



Behavioral Health

Georgia Appleseed is a nonprofit, nonpartisan law center that has worked for twenty years in and with schools to ensure every child has an opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. We work statewide to ensure that all children have access to behavioral and mental health supports.

Expanding School-Based Behavioral Health in Georgia

School-based behavioral health (SBBH) programs bridge gaps by offering care within schools, a more comfortable and trusted setting for students and their families.

We convene educators, mental health professionals, policymakers, families, and young people in communities statewide to share best practices and build support for SBBH.

We draw on our unique legal expertise to provide guidance and published resources to schools on starting SBBH programs, such as:

- **Establishing a School-Based Behavioral Health Program**
- **Certified Peer Specialists and Schools: Creating a Successful CPS Partnership**
- **Sample CPS Partnership Agreement**
- **Sample CPS Consent Form**

To ensure every child in the state has access to SBBH, we helped found the state's only **SBBH Collaborative**, whose mission is "to make SBBH as common as the school lunch."

Supporting K-12 Students with Behavioral and Mental Health Challenges

Through our **FAIR (Fairness, Advocacy and Individualized Representation) project**, we provide coaching and legal advocacy for students and their families. We also assist students with disabilities with **Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)** and **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** meetings.

We offer free resources through our website, including **Help Guides**, for caregivers of children with behavior and learning challenges.

Policy and Legislative Advocacy

We advance innovative policy proposals that lay the groundwork for expanding SBBH statewide, including:

- **Healthcare Workforce Expansion:** Supporting reforms to allow internationally trained doctors to serve Georgia's students - especially the 150,000+ English-language learners.
- **SBBH Funding:** Supporting traditional and innovative funding models for school-based behavioral health services.
- **School Climate & MTSS:** Supporting Georgia schools' efforts to promote positive school climate through the use of evidence-based discipline and mental health programming, such as MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports).