

# American Academy of Pediatrics

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**California Chapter 2** - Kern | Los Angeles | Riverside | San Bernardino  
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The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva  
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## **Re: AB 552 Integrated School-Based Behavioral Health Partnership Program – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Quirk-Silva,

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) California Chapter 2, which represents over 1,000 pediatricians, is in full support of AB 552, which would create the Integrated School-Based Behavioral Health Services Partnership Program encouraging local education agencies and county behavioral health agencies to collaborate on providing on-school campus services for students at the earliest onset of a behavioral health condition.

In October 2021 the AAP declared a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health due to soaring rates of mental health challenges among children, adolescents, and their families, that were exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Within California, incidents of youth deliberately causing self-harm increased 50 percent between 2009 and 2018, according to the state auditor report. Further, according to state data, between 2019-2020 opioid-related overdoses among 15- to 19-year-olds nearly tripled. And one in 330 California children has lost a parent or caregiver to the pandemic.

AB 552 will increase on-school campus mental and behavioral health services to ensure timely service delivery for all students, regardless of insurance status. Expanding mental and behavioral health services to youth while at school is an important step in addressing the ongoing youth behavioral health emergency.

Sincerely,

Karinne Van Groningen, MD, MPH  
Legislative and Policy Analyst  
AAP-CA2