

# The Mental Health Moment

*Craig Kramer  
AASB Fall Conference  
Montgomery, Alabama  
October 18, 2021*





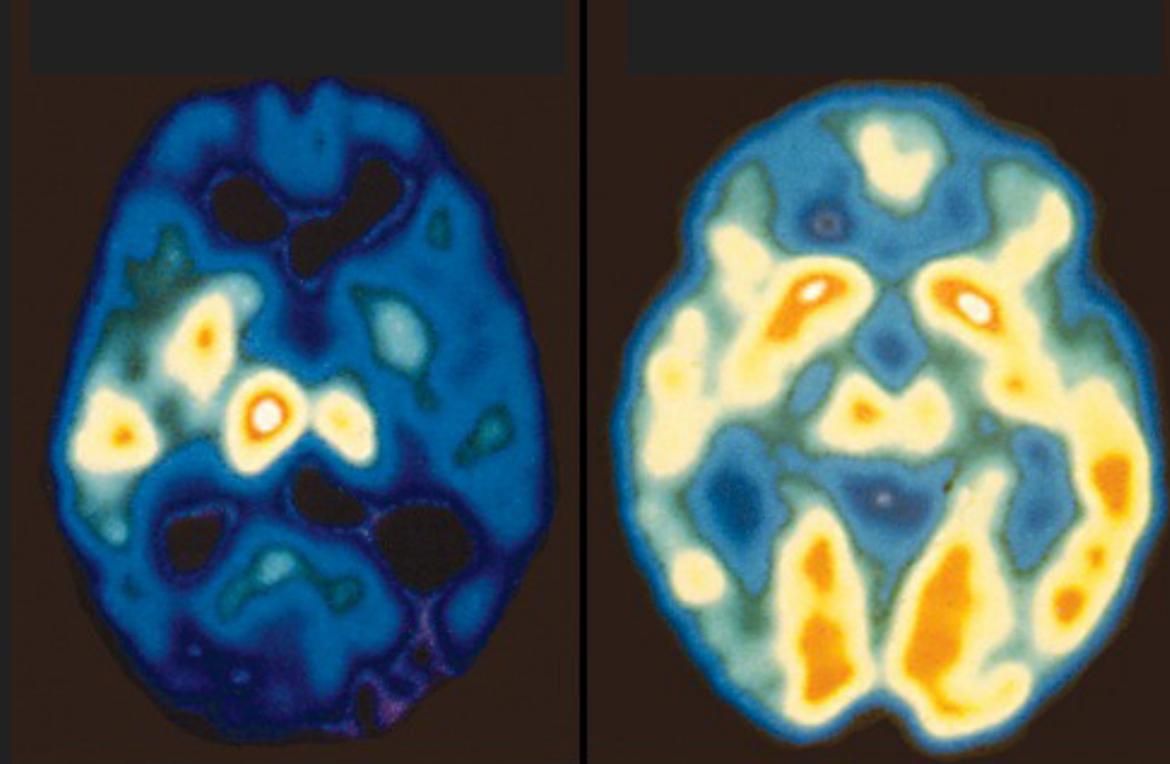






You just need to change your frame of mind.  
Then you'll feel better.







