



Promoting Mental Health Education in Schools through Legislation: *Strategies for Advocacy and Implementation*

Jenifer Urff, JD, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health

*Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health
Austin, TX – November 7-9, 2019*

Mental Health Education Laws



States requiring mental health education:

- New York
- New Jersey
- Virginia (9-10)
- Maine
- Pennsylvania
- *Florida*

States considering mental health education laws:

- Massachusetts
- Delaware
- Kentucky
- South Carolina

What is Driving Mental Health Education Laws?



- Increased rates of mental health needs
 - Prevalence rates
 - Special needs/accommodations and IEPs
- Suicide
- School safety
- Student advocacy

What Do We Mean by Mental Health Education?



- Universal; primary intervention
- Distinct from mental health services and supports
- Purposes:
 - Increase mental health knowledge
 - Improve attitudes toward mental health; decrease stigma
 - Increase help-seeking behavior
 - Promote resiliency

Mental health education is designed to give students the information they need to better understand, value, and protect their mental health.



Social Emotional Learning Core Competencies



Mental Health Association of New York State

Can Mental Health Education Help?



	Probably	Possibly	Probably Not
Increased Knowledge	✓		
Improved Attitudes		✓	
Help-Seeking Behavior		✓	

Salerno J. P. (2016). Effectiveness of Universal School-Based Mental Health Awareness Programs Among Youth in the United States: A Systematic Review. *The Journal of School Health*, 86(12), 922–931.

Navigating the Complexities



Leah Harris:

We ... need to teach students that adversity, while affecting us in significant ways, is not destiny. The brain is neuroplastic, or able to heal itself, especially when we are exposed to the right kinds of social support, and learn strategies for regulating our chronically-stressed nervous systems. **We need to underscore that healing is always possible, and affirm the many ways in which young people manage to cope and survive in the face of incredible adversities.**

<https://www.madinamerica.com/2018/07/why-mandating-mental-health-education-in-schools-is-a-band-aid-on-a-gaping-wound/>

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS THROUGH LEGISLATION

STRATEGIES FOR ADVOCACY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Lucas Johnson

Director, Coalition For The Common Good

COALITION FOR THE COMMON GOOD

- Coalition for the Common Good: Public interest group aiming to raise awareness of issues that affect all Americans through the creation, proposal, and lobbying of non-partisan policy alternatives.
- Has passed legislation in Virginia and Maine concerning mental health education in K-12 public high school health classes.
- Organizing with students from five states aimed to improve the mental health environment of schools through the passage of legislation created, written, and lobbied by and for students.



MENTAL
HEALTH
LEGISLATION

K-12 Mental Health Education: Bringing mental health education into K-12 health classes to provide a more holistic and substantive approach to human health.

Mental Health First Aid for School Personnel: Aims to increase school personnel's knowledge of mental health and improve school mental health environments through the implementation of Mental Health First Aid into employment requirements.

Mental Health Counselor Pilot Program: Incorporates mental health counselors into middle and high schools to provide substantive on-site support for at-risk students.

VIRGINIA LEGISLATION

2018:

Enaction of \$150,000 of funding for full-time mental health counselors in three high schools in Albemarle County Public School District

Passage of mental health education bill unanimously in Virginia General Assembly

2020:

Effort to introduce Mental Health First Aid for training for school personnel and mental health counselor pilot program





MAINE LEGISLATION

2019:

Passage of mental health education bill unanimously in Maine State Legislature

2020:

Effort to introduce mental health counselor pilot program in Maine State Legislature

2019 LEGISLATIVE AIMS

1. Alaska: Mental Health Education Bill - Prefiled
2. Arizona: Mental Health Education Bill - Prefiled
3. Delaware: Mental Health Education Bill - Prefiled
4. Indiana: Mental Health Education Bill - Prefile Attempt
5. Kentucky: Mental Health Education Bill - Prefiled
6. Maine: Mental Health Counselor Pilot Program - Prefile Attempt
7. Virginia: Mental Health Counselor Pilot Program - Prefile Attempt
8. Virginia: Mental Health First Aid for School Personnel - Prefile Attempt



STUDENT INITIATIVE ON LEGISLATION



Student perspective matters, especially on issues they face every day and can readily identify as problems in their community.

Student support and input is fundamental to raising awareness of an issue, and integral to the success of any policy proposal.

We believe successful policy writing combines professional advocacy and student initiative.

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**The 2019 Annual Conference on
Advancing School Mental Health**
November 8, 2019



