



Kansas City Star
Letters
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Students' mental health

Regarding "What is schools' duty in children's mental health?" (8/23, As I See It):
While it's tragic that a family lost two children to suicide, it's more of a tragedy that people think the school "should have known" or somehow prevented it. The mental health of any child is the responsibility of that child's parent and not the school administrators. Legally speaking, the Supreme Court has already delineated the responsibility of the school district when it comes to the health of the child and has stated that it's the constitutional right of the parent, not school officials, to make decisions concerning a child's health.

Schools should reject implementation of screening programs. There's considerable discrepancy within the mental-health professions as to the precise definition of "mental illness," how to diagnose it and how to treat it. Assuming that screening programs identify students who suffer mental illness or suicidal tendencies, what would school officials recommend? Would they make recommendations or would recommendations become requirements? If parents reject those recommendations/requirements, what penalties would parents incur?

What if a child is incorrectly funneled into receiving treatment/drugs for an illness they don't have? Will the school gain be held responsible for the resulting destruction of that child's life?

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