

MEMORANDUM

To: Smithfield School System Special Education Team

From: Susy Branson, special education manager

Date: May 20, 2020

Subject: Special Education and Mental Health Problems

I am writing this memorandum to discuss the stigmatization of mental health disorders in our school and suggest some helpful solutions.

Smithfield School District has faced an increase in students who need special education resources. However, we know that students, as well as their families, may refuse from seeking additional resources due to the stigma of mental health issues. It is obvious that there is a significant increase of students with mental health disorders. However, we missed this fact. It becomes obvious that this precedent should be explored in detail.

We need to address this problem by collecting more data on student diagnoses and reconsidering our training program. By collecting additional data, we will be able to find out whether stigma may prevent some of the students from asking for special education resources. As for the training, we need to seek a better understanding of our students. Yes, we managed to establish a solid education training program, but recent training fails to address the need of working with students with mental health disorders. We may even reinforce the stigma by the failure to provide specialized training. As such, this question should be addressed as soon as possible. We are planning to discuss this problem at our next quarterly meeting.