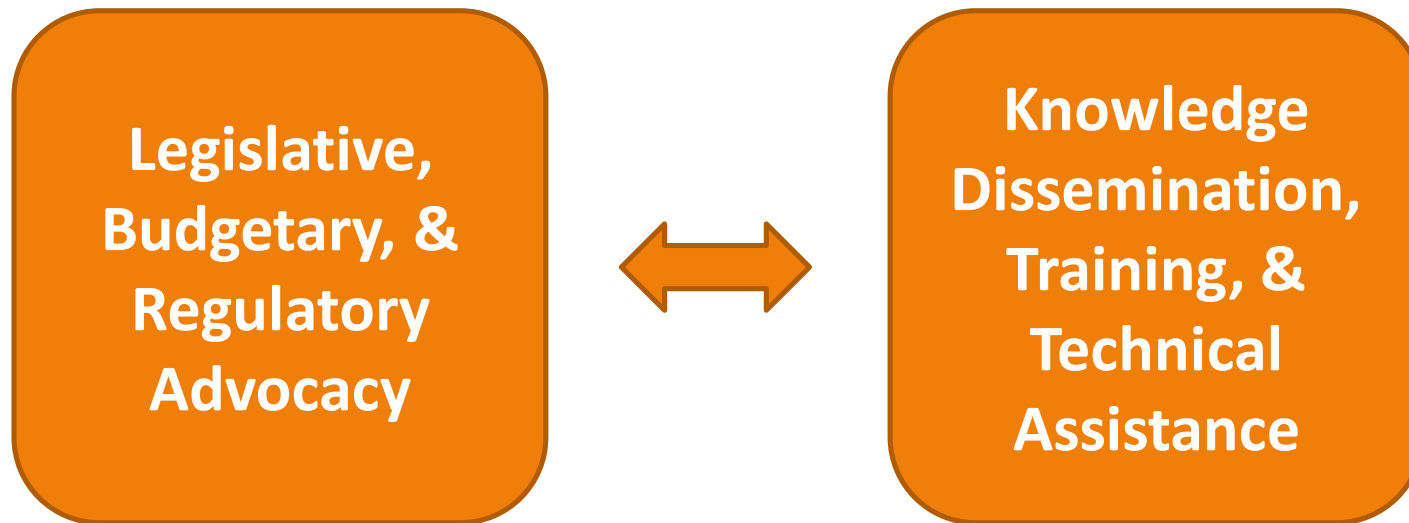
Jessica Larochelle, MPH
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
Massachusetts Association for Mental Health

About MAMH



Mission and Vision

MAMH is committed to advancing mental health and well being by promoting prevention, early intervention, effective treatment and research to address social, emotional and mental health challenges.



Advocacy Framework



COMMUNITY CATALYST SYSTEM OF ADVOCACY



*Graphic courtesy of Community Catalyst

Opportunity in Massachusetts



- Few education mandates in Massachusetts
- The Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework last revised in 1999
- Data from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MA Department of Public Health, MetroWest Health Foundation, clearly illustrate need
- Other states achieving change though legislative advocacy provide inspiration

Advocacy Framework

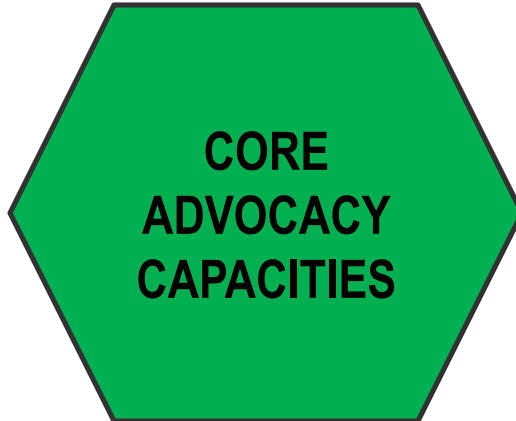


COMMUNITY CATALYST SYSTEM OF ADVOCACY



*Graphic courtesy of Community Catalyst

Core Advocacy Capacities



GRASSROOTS

- Let's Empower, Advocate, and Do Inc. (LEAD)
- Lucas Johnson (Virginia, Maine, and beyond)

GRASSTOPS STAKEHOLDERS

- MA Dept. Elementary and Secondary Education, Safe and Supportive Schools
- Social Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts
- Massachusetts School Mental Health Consortium
- Massachusetts School-Based Health Alliance
- Behavioral Health Integrated Resources for Children Center
- MindWise Innovations and The Nan Project
- Children's Mental Health Campaign (CF Adams Fund)
- Massachusetts Community Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention Commission

