

October 27, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Claudia Alvarez and I am a proud School Counselor at Morton East High School. Over the years, I have had countless, positive interactions with our school-based clinic. As a counselor, I often see students who suffer from trauma, depression, crippling anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. I also have students who do not know where to go when they think they might be pregnant, and are afraid to go to their family doctor for a pregnancy test. The clinic has always been there for our students, and for those of us doing our very best every day to help them navigate life's challenges. I truly cannot imagine Morton East without them.

I can recall one student in particular who I believe is still here today because of the clinic. This student had been bullied for many years; she was extremely depressed, and often thought about taking her own life. She attempted suicide one day, but was taken to the hospital after being found in time by her father. After a brief hospitalization, my student returned to school. She said she did not feel like she had anyone to talk to, her parents could not afford therapy, and they did not have a car to take her to a therapist even if they could afford one. I referred my student to the clinic, and she returned on a weekly basis for one-on-one therapy. After a couple of months, my student started smiling again, and she was significantly improving academically. Sadly, my students' father passed away over the summer. I was terribly worried about her, and kept a close eye on her because I knew about her troubled past. To my surprise, she told me not to worry, that she felt like she could move forward from this because of the tools she has learned from the clinic, and she was still meeting with her therapist virtually which has helped her tremendously. The benefits my student has received from the clinic are clear to me, and she continues to thrive to this day. This is just one story, and I can confidently say the clinic has saved hundreds of our students lives, just by being right here at school.

The lives of our students are changing now more than ever, and it is creating more anxiety and trauma for our entire community. This is a time when we need resources like the clinic the most. I urge you to consider keeping our school-based clinic. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

*Claudia Alvarez*

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