

Psychometric Analysis of Educators' Perceptions of North Carolina's School-Based Mental Health Policy

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Abstract : In 2020 North Carolina passed legislation mandating all educators be trained in identifying, referring, and supporting students showing signs of mental health issues, drug use, suicidal ideation, and sex trafficking. This study collected survey responses from 226 educators in North Carolina to better understand their perspectives on the legislation and their self-efficacy in supporting student mental health needs. Key findings of the study reveal that the mandated trainings increased educator awareness of student mental health, and higher awareness was linked to higher self-efficacy in supporting student mental health needs. Additionally, the results showed that educators who identify as Black had lower levels of self-efficacy in supporting student mental health. Additionally, rural educators were least likely to support the legislation in comparison to their urban and suburban counterparts. These findings can help inform policymakers in evaluating the policy and district decision-makers in selecting and implementing school-based mental health training.

Keywords : school-based mental health, education policy, student health, North Carolina, K-12 education

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