POLICY ANALYSIS

- MAMH drafts literature review and policy brief

Advocacy Framework

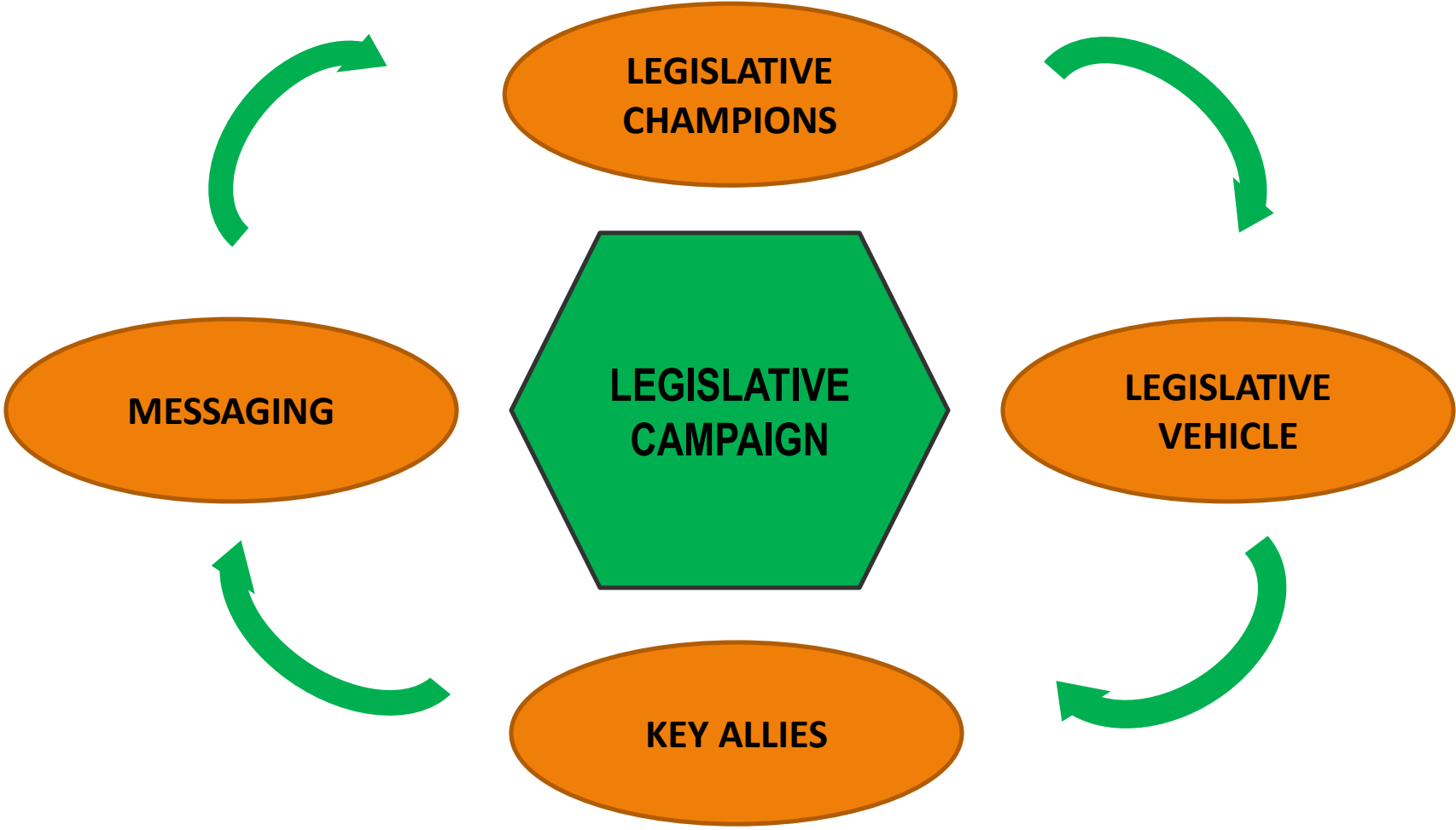


COMMUNITY CATALYST SYSTEM OF ADVOCACY



*Graphic courtesy of Community Catalyst

Legislative Campaign



Legislative Campaign



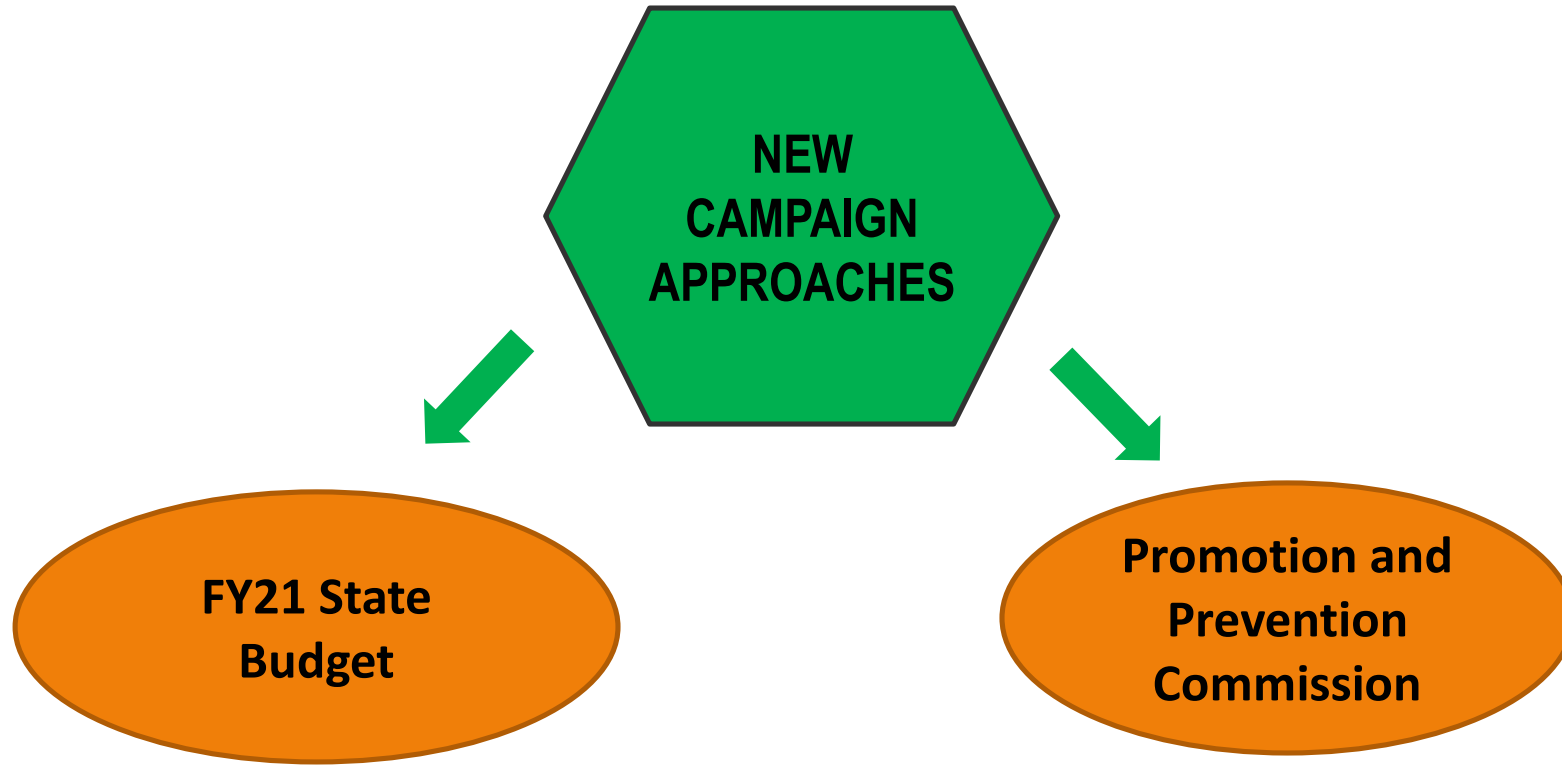
MAMH
Massachusetts Association
for Mental Health



