good individual and community health. In addition to continued health guidance, provision shall be made in the school program of grades 4-6 for planned units of teaching which shall include health instruction through which pupils may become increasingly self-reliant in solving their own health problems and those of the group. Health education in the elementary school grades shall be taught by the regular classroom teachers.

8 NYCRR §§135.1, 135.3

ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Since publication of a Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the State Register on February 7, 2018, the State Education Department (SED) received the following comments on the proposed amendment.

1. COMMENT:

The New York State Psychological Association (NYSPA), strongly supports the proposed amendments to §135.1 and §135.3 related to mental health instruction in schools. The NYSPA additionally requested the opportunity to participate on the New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE:

No response necessary as the comment is supportive. However, although the NYSPA did have representation on the New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council, the Department extended the opportunity for additional NYSPA members to participate.

2. COMMENT:

Commenter, a family practitioner, expressed the importance including at least one experienced primary care physician with experience teaching day-to-day mental health with patients on the New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council. Commenter was particularly concerned with the expertise necessary to develop useful curriculum to be developed for classroom teachers.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE:

No response necessary as the comment is outside the scope of the proposed rule. However, the Department extended the opportunity to this individual to participate as a member of the New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council.

**NEW YORK STATE MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
JANUARY 2018**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Adams, Heather Health Teachers Section: Assistant in Research And Educational Services	New York State United Teachers
Adman, Gail Director of School Nursing	New York City Department of Education
Andriola, Tom Chief of Policy Implementation	New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
Armbruster, Lindsay New York State Certified Health Educator	Burnt Hills, Ballston Lake Central School District New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
Bailey, Doug Educational Consultant	New York State Office of Mental Health
Bargy, Jennifer Director, Bureau of Youth Development and Crossover Initiatives	New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Barney, Maribeth Supervisor of Education Programs	New York State Education Department
Barrett, Peg LCSW-R	New York State School Social Workers Association President and Board Member
Belokopitsky, Kyle Executive Director	New York State Parent Teachers Association
Benson, Debbie Executive Director	New York State Council on Children and Families
Bernardi, Mike Attendance Teacher	Albany City School District
Bernstein, Barbara Chief Planning Officer	Mental Health Association of New York State, Inc. Westchester County
Bloom, Scott Director School Mental Health Services	New York City Department of Education
Brandt-Ruzza, Sharyn Manager School-Based Health Clinics	New York State Department of Health
Breux, Pat Coordinator of School & Youth Initiatives	Suicide Prevention Center New York State Office of Mental Health
Bullock, Ebony Assistant Superintendent	Office of Shared Accountability Buffalo Public Schools
Bunn, Christine Family & Consumer Science Teacher	Liverpool Central School District New York State Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
Burch, Wendy Executive Director and Parent Advocate	National Alliance on Mental Illness
Burr, Emily New York State Certified Health Educator	Albany City School District

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Canzone-Ball, Kerri Director of Pupil Personnel Services	Albany City School District
Casey, Mary Beth Associate, Office of Curriculum and Instruction	New York State Education Department
Cieri, Anna Dr. Assistant Superintendent Student Services	Williamsville Central School District
Delgado, Rachel Elementary Teacher	Scotia-Glenville Central School District
Daily, Darryl Associate in Physical Education, Office of Curriculum and Instruction	New York State Education Department
Davidson, Amanda Youth Engagement Specialist	Youth Power!
Dawson, Amy Health Education Instructional Coach	New York City Department of Education
DeCataldo, Kathleen Assistant Commissioner, Office of Student Support Services	New York State Education Department
Dye, Thelma Ph.D. Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer	Northside Center for Child Development, New York City
Emerson, Susan MD	Family Medicine, Bassett Healthcare
Ficarra, Laura Ph.D. Coordinator Prevention Planning and Education	New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
Gallagher, Cindy Director of Governmental Relations	School Administrators Association of New York State
Grishman, Henry Superintendent	Jericho Union Free School District New York State Council of School Superintendents
Grodin, Jerry PhD Director of Professional Affairs	New York State Psychological Association
Guthrie, Elisabeth MD	Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University/New York State Psychiatric Institute
Harr, Lindsay Executive Director School Wellness Programs	New York City Department of Education
Hernas, Denise Public Health Program Nurse-Child Health	School-Based Health Centers New York State Department of Health
Hull, Jessica New York State Certified Health Educator Middle School	Shenendehowa Central School District New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance
Irani, Priti Research Scientist-Public Policy	New York State Department of Health
Jambor, Steven Ph.D. Professor President	Fordham University School of Education Westchester/Putnam School Boards Association
Jean, Gloria Professional Development Committee Chair	New York State School Counselor Association College of Saint Rose
Khalil, Linda Executive Director	New York State Center for School Health

