



Bits 'n Pieces

Winter 2019

For use by School Leaders

Did You Know?

Superintendent Tenure and Compensation

- 5.75 years – The average length of tenure for a school superintendent in Minnesota (MSBA data 2016-2017)
- 7.25 years -- The average length of tenure for superintendents employed by the same school district three or more years (MSBA data 2016-2017)
- 10.27 years – The average length of tenure for superintendents employed by the same school district seven or more years (MSBA data 2016-2017)
- In 2016 one-third of superintendents were employed by the same school district seven or more years. (MSBA data 2016-2017)
- The average superintendent salary in the United States is \$157,796. (salary.com, January 2019)
- The average superintendent salary in Minnesota is \$151,520. (salary.com, January 2019)
- Salary ranges can vary widely depending on many important factors, including: education, certifications, additional skills, the size of the school district, and the number of years you have spent in your profession.

Anxiety at a Glance

For Educators to know

Regular anxiety becomes a disorder when young people have out-of-proportion responses to things most of us cope with easily.

- In the past 10 years, there has been increasing recognition of anxiety in young people by health care providers, including a 17% increase in anxiety disorder diagnosis.
- Anxiety symptoms are often minimized or ignored. As little as 1% of youth with anxiety seek treatment in the year symptoms begin.
- At some point, anxiety affects 30% of children and adolescents, yet 80% never get help.
- Untreated anxiety disorders are linked to depression, school failure and a two-fold increase in risk for substance use disorder.

Pass-along to Parents (taken from *Raising Children Without Anxiety*, WEBMD)

The balance between the need to protect our children and our children's need for independence is a delicate one. According to psychologist Paul Donahue, PhD there are several strategies that can help parents to find that balance.

- Take cues from experienced parents. They can be models and offer suggestions and/or feedback.
- Talk to teachers. They can help you understand that risk-taking like running fast, climbing, and other physical activities is an important part of being a kid.
- Project confidence. Your demeanor will let your child know that everything is OK.
- Know the signs. Some anxiety when a child faces the unknown is normal but be alert if that anxiety gets in the way of everyday activities.
- Get some rest. Lack of sleep will contribute to your own anxiety, which will then get transmitted to your child.
- Seek help. If you struggle to let go of your fears, talk to a mental health professional about you and or your family.

Pass-along to staff. (taken from *Kids Matter*. Find more information at <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/mental-health-difficulties/anxiety/anxiety-suggestions-teaching-staff>)

Children with anxiety difficulties are easily overlooked at school as they are usually quiet and obedient. Often, they get anxious about doing the wrong thing, about their schoolwork not being perfect, and about social relationships. Worries about issues that arise outside of school may also interfere with their ability to concentrate in class or relate to others.

- Teach coping skills. Provide regular social and emotional learning that stresses coping skills.
- Discourage avoidance. Assist students in managing difficult situations or tasks in spite of anxious feelings.
- Encourage “having a go”. When students participate and ‘have a go’ at something it helps them get over doubts about their ability to manage.
- Set realistic expectations. Feeling pressure to be perfect is common for children with anxiety disorders. Setting realistic expectations for academic work is important to help the student learn to manage their anxiety and stress less.
- Modify and monitor stressful activities. Tests or class presentations may be particularly stressful for children with anxiety difficulties.
- Develop independence. Provide opportunities for children with anxiety to take on special responsibilities that help them support their view of themselves as capable.
- Access help when needed. Anxiety can be caused by a range of factors. When children’s anxiety symptoms are severe or persistent it is important to consult with your school’s student wellbeing staff member for further advice and support.

Media Matters

Media plays an important and useful role in research, communication, education, creativity, and even – when used appropriately – socialization. However, when too much time is spent using media – especially social media – there can be adverse outcomes.

- 95% of teens use a smartphone, and 45% say they are online almost constantly. About 70% of teens are on Snapchat and Instagram, while 85% are on Youtube. – Pew Research Center, 2018
- Kids who spend more time watching TV (both with and without parents and siblings present) spend less time interacting with family members. – *Television and Children*, Michigan Medicine, University of Michigan

Excessive TV viewing can contribute to poor grades, sleep problems, behavior problems, obesity, and risky behavior. – *Television and Children*, Michigan Medicine, University of Michigan

- “...students can become too involved with how others see them on social media and become stressed.” – *Social media is becoming an increasingly large stressor for students*, Madeleine O’Connell, April 23, 2018, ncclinked
- Youth with a stronger emotional investment in social media are likely to have higher levels of anxiety. – *2018 Children’s Mental Health Report*, Child Mind Institute
- Suicide risk factors rose significantly after two or more hours a day of time online. – Jean Twenge, Professor of Psychology, San Diego State University
- Peer relationships actually tend to get worse with increased cell phone usage. – Jacob Barkley, Health Sciences Professor at Kent State University
- Higher emotional investment in social media is strongly correlated with higher levels of anxiety. – *2018 Children’s Mental Health Report*, Child Mind Institute

Quotes and Quotables

Anxiety

- “Our anxiety does not come from thinking about the future, but from wanting to control it.” – HealthyPlace.com
- “It’s sad, actually, because my anxiety keeps me from enjoying things as much as I should at this age.” – HealthyPlace.com
- “Social anxiety isn’t a choice. I wish people knew how badly I wish I could be like everybody else, and how hard it is to be affected by something that can bring me to my knees, every single day.” – HealthyPlace.com
- “Anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.” – Arthur Somers Roche
- “There’s just so much going on in my mind, sometimes I can’t keep up with what’s going on around me.” – Amanda Jade Briskar
- “Even when things are wonderful. I’m always waiting for something horrible to happen.” HealthyPlace.com

Progress

- “Do what you can with what you’ve got, where you are.” – Theodore Roosevelt
- “You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.” – HealthyPlace.com
- “You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” – Martin Luther King
- “The great thing, then, in all education, is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy.” – William James
- “I just give myself permission to suck. I find this hugely liberating.” – John Green, author and educator