



Mental Health Days for Students

By Educator Barnes – July 22, 2019

With the recent push for self-care, people have been encouraged to take mental health days to take care of themselves. Physical health is just as important as mental health, so wouldn't students benefit from mental health days?

Kate Brown, Governor of Oregon, signed legislation last month that will allow students to take mental health days as an excused absence. Typically students are granted excused absence for

physical health issues. This legislation will potentially help remove barriers or the stigma around students addressing their mental health.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, “1 in 100,000 children ages 10 to 14 die by suicide each year, and 7 in 100,000 youth ages 15 to 19 die by suicide each year.” The increase in youth suicide is a matter we need to address head-on. In Indiana, teachers have to complete youth suicide training annually. We know it is an issue, and Oregon has found an additional way to support students.

This may seem unnecessary, and there might be fear about misuse of these days. Yes, some students might abuse the policy. Isn't that risk worth potentially helping other students who are struggling with their mental health? Oregon may be the first state with the legislation, but it is possible this legislation could show up in other states. Stakeholders across the U.S. will be watching to see how this unfolds in Oregon schools.