

CT School Based Mental Health Summit 2012

Connecticut held its first School Based Mental Health Summit on January 25th at Church Street Elementary School in Hamden, CT. The event which was co-sponsored by the Keep The Promise Coalition Children's Committee (<http://www.ctkeepthepromise.org/childrens-committee.php>) and Hamden Public Schools was attended by 175 people. Those in attendance included the Department of Children and Families Commissioner, Joette Katz and the Commissioner of Education, Stefan Pryor. The House Majority Leader of the CT General Assembly, Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden), also attended to learn about key issues related to the mental health of students in our schools across the state.

Eric Arzubi, M.D. who is a psychiatrist and Fellow at Yale Child Study Center was one of the key organizers of the event through his work as co-chair of the Keep The Promise Coalition Children's Committee. During his presentation he noted that only 20 percent of school age youth in need of mental health services actually receive services. "Of those children who do get access to services, more than 75% receive mental health support in their school." Keynote speaker, Sharon Stephan, PhD., of the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine noted, "Schools have become the de facto provider of mental health services for young people in this country."

Hamden Public Schools Coordinator of Special Education Student Support Services, Christopher Brown, presented information describing how the school district is partnering with community resources, Town departments, and private funders to meet the growing social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. "We have built a strong infrastructure in the district to support the social and emotional development of our students thanks to the advocacy of Superintendent Rabinowitz and our Board of Education. We also know that we can form valuable partnerships with other local organizations that will bring our broader community together to effectively meet the challenges faced by our students and their families."

The School Based Mental Health Summit was recorded in its entirety by The Connecticut Network. If you were unable to attend the event, but would like to view the presentation please go to <http://ct-n.com/ondemand.asp?ID=7388> and you can watch the event at your convenience.