New Campaign Approaches



Advocacy Capacities: Flexibility and Responsiveness



Thank You!



- For more information about MAMH, please visit our website: www.mamh.org
- To contact me directly, please email me: Jessicalarochelle@mamh.org

THANK YOU!



HEALTHY MINDS FOR A HEALTHY NEW YORK

Promoting Mental Health Education in Schools through Legislation: *Strategies for Advocacy and Implementation*

Presented by:

Amy Molloy, Director

School Mental Health Resource and Training Center

Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.



MHANYS is a not-for-profit organization that works to end the stigma against mental illness and promote mental health wellness in New York State. MHANYS achieves this through training, education, advocacy and policy, community-based partnership programming, and by connecting individuals and families to help.



HEALTHY MINDS FOR A HEALTHY NEW YORK

Mental Health Literacy

When people are educated about:

- how to recognize mental health disorders
- common risk factors
- self-help strategies and types of professional help
- stigma and how it impacts help-seeking behaviors

Then people are more likely to:

- express positive attitudes about mental health
- seek professional help sooner
- be able to support others

Based on research by Dr. Anthony Jorm, Australia

“We possess the knowledge and tools necessary to increase awareness in young people about mental health, how to recognize signs and symptoms in themselves and others and how to get help. Why in the world would we withhold this lifesaving information from our youth?”

MHANYS Issue Brief: Mental Health Education in Schools 2016

TIMELINE: 2016

From Partnerships to Planning

- October 2016 – Governor signs Mental Health Education bill
- March 2017 – MHANYS hosts education summit
- August 2017 – State Education Department sends survey
- September 2017 – Advisory Council first meeting
- October 2017 – MHANYS publishes white paper

Mental Health Education in New York Schools

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE HISTORY, INTENT AND
VISION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

October 19, 2017



Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

HEALTHY MINDS FOR A HEALTHY NEW YORK

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Included:

- Legislative Background
- National Trends
- Why Mental Health Instruction
- Mental Health Literacy
- MHANYS recommendations:
 - Guiding Principles
 - Curriculum Elements

Available at:

www.mhanys.org

*MHANY'S
9 Concepts
to include
in Mental
Health
Instruction*

1. A holistic view of wellness, including self-care and personal responsibility.
2. The concept of mental health as an integral part of health.
3. Recognition of signs & symptoms of developing mental health problems.
4. Instruction in the awareness and management of mental health crises.
5. The relationship between mental health and substance use.
6. Understanding of how stigma & cultural attitudes contribute to discrimination.
7. The concept of recovery.
8. The implications of risk factors, protective factors and resiliency.
9. How to identify and leverage appropriate professionals, services & supports.

