



Letter of Support  
Bills S2015 & A2974

\_\_\_\_\_, along with the Association of Student Assistance Professionals (ASAP-NJ), are in support of the passage of Bills S2015/A2974, requiring school districts to employ Student Assistance Coordinators.

In 1988, legislation was enacted requiring all schools in the State of New Jersey to provide substance awareness programs (N.J.A.C. 6A:16). Although not required by law, most school districts (approximately 96%) employed NJDOE-certified Student Assistance Coordinators (SAC's) to oversee these programs. As these programs evolved, drug and alcohol use by adolescents dropped (NJ Middle Schools Survey, 2001) - despite the fact that overall use among all other age groups increased- because schools now employed appropriately trained professionals to deal with student issues that were not otherwise addressed prior to this law.

Over time, the need for interventions expanded to include family addictions, violence, bullying and cyber-bullying, depression, suicide, stress and anxiety disorders, gambling, eating disorders, self-injury, gang involvement, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, and other social/emotional issues that threaten the health and safety of all students.

The SAC is best suited to address student substance abuse, mental health and behavioral problems because they uniquely possess the specific training to identify and address these behaviors. Without the SAC position, the inability to effectively intervene with these students will prevent teachers from teaching, prevent students from learning, and draw vast amounts of time, finances, and other resources away from teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and special services personnel.

Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_, is in support of ASAP-NJ in their efforts to obtain passage for Bills S2015/A2974.

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(Signature) (Title) (Date)