

For Immediate Release

Press Contact: Cody Zimmer, Communications Manager, codyz@casponline.org, (916) 444-1595

CASP Partners with CDPH to Launch Recognize, Respond, Connect Training for School Staff to Support Students

Sacramento, CA – February 19, 2026 – The California Department of Public Health, Office of School Health, with the help of several educational partner organizations, including the California Association of School Psychologists (CASP), has developed a free, self-paced, 50-minute training to support the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students. The training helps school staff, as trusted adults, create learning environments where students feel safe, accepted, and valued, and is aligned with the requirements of California Education Code Section 49428.2(c).

"CASP was excited to collaborate and share our expertise with CDPH to help launch this landmark holistic program," said CASP President Chris Jones. "Our mission is to foster the well-being of communities in California, and *Recognize, Respond, Connect: Supporting the Behavioral Health of Our Students* (RRC) creates an inclusive system addressing the challenges many of our schoolchildren face every day."

Created for all school staff serving grades 7 through 12, the training teaches simple, practical ways to build trusted relationships with students and contribute to safe and supportive school communities where everyone can thrive. It provides an overview of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and other common adversities that can affect students' ability to learn and connect, and guides staff in recognizing signs of distress, responding with empathy and support, and making appropriate referrals for students experiencing behavioral health challenges.

"The Office of School Health at the California Department of Public Health appreciates the partnership with CASP," said Ryan Skaggs, Chief of the Office of School Health. "The RRC training will help adults working in our schools to be the caring adults our students need when they are experiencing behavioral health challenges, so that they can thrive and not just survive."

CASP members Dr. Margaret Sedor and Dorothy Guinter guided the team with more than 50 years of combined expertise working with children as school psychologists. Both highly accomplished, Dr. Sedor is the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) 2025 School Psychologist of the Year, and Ms. Guinter received the 2025 Community Advisory Committee Excellence in Special Education Award at San Dieguito HS Academy.

"As school psychologists, it has been a true honor to help shape this training. Every day, we see firsthand how much our staff care about their students, and seeing this training come to life is so rewarding. By sharing our tools to help catch those early warning signs, we're empowering our colleagues to give countless students the support they deserve, right when they need it most," remarked Guinter.

"It was an unprecedented collaborative relationship with the CDPH, CDE, and UCLA-UCSF ACEs Aware Family Resilience Network (UCAAN) to provide universal mental health training curriculum for K-12 educators and school staff. "This is a monumental step forward in creating psychological safety, supporting mental wellbeing, and the best conditions for learning for all students." Dr. Sedor added.

The free RRC training is accessible [here](#).

The [California Association of School Psychologists](#) is a nearly 2,000-member, 75-year-old statewide professional association that represents school psychologists and licensed educational psychologists (LEPs) in California. The CASP mission is to foster the well-being of the children, schools, and communities it serves through legislative advocacy, professional development, communications, publications, ethics guidelines, and direct services to its members.

###