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Kremer, Tim Executive Director	New York State School Boards Association
Lask, Sylvia Board Member and Advocate	Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.
Liebman, Glenn Chief Executive Officer	Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.
Manchester, Carri Associate, Office of Student Support Services	New York State Education Department
Martello, Jacqueline Division of Integrated Community Services for Children and Families	New York State Office of Mental Health
Maynard, Shauna School Psychologist	Guilderland Central School District New York Association of School Psychologists
McDowell, Karla Pupil Personnel Assistant Director	Albany City School District
McHugh, Mary LCSW-R Director, Strategic Clinical Solutions	New York State Office of Mental Health
Miller, Connie Educational Support Services	Board of Cooperative Educational Services
Molloy, Amy Director of Education	Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.
Morrissey, Martha Associate, Office of Student Support Services	New York State Education Department
Murray, Catherine New York State Certified Health Educator	Southern Cayuga Central School District
Pierce, Paige Executive Director	Families Together in New York State
Pendegar, Ellen Chair of Board of Directors Chief Executive Officer	Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc Ulster County, Mental Health Association in New York State
Perrone, Lisa New York State Certified Health Educator Middle School	Ballston Spa Central School District New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance
Petrucci, Terri New York State Certified Health Educator High School	Walter Panas Central School District Lakeland Central School District
Pietropaolo, Laura New York State Certified Health Educator (retired)	New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance
Provencher, Kate Mental Health Program Specialist	New York State Office of Mental Health
Przylucki, Bill Director Collaborative Solutions	New York State Council on Children and Families
Ramirez, Melissa Deputy Director	Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc
Richter, John	

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Director of Public Policy	Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc
Rider, Renee Associate Commissioner, Office of School Operations and Management Services	New York State Education Department
Salamone, Adrienne	Social Worker
Sawyer-Cohen, Jeannette PhD Child Psychologist	New York State Psychological Association
Shearer, Kristen President	New York State School Counselor Association
Sherman, Michele Librarian/Media Specialist	Monroe-Woodbury High School, Central Valley
Smith, Ron Psychologist Superintendent (retired)	New York State Council of School Superintendents
Stranahan, Robert Health and Physical Education Teacher	Green Tech High Charter School, Albany
Thompson, Paul Supervisor, Office of Professions	New York State Education Department
Tierney, Tina Executive Director	New York State Center for School Safety
Valesey, Brianna Director; Youth Leadership and Advocate	Youth Power!
Venery, Christine Mental Health Director	Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Health Services
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Wells, Lynne Dr. Assistant Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction	Capital Region BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services)
Whelan, Meghan Associate, Special Education Policy Unit	New York State Education Department
Whipple, Elizabeth Associate, Office of Student Support Services	New York State Education Department
Williams, Betsy School Nurse/District Leader	Scotia- Glenville Central School District New York State Association of School Nurses
Wright, Jessica New York State Certified Health Educator High School	Monroe- Woodbury High School, Central Valley New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance
Wright, Shammara Director of Health Education	New York City Department of Education
Wyman, Peter Ph.D. Professor	Department of Psychiatry University of Rochester School of Medicine

New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council Recommendations to the New York State Board of Regents

Mental Health Classroom Instructional Resources Workgroup 1 Recommendations

1.1- Professional development (PD) or training for educators on application of the “Mental Health Instructional Guide” in classrooms as part of an integrated approach of infusing mental health into all curriculum subjects (Health, English, History, etc.).

1.2 - Health education curriculum (Pre-K–12) inclusive of mental health, taught by NYS Certified Health Educators having professional development in content.

1.3 – Mental health literacy instruction for high school students on prevalent mental health disorders to gain knowledge, attitudes and competencies to help self-identify for themselves and others. Mental health literacy key components:

- a. Understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health
- b. Understanding mental disorders (i.e., anxiety, depression, psychosis) and treatments
- c. Decreasing stigma
- d. Enhance help-seeking efficacy (know when, where, and how to obtain good health with skills to promote self-care)

1.4 – Increase time and identify regular frequency to teach students health education, inclusive of mental health, in the classroom setting:

- a. Instruction to begin in Pre-K
- b. Identify amount of time instruction is to occur in elementary school (i.e., 20 lessons each school year, at each grade level)
- c. Increase middle school instruction to .5 credit at each grade level
- d. Increase high school instruction to 1 full credit

*Efforts need to be made to minimize the amount of time between instruction at the middle school and high school level to reduce potential 4-5-year learning gaps.

