

Offered by COUNCILLORS SAM YOON, JOHN TOBIN, MICHAEL ROSS AND CHUCK
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CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

WHEREAS, The mental health of the students in the Boston Public School System is a priority both in and of itself and as a key to solving the ongoing crisis in youth violence; and,

WHEREAS, There are 57,900 students in the Boston Public School system, many of them with unmet mental health needs. According to experts on the mental health needs of Boston Public School students there are gaps in early preventive care that could head off future behavioral problems, as well as shortages in active mental health services. Students with unmet mental health needs are more likely to be disorderly, violent or aggressive; and,

WHEREAS, Prevention of aggressive or violent incidents is a priority for keeping a calm classroom and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of education to students. One student can disrupt an entire classroom, not only interrupting ongoing education, but risking the students' and the teacher's safety; and,

WHEREAS, The recent study published in the *Journal of Pediatrics* by Dr. Nancy Rappaport of the Cambridge Health Alliance suggests that traumatized students can greatly benefit from comprehensive psychiatric assessment and treatment. Her research promotes the concept of providing holistic treatment to students rather than of piecemeal therapies; and,

WHEREAS, The Boston Public Schools, the Boston Public Health Commission, the Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnership and other groups do provide some therapeutic services; however, a greater emphasis on comprehensive counseling and rehabilitation could better prevent further violent or aggressive student behavior; *NOW*,

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the current status of mental health services in the Boston Public Schools as well as the possibility of comprehensive mental health assessment and treatment outlined by Dr. Rappaport's study. Representatives from the Boston Public Schools, the Boston Public Health Commission, Children's Hospital and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed: September 20, 2006