

Local, Federal, State Efforts to Address Student Mental Health Highlighted

U.S. Secretary of Education's School Bus Tour Visits State

LANISING – Students at Detroit's Cass Tech High School discussed student mental health needs with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona on Thursday. State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice and State Board of Education President Dr. Pamela Pugh joined Secretary Cardona at the school for the final stop of the Michigan leg of his four-day 2024 Back to School Bus Tour.

"We appreciate support that our federal partners have provided in helping local schools address student mental health challenges," Dr. Rice said. "Improving children's mental health is a top priority and is part of Goal 3 in [Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#), to improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners."

Other attendees of the event at Cass Tech included Detroit Public Schools Community District Superintendent Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Cass Tech Principal Mrs. Lisa Phillips, and Dr. Daveda Colbert, superintendent of Wayne RESA.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, the U.S. Department of Education has expanded access to mental health support in schools across the country. Last year, President Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which included historic levels of funding to address youth mental health, including \$2 billion to create safe, inclusive learning environments for students and hire and train more mental health professionals for schools – where students are most likely to receive these crucial services.

For a number of years, Michigan made large progress in funding children's mental health. Michigan's state school aid act provided no funding for school mental health as recently as fiscal year 2018. After \$31.3 million in funding in each of fiscal years 2019 and 2020, \$56.9 million in fiscal year 2021, \$179.3 million in fiscal year 2022, and \$376.4 million in fiscal year 2023, budget investments in mental health and school safety climbed to an historic \$491.8 million in the current fiscal year, fiscal year 2024.

The increased dollars allowed schools to hire more than 1,000 additional helping professionals such as social workers, counselors, nurses, and psychologists.

To continue to improve children's mental health supports, additional funding is required in subsequent budgets.

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