1.5 – Dedicate funding to support integrating mental health education:

- a. Fill NYS Education Department position: Associate in Health Education
- b. Update NYS Learning Standards for Health Education (1996)
- c. Create an addendum, or completely update the Guidance Document for Achieving the New York State Standards in Health Education (2005)

Multiple Dimensions of Mental Health Workgroup 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 – Increase the presence of pupil personnel staff (i.e., school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse) in schools by minimally, aligning staffing with student population and identified needs.
- 2.2 – Promote the role and expertise of school social workers, school counselors and school psychologists to support health educators.
- 2.3 - Include mental health wellness, and the multiple dimensions of health (i.e., physical, nutrition, social-emotional) in school districts mission and vision statements.
- 2.4- Build on existing resources to strengthen capacity, infrastructure and integration:
- a. Boards of Cooperative Education Services offer regional services such as community school programs through a Cooperative Service or a CoSer.
 - b. Work with an existing committee (i.e., local wellness committee) to advise on mental health instruction and related supports.
- 2.5 - Integrate the NYS Education Department’s Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Benchmarks into school programs and the instruction of mental health.

Resources for Schools, Students and Families Workgroup 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 - Provide guidance on best practices in effective schools - community partnerships to address student mental health, physical health, and overall well-being.
- 3.2 – Support district/school leadership and pupil personnel services to develop innovative strategies (i.e., extended learning opportunities) supporting mental health and wellness of students through the utilization of school resources and the enhancement of school-community partnerships.
- 3.3 – Identify a liaison within each school to ensure parents/guardians are informed, supported, and engaged in knowing the school and community mental health resources available to the family.
- 3.4 – Provide guidance, and template resources for parents/guardians on how to guide conversations and talk with their children about mental health to support the instruction they are receiving in school.
- 3.5 - Align NYS Education Department’s funding priorities that promote positive school climate while leveraging State-level partnerships (i.e., NYS Office of Mental

Health, Mental Health Association in NYS, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, etc.).

Supporting Positive School Climate and Culture Workgroup 4 Recommendations

4.1 – All instructional and non-instructional staff in schools receive PD or training, minimally in the following areas:

- a. Content aligned to their district/school-wide prevention framework;
- b. Promotion of mental wellness;
- c. Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks;
- d. Accessing mental health supports for students and families; and
- e. Recognizing, and appropriately responding to sensitive situations.

4.2 – Assess the school climate based on the NYS Education Department’s SEL school-based framework that includes mental health and wellness.

4.3 – Districts/schools adopt and support a whole-school based framework to promote a positive school climate while supporting the whole-child approach.

4.4 – Districts/schools conduct ongoing valid and reliable research-based school climate needs assessment, including data collected from students, parents, and staff, leading to the development of mental health and wellness goals.

4.5 – Extend the applicability of functional knowledge of mental health into areas in schools beyond the classroom emphasizing the impact on school climate.

Implementation Workgroup 5 Recommendations

5.1 - NYS Education Department develops guidance to school districts regarding comprehensive health programs, services, and instructions that incorporate and connect inter-related student wellness topics such as mental health, social emotional learning, school counseling programs and services, health, and the whole child.

5.2 - The Board of Education for each district adopt and approve a policy requiring district collaboration with the NYS Office of Mental Health and other mental health professionals regarding the inclusion of mental health education and awareness, instruction, prevention, and alternatives to discipline intervention strategies, within a comprehensive health education program.

5.3 – NYS Education Department’s Offices of Higher Education, P-12, Teacher Certification and Office of Professions work with colleges and universities to require pre-service higher education programs to infuse knowledge in addressing children’s mental health within instructional and administrative staff preparation programs.

5.4 - Integrate mental health education into the NYS Health Education Framework's functional knowledge and skills by developing a state-level web resource with materials related to best practices and evidence-based practices on mental health instruction, integration, supports, materials, and evaluation (e.g. [Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome \(SOLO\) Taxonomy](#) of a practical and evidence-based approach to illustrate student learning outcomes and engage students in the process).

5.5 - PD or training for educators on sequential integration of mental health into curriculum Pre-K-12, utilizing a statewide coordinated leadership model of best practice professional development engaging current health education structures.

5.6 - Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) certificate holders to complete ten percent of currently required CTLE hours in mental health.