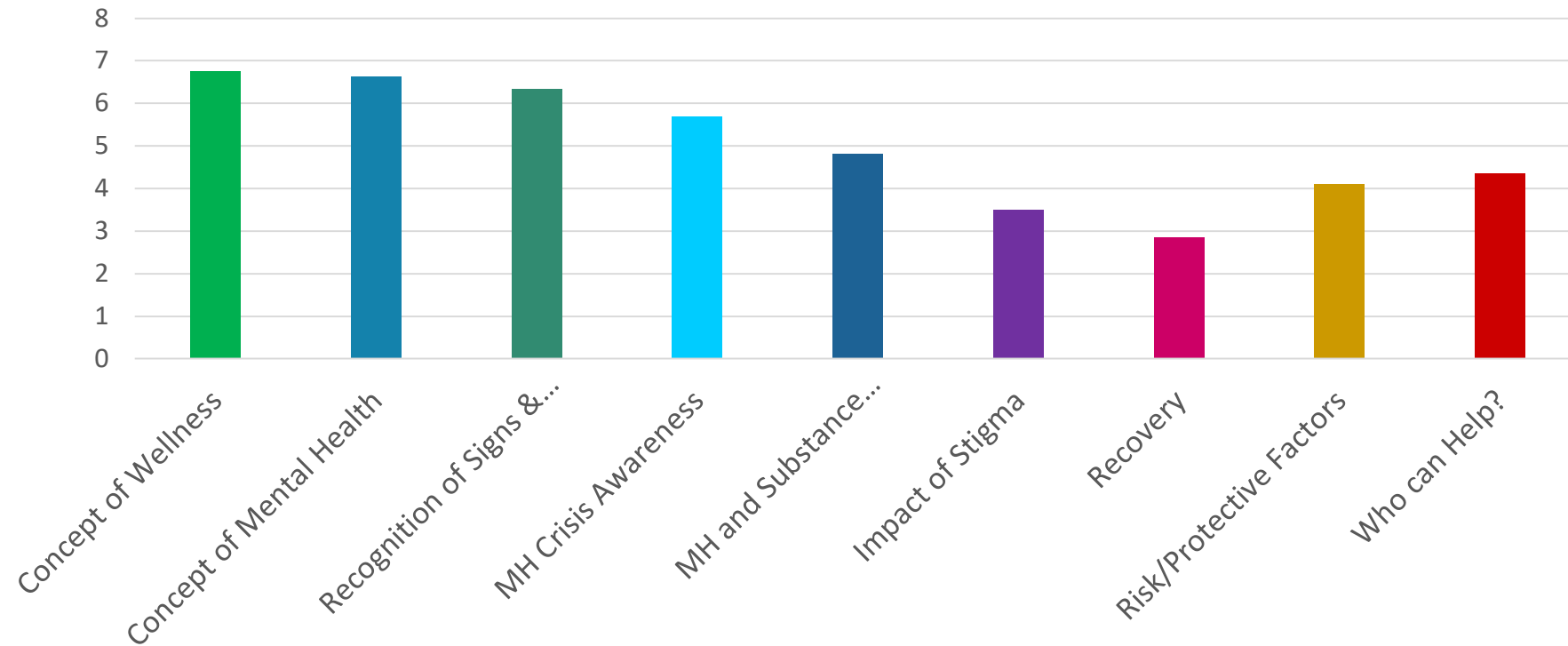
*NYS
Education
Law
§ 804*

took effect July 1, 2018

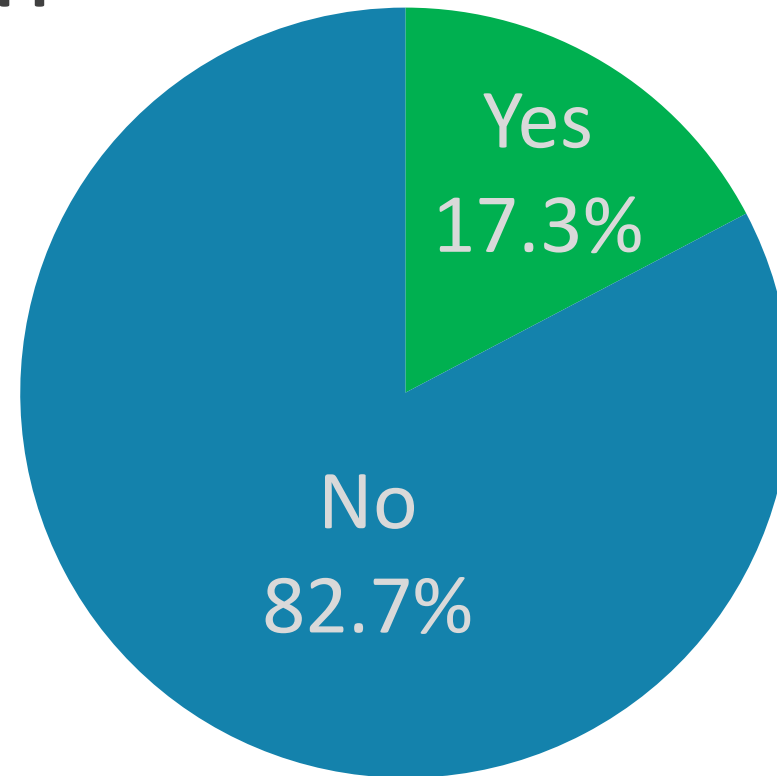
“All schools shall ensure that their health education programs recognize the **multiple dimensions** of health by including mental health, and the **relationship of physical health and mental health**, so as to **enhance student understanding, attitudes and behaviors that promote health, well-being and human dignity.**”

