

Dear State Representative (Superintendent of School District/Department of Education),

I am writing to you as a constituent and a high school student/parent/educator/\_\_\_\_\_. I'm also a supporter of the non-profit GoTough.org, which has the mission of promoting mental toughness. I'm writing to urge your support to build a resilience curriculum in public schools.

In a survey done by the University of Pennsylvania (Upenn), well-being came up as the top priority for parents. 25 years of research done by UPenn have shown that resilience increases well-being, classroom engagement, and social behaviors while decreasing hopelessness, mental illness, and conduct problems. Well-being is more than just physical fitness. It includes social, emotional, and mental wellness.

While students spend most of their waking hours in schools, they do not have a chance to receive any mental wellness training. This huge gap in our educational system is alarming considering the rampant increase in student depression and suicide. According to the WHO, one in seven 10- 19 year olds experience a mental disorder. Among 15 - 29 year olds, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death. Failure to prevent mental illness in children, which often extends into adulthood, limits opportunities, as it impedes on their mental and physical health. With government funded schools, It's hard to win the argument that it's not the schools' responsibility to help fight this crisis.

Resilience skills not only help to prevent mental illness, but, more critically, also build a foundation for our success. In UPenn's Resilience Program (PRP), which was specifically designed for school age children, they teach optimism, empathy, strengths of character, relationship building, and willingness to fail and courage to bounce back. Resilience develops much like muscles in our body; it requires continuous training to further strengthen our mind. We have the opportunity to build these character traits in the next generation. Schools should be the training ground for this.

We are aware that our schools recently received funding for mental health counseling for students, which is a step in the right direction. However, this only addresses the problem after it has occurred instead of a more proactive and preventative approach. What we also need is a mandatory resilience curriculum that provides all students with mental toughness training, so that they can learn skills to bounce back from adversities in life.

I urge you to support the implementation of resilience programs in schools by funding the training of teachers in resiliency and installing a resilience curriculum. In doing so, you will demonstrate your commitment to healthy lives for our families. Please let me know if you or your staff would like any additional information to develop this important legislation, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_