

Dear Fellow Administrators,

James R. Sebert, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

We are writing to urge you to become part of the national effort to ensure the mental health of America's middle and high school students through mental health checkups, now presented in a user-friendly, free set of materials online by the TeenScreen National Center for Mental Health Checkups at Columbia University.


Since 2002, we have been implementing TeenScreen mental health checkups throughout our system of 7300 students in Wisconsin, identifying at-risk youth and offering them and their parents the support they need to live and learn successfully. The TeenScreen National Center is a non-profit initiative devoted to increasing access to regular mental health checkups across the U.S. It was developed by Columbia University's Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and is listed in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices and in the Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention.

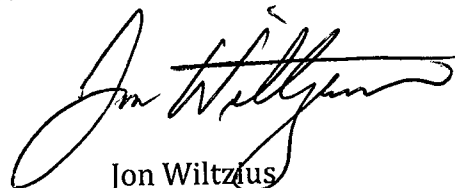
As educators, you know that adolescence is an important time for the early detection of mental illness. Research from the National Institute of Mental Health has shown that half of all mental disorders start by age 14. Research has also demonstrated that 20 percent of teens suffer from mental illness with impairment in their day-to-day functioning in school, at home or with peers. The vast majority of these teens, at least 70 percent, go unidentified and untreated.

The TeenScreen Schools and Communities Program, newly revised to reflect lessons learned from nearly 10 years of practical implementation in 38 states, presents program development, implementation and training in a simple step-by-step process on line. It provides an important opportunity to work collaboratively with other youth-serving organizations in your community. Most important of all, it has the potential to help save young lives.

We urge you to read more about TeenScreen's new, free online materials at <http://www.teenscreen.org/programs/schools-communities/>. We hope you will recognize that like the hearing, vision, and scoliosis exams regularly conducted in our schools, mental health checkups are a vital step to ensure that our students are ready, willing and able to learn in school and in life.

Sincerely,

  
James Sebert, PhD  
Superintendent of Schools  
Fond du Lac School District



Jon Wiltzius  
Principal  
Fond du Lac High School

*The mission of the Fond du Lac School District, in partnership with the family and the community, is to promote high achievement and foster the continuous growth of the whole child, so that each becomes a creative, contributing citizen in a global society by providing personalized learning opportunities in a safe, nurturing environment.*