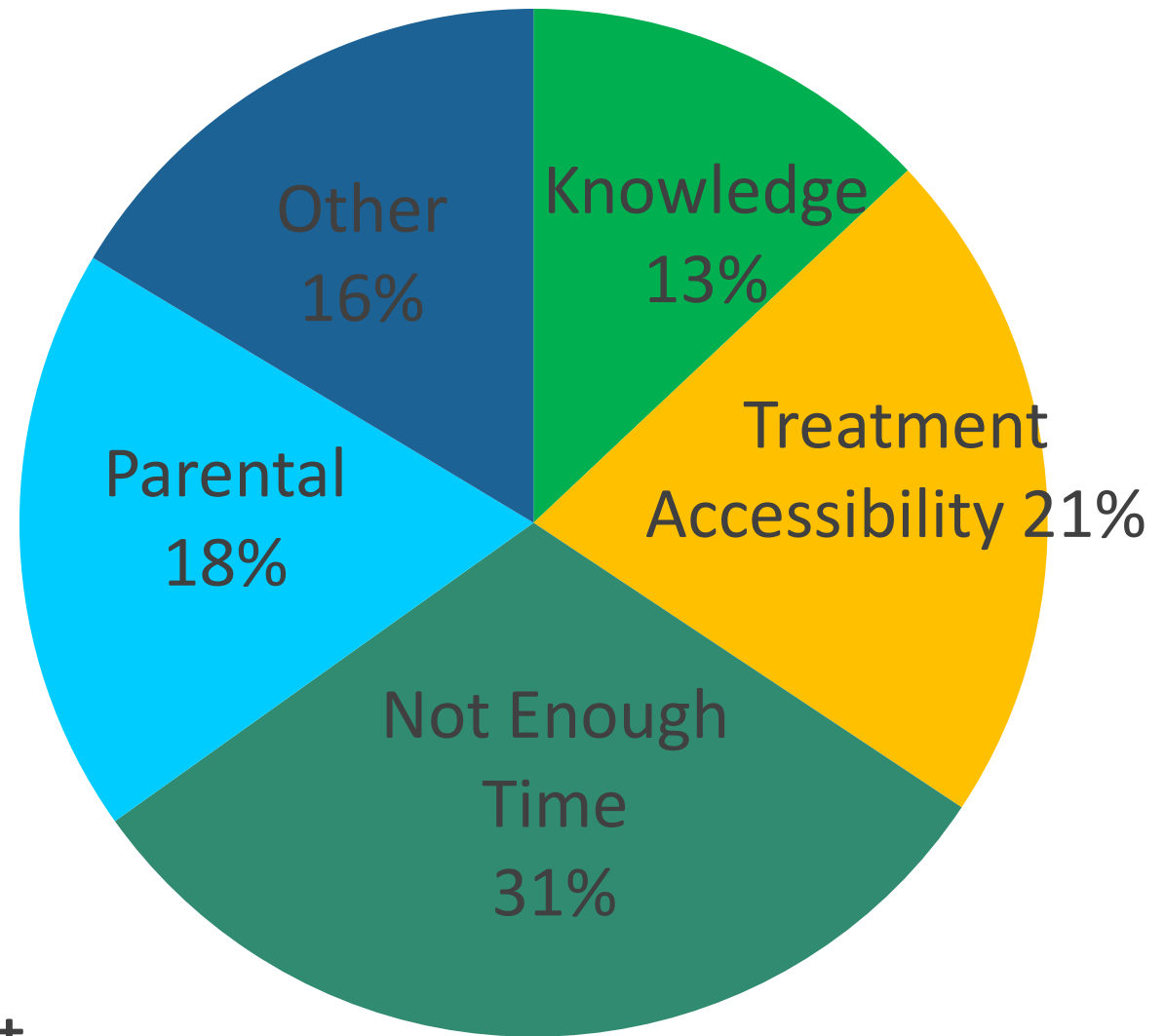
School Survey Results

Rank Order of Mental Health Instruction Topics



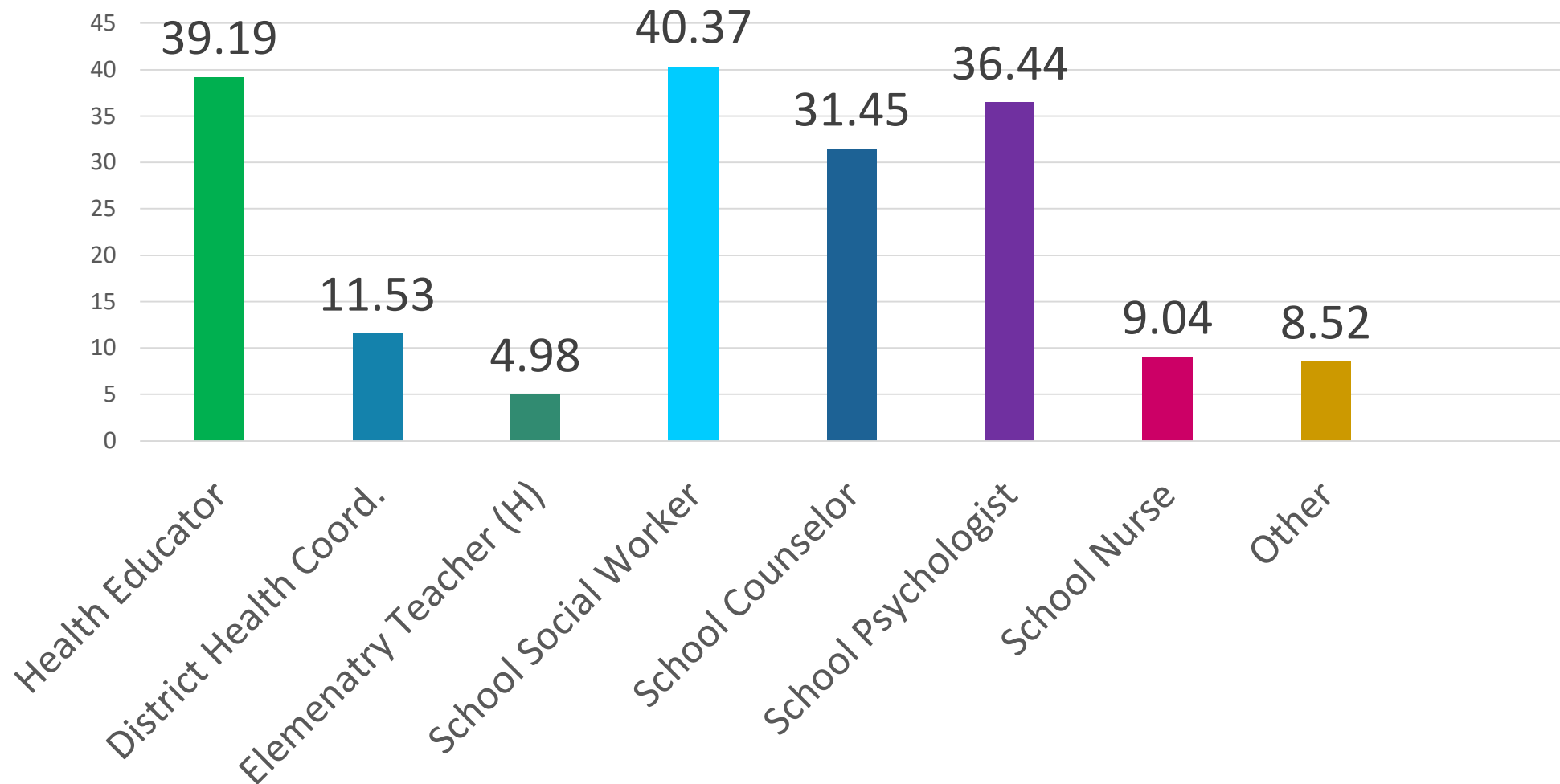
Concerns About Ability to Teach Mental Health