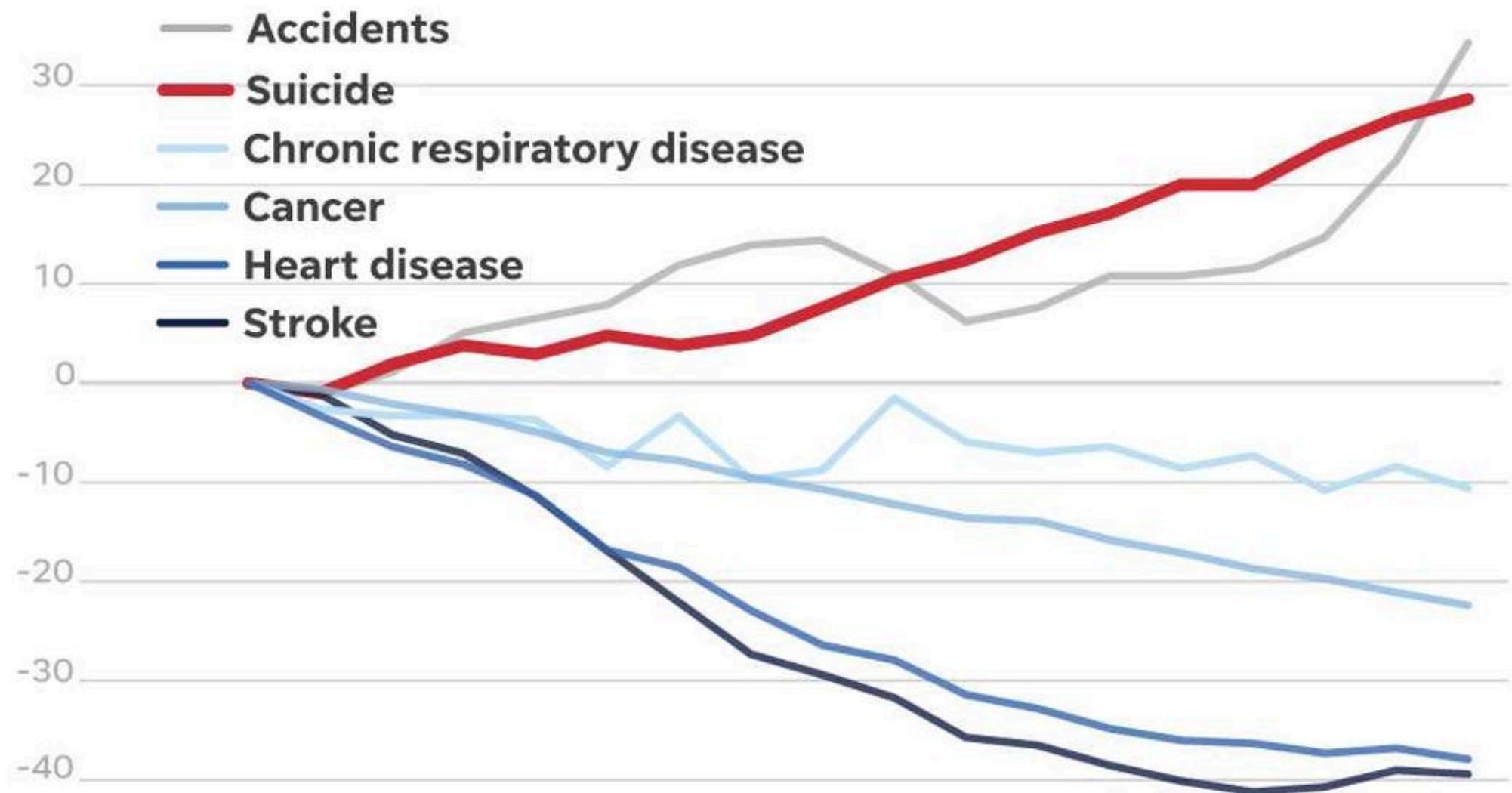
# Planning begins for global campaign

*Global mental health campaigners convene to  
create a new citizen-led campaign.*









Source: NIH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



# Impact of COVID on K-12 Schools



OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

[“Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impact of COVID-19 on America’s Students,” Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, June 2021.](#)

**AXIOS**

[The pandemic has weakened public schools – Axios](#)



[School superintendents confront COVID-19: There are no good options for next year, JAMA Network, July 2020.](#)

**EducationWeek**®

[Teachers’ mental health has suffered during the pandemic, EducationWeek.](#)

*The Atlantic*

[Parents Are Not Okay, The Atlantic, August 22, 2021](#)

# Impact of COVID on School Superintendents



**The New York Times**

[School Superintendents are Super Stressed NYTimes \(subscription\)](#)

**BROOKINGS**

[Brookings: How can school superintendents lead through the COVID-19 crisis?](#)

**EducationWeek®**

[Has COVID-19 led to a mass exodus of school superintendents? Education Week](#)

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

[Chicago Public Schools Superintendent Steps Down, WSJ, May 3, 2021.](#)

**EdSource**

[LA Unified's Austin Beutner Explains Why He Resigned, EdSource, April 22, 2021.](#)

**The New York Times**

[Richard Caranza Resigns as NYC Schools Chancellor, NYTimes, Feb. 26, 2021.](#)

