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March 23, 2015

TO: Co-Chairs Nathanson and Bates  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means-Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Wayne Herron Superintendent  
Elgin School District

Subject: School Access to Mental Health Services

Co-Chairs Nathanson and Bates and Members of the Committee:

My name is Wayne Herron, and I am the Elgin High School Principal and also the Elgin School District's Superintendent. I am writing in support of School Access to Mental Health Services.

Due to school budget constraints for a number of years, the Elgin School District has not been in a position to fund a full-time mental health specialist. The state funding received by our Center for Human Development, has allowed for a mental health specialist at our high school.

This position has proved to be extremely beneficial to our high school students. Our student population includes a high percentage of students on free and reduced lunches, students from single parent families, and students that live with guardians other than their parents. Our mental health specialist this year is working with a full daily schedule of students that are dealing with a wide array of issues stemming from their lives outside of our school.

Consequences due to inappropriate behavior in our classrooms or hallways do not always change the inappropriate behavior. The behavior often stems from deeper issues in those student's lives. Over the years, it has been frustrating to me as the high school principal to sense our students needed help beyond what I could provide in my position. Our mental health specialist has definitely helped fill a much needed void.

Due to the positive impact our mental health specialist is providing for our students at Elgin High School, I would urge the continuation of funding for this position. Please contact me if there is anything more I can do to help secure the necessary funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Herron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "W" and "H".

Wayne Herron  
Superintendent/High School Principal  
Elgin School District