Barriers that Might Interfere With Teaching about Mental Health

Who Would Coordinate Instruction in Your School/District?



Mental Health Advisory Council

WORKGROUPS:

- 1) Mental Health Instruction/Resources for the Classroom
- 2) Multiple Dimensions of Mental Health
- 3) Mental Health Resources for Schools, Students and Families
- 4) Supporting a Positive Climate and Culture
- 5) Implementation

TIMELINE: 2018

From Guidance to Implementation

- January 2018 – MHANYS advocates for Resource Center
- April 2018 – MHANYS receives \$1M in state budget
- May 2018 – guidance is presented to Board of Regents
- July 2018 – law takes effect, Resource Center is launched
guidance is shared with education community

TIMELINE: 2019

Building on our Success

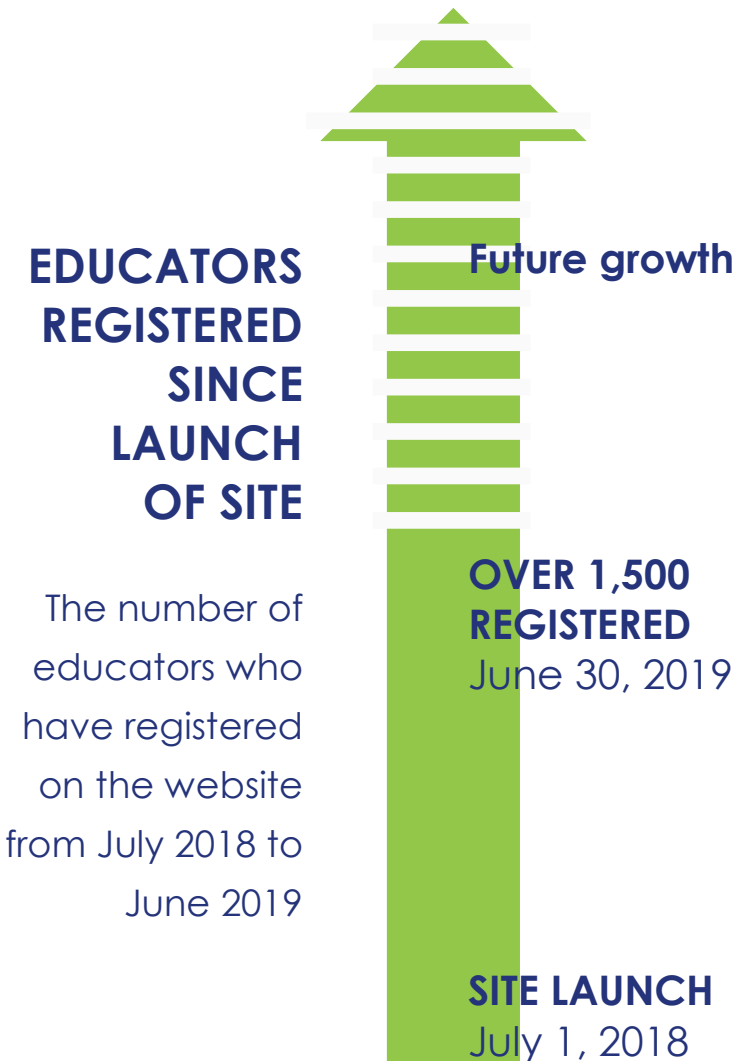
January 2019– MHANYS advocates for continued funding

April 2019 – MHANYS receives \$500K in Governor's budget

June 2019 –send survey to education community

August 2019 – first year evaluation is completed

School Mental Health Resource and Training Center: Utilization Data for Year One



NYS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS' PARTICIPATION EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES MAXIMIZED

TRAININGS	PARTICIPANTS
140 facilitated	7,065 attended
5 regional summits	600 participated

Participants have included educators, administrators, and other school staff.