# Impact of COVID on School Boards

*Dear Mr. President: America's public schools and its education leaders are under an immediate threat. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) respectfully asks for federal law enforcement and other assistance to deal with the growing number of threats of violence and acts of intimidation occurring across the nation. Local school board members want to hear from their communities on important issues and that must be at the forefront of good school board governance and promotion of free speech. However, there also must be safeguards in place to protect public schools and dedicated education leaders as they do their jobs." September 29, 2021*



National School Boards Association  
1680 Duke St. FL2, Alexandria, VA 22314-3493  
Phone: (703) 838.6722 • Fax: (703) 683.7590  
www.nsba.org

September 29, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: *Federal Assistance to Stop Threats and Acts of Violence Against Public Schoolchildren, Public School Board Members, and Other Public School District Officials and Educators*

Dear Mr. President:

America's public schools and its education leaders are under an immediate threat. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) respectfully asks for federal law enforcement and other assistance to deal with the growing number of threats of violence and acts of intimidation occurring across the nation. Local school board members want to hear from their communities on important issues and that must be at the forefront of good school board governance and promotion of free speech. However, there also must be safeguards in place to protect public schools and dedicated education leaders as they do their jobs.

NSBA believes immediate assistance is required to protect our students, school board members, and educators who are susceptible to acts of violence affecting interstate commerce because of threats to their districts, families, and personal safety. As our school boards continue coronavirus recovery operations within their respective districts, they are also persevering against other challenges that could impede this progress in a number of communities. Coupled with attacks against school board members and educators for approving policies for masks to protect the health and safety of students and school employees, many public school officials are also facing physical threats because of propaganda purporting the false inclusion of critical race theory within classroom instruction and curricula.<sup>1</sup> This propaganda continues despite the fact that critical race theory is not taught in public schools and remains a complex law school and graduate school subject well beyond the scope of a K-12 class.

On behalf of our state associations and the more than 90,000 school board members who govern our country's 14,000 local public school districts educating more than 50 million schoolchildren, NSBA appreciates your leadership to end the proliferation of COVID-19 in our communities and our school districts. We also appreciate recent discussions with White House and U.S. Department of Education staff on many critical issues facing public schools, including threats school officials are receiving.

<sup>1</sup> The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), "Fact Sheet: Demonstrations over Critical Race Theory in the United States," July 14, 2021, [https://acleddata.com/acleddata/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ACLED\\_FactSheet\\_CRT-Demos\\_2021.pdf](https://acleddata.com/acleddata/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ACLED_FactSheet_CRT-Demos_2021.pdf).

*The leading advocate for public education*



Letter from NSBA to President Biden Re: Federal Assistance to Stop Threats and Acts of Violence Against Public Schoolchildren, Public School Board Members, and Other Public School District Officials and Educators, **September 29, 2021**

