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To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the Liberty Center Schools grant application as a parent, a community member and a practicing physician. I have practiced family medicine in Liberty Center and the surrounding community for 14 years. Throughout that time I have had the opportunity to interact with students and families in the community and in particular in the Liberty Center School district on many levels.

In my practice, I see students of all ages dealing with depression and other mental health issues. I listen to the struggles these children face in handling their day to day school work while trying to identify and manage their mental health issues. I see and hear stories of bullying in the school and stressors in the home that further impact and distract the students' ability to focus on their primary job- learning.

Sadly, I have also seen these stressors overwhelm students. I have seen students who turned to alcohol, substance abuse, and in some cases suicide, to deal with the challenges they were facing. All of these impact the educational environment for the individual student, as well as the student body as a whole.

In the Liberty Center Schools, there have been and continue to be committed efforts to address all of these issues for our students. As a parent I have seen my children involved in numerous programs including suicide prevention student fund raisers and anti-bullying campaigns. I have seen the commitment of the staff to raising awareness of mental health issues for students and families. The school also has a vigorous anti-bullying program and programs designed to raise awareness of dating safety and dating violence. Most recently the district made a commitment to institute drug screening of athletes and other students, to identify at risk young people.

As a physician, a parent and a community member I strongly support state grant funding to assist Liberty Center students with these very real issues. Additional funding for the district will allow them to continue to assist our students in focusing on learning in a safe and healthy environment.

Respectfully,

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