School Mental Health Resource and Training Center

Utilization Data 2018-2019

IMPACT

More than **1,500 educators** have **accessed** the Center's K-12 "We All Have Mental Health" lesson plans on the website.

On December 12, an online training titled, "Supporting the Mental Health and Wellness of Students" was launched. Since then, **416 educators** **registered** for the training.

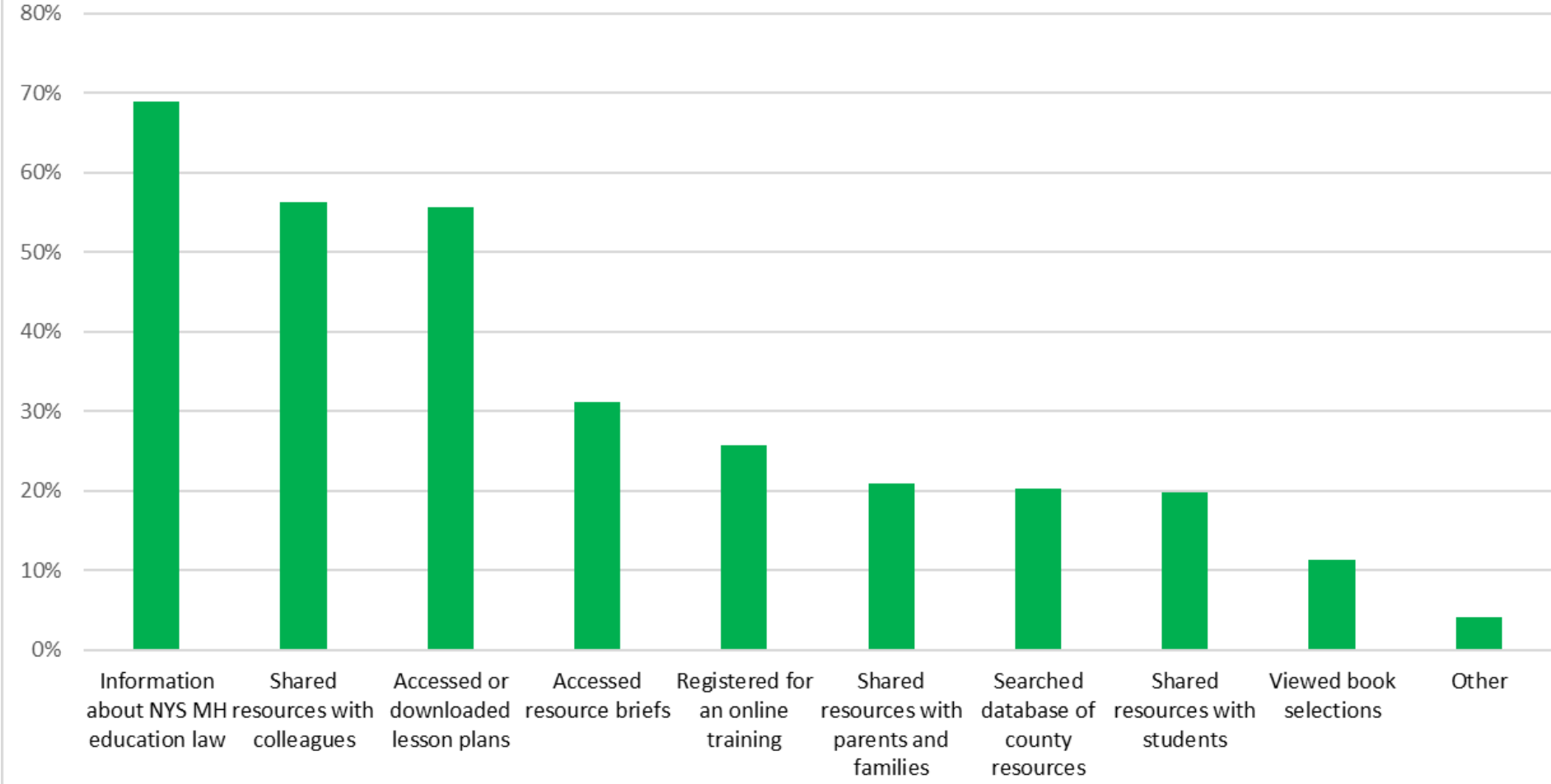
The World Mental Health lesson plans were **accessed** approximately **1,800 times** since they were posted on World Mental Health Day on October 10, 2018.

"Resource Briefs" provide a snapshot of programs for mental health instruction; **2,361 users** have **visited** the webpage to view these resources.

The Center offers a search tool for community-based resources (by county) which has been **visited 2,428 times** since it was launched in October.

Regional staff provided mental health instruction in **21 school districts**; **4,900 middle school and high school students** received mental health education.

How have you used the information from the School Mental Health Resource and Training Center website? (check all that apply)



School Mental Health Resource and Training Center

Utilization Data 2018-2019

I have found this resource incredibly effective. One of the few partnerships that I have felt has had an immediate impact on our school community.

*—Educator
Survey Respondent, June 2019*

REGIONAL SUMMITS

97% of those completing evaluations from all five Regional Summits agreed that the topics covered were relevant and the content could be applied to their work with students and/or in the school setting.

89% reported that the content increased their understanding of the alignment of the Mental Health Education Framework with other New York State Education Department initiatives.



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THANK YOU!