



Susan Mikolic, a Lake County resident, attended the signing ceremony as a parent and advocate for children and families (Mikolic is pictured above in the center directly behind Governor Taft).

Governor Taft signs Senate Bill 2

Bill includes language on mental health and school success

Governor Bob Taft signed Senate Bill 2 on March 10, implementing the recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Teaching Success. The bill includes language that will provide standards for professional development for teachers to be better prepared to recognize and address the critical link between mental health and school success.

The language strengthens the efforts of the Mental Health Network for School Success. The Network, formed in 2002, is working to improve and expand school-based mental health services by assisting schools in addressing emotional and behavioral barriers to learning.

Mikolic, a former member of the NAMI Ohio Board of Directors and a past president of NAMI of Lake County, has been working on mental health and school success issues for many years. She has provided both local and statewide leadership in to designing a continuum of services for children and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), including school-based mental health services.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH), in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), hosted a Legislative Forum on Mental Health and School Success on October 9, 2003 to address the importance of families, schools and mental health professionals working together to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of children and help them succeed in school. Testimony from all of these partners and students stressed the importance of school-based services and teacher awareness of mental health issues and their effect on learning.

Senate Bill 2 will be effective June 9, 2004. Full text of the bill is available at http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=125_SB_2.

Visit the Mental Health Network for School Success Web site, <http://www.units.muohio.edu/csbmhp/network.html>, for more information about the network and continuing work to ensure every child in Ohio – including those at emotional or behavioral risk and those with mental health problems – will have the opportunity and the support needed to be successful in school.