



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **New Report Calls for Expansion of School-Based Mental Health Services to All NYC Public Elementary Schools**

*CCC Survey Highlights Need for Services and Barriers to Access*

**August 15, 2013** – Today, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) released a new report that lays the groundwork for policy makers to improve outcomes for New York City children by increasing access to school-based mental health services. The report, *A Prescription for Expanding School-Based Mental Health Services in New York City Public Elementary Schools*, highlights the clear need for mental health services on-site at city elementary schools and the financial and regulatory barriers that must be overcome in order to make these crucial services available.

[Download the report here.](#)

“Our report outlines a set of practical steps that can be taken to maximize the value of public mental health care dollars by investing in approaches that will yield better health outcomes, improve quality of life and lower costs to taxpayers,” said CCC’s Executive Director Jennifer March. “We hope that our recommendations will serve as a roadmap toward increasing access to clinical mental health services in schools and across the city’s communities.”

The report stems from a multi-year research project, which included surveys of elementary school principals, surveys of mental health clinicians working in elementary schools, a literature review, mapping of schools and programs, a demographic analysis of communities with and without the services, and ongoing conversations with community partners and state and city agencies. All surveyed principals believed that some of their students had unmet health needs impeding their learning or disrupting the learning of other school children. Principals, as well as clinicians, attributed improvements in students’ academic performance to the availability of on-site clinical mental health services. However, respondents also indicated that there were significant barriers to sustaining and expanding these services including budget deficits, difficulty accessing external financing to offset these deficits and school space constraints.

As a result of these findings, CCC makes a series of recommendations aimed at sustaining and expanding mental health services in elementary schools, including strategies to address state and city regulatory barriers that impact the fiscal viability of on-site services. The report also recommends expanding behavioral intervention programs and other services that improve school climate and increase students’ connections to community-based supports.

“There is an undeniable connection between children’s mental health status and academic success. Mental health is essential to a child’s healthy development. It influences academic performance, school readiness, capacity to learn, social competence and life-long health. By bringing mental health workers to school grounds, students with mental health needs are far more likely to get evaluated and treated, which in turn, promotes academic engagement. Mental health services are not support services; rather, they are integral to the academic experience,” explained Pamela Corbett, CCC’s Policy Associate for Health and Mental Health.

#### **About CCC**

Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York educates and mobilizes New Yorkers to make the city a better place for children. Since 1944, our advocacy has combined public policy research and data analysis with citizen action. We cast light on the issues, educate the public, engage allies, and identify and promote practical solutions to ensure that every New York City child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. For more information, visit our web site at [www.cccnewyork.org](http://www.cccnewyork.org)

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