# Educational impact of COVID-19

**1.5  
BILLION**

*Number of children affected by school closures (height of pandemic)*

**463  
MILLION**

*Number of children whose schools closed that had no remote learning*



**50%**

**with no remote learning**

**22%**

**households with a computer**

**10%**

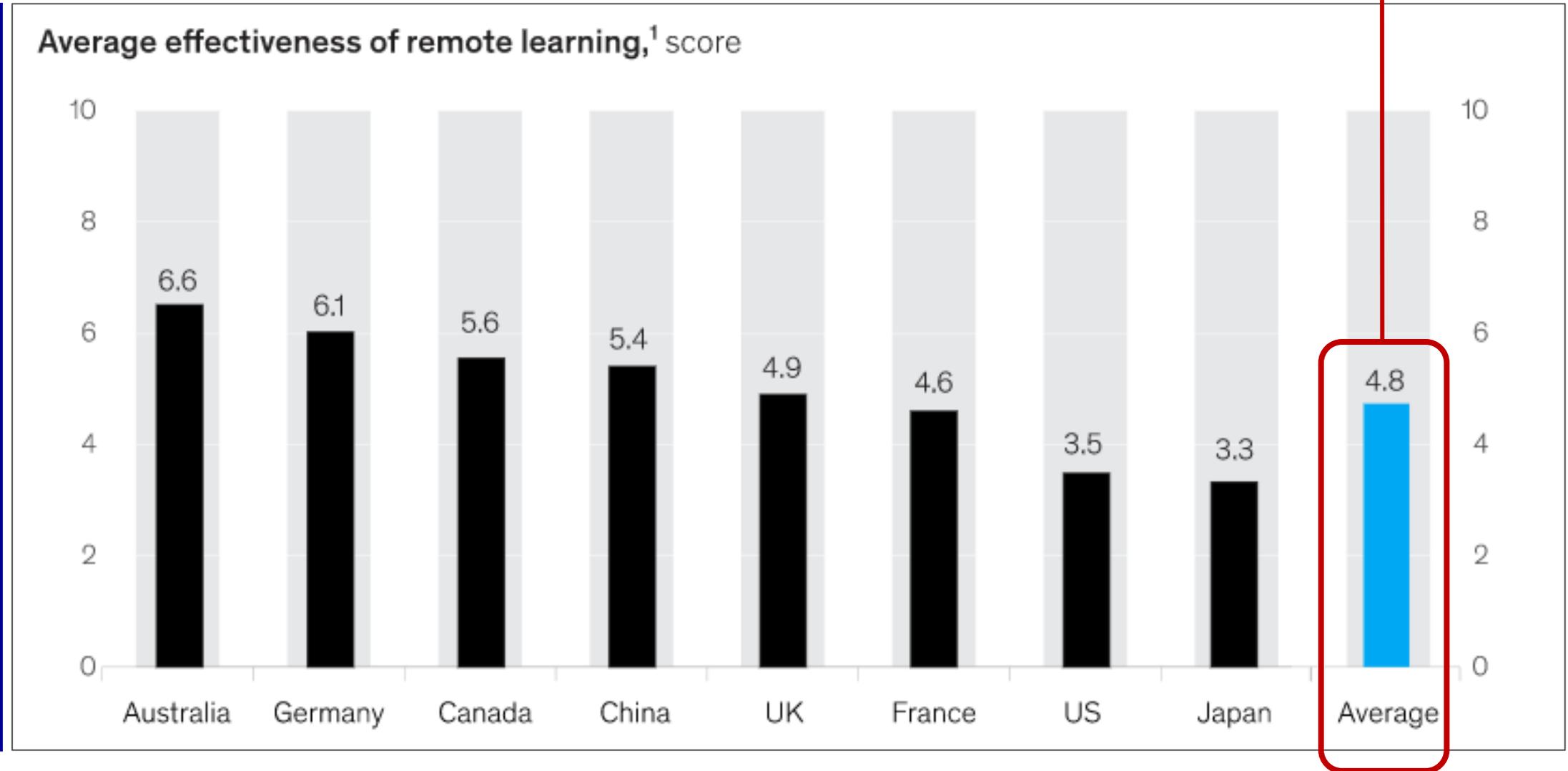
**households with an internet connection**

Amnesty International (2021). Failing to learn the lessons? The impact of COVID-19 on a broken and unequal education system. Index: AFR 53/33445/2021

# Remote learning is a challenge...

Average score ~ 4.8/10

- Teacher survey
- Effectiveness of online instruction
- 8 countries
- March-July 2020
- 1=worst to 10=best



McKinsey teacher survey finds significant learning loss for students in remote learning around the world | McKinsey. Last accessed April 6, 2021



# Our Mental Health Occurs on a Continuum



# WORKING WELL

PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING A MENTALLY HEALTHY BUSINESS



# Supporting employee mental health - return to work (APA)

- Employers should start preparing well in advance (ie, months ago)
- Individualize the approach: provide tools for managers
- Allow flexibility in work
- Should reflect the “new normal” being discussed across many sectors
- Involve employees about discussions about their workspace
- Leaders help to set examples



**AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION**

<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/employee-mental-health>

# APA - coping with the stress of uncertainty...



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

- Uncertainty can produce stress, anxiety, mood symptoms
- Affects your physical health,
- Prolonged, with uncertain ending
- Practical suggestions that can be built into your day-to-day life

- Be kind to yourself.
- Reflect on past successes.
- Develop new skills.
- Limit exposure to news.
- Avoid dwelling on things you can't control.
- Take your own advice. If a friend came to me with this worry, what would I tell her?
- Engage in self-care.
- Seek support from those you trust.
- Control what you can.
- Ask for help.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/uncertainty>





*Cornell University*



