



## Testimony for Budget Line Item

Since COVID 19, teachers and guidance counselors have shared with OK, Inc. Instructors the following concerns:

Students are more **lonely, lacking in social skills**, more **depressed**, and **anxious**.

They feel a **lack of belonging, lack of self-esteem**, and are **more isolated**.

There is an increase in victimization such as **cyberbullying, dating violence**, and **self-harm**.

And there is a HUGE INCREASE in the use of **Social Media**! This may add more to the list of concerns as students are naïve to the presence of predators on social media.

School Principals call the OK, Inc. office on a regular basis to report that **vaping** and **sexting** are on the rise. And they ask if OK, Inc. can help.

There has been a dramatic increase in the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (**STIs**) among our youth and there is tremendous ignorance in the students' lack of knowledge in their awareness of what STIs are, and how they are contracted!

### How do OK, Inc.'s Programs Help?

1. OK, Inc. is A-G Compliant and diligently fulfills each objective.
2. Parents rely on OK, Inc. programming. Research is clear time and time again that parents want OK, Inc.'s programming. And OK, Inc. values the role parents, guardians, and trusted adults play in the life of the students. OK Inc's programs answer students' questions in an age-appropriate manner and encourage students to communicate with their parents, guardians, and trusted adults.

Here is a danger: If OK, Inc.'s programs are not in the classrooms, the students still need answers and will seek them from social media such as Tik Tok, Snapchat, and Instagram. Students may also be exposed to music and media which promotes violence, drug use, or sexual risks. OK, Inc.'s programs give students the skills they need to be assertive and avoid risk behaviors that could negatively impact them in accomplishing their goals.

3. OK, Inc. is committed to education that teaches youth **self-regulation, goal setting, healthy decision-making, healthy relationships, a focus on the future**, and the **prevention and avoidance of sexual activity and other risk behaviors**.
4. OK, Inc.'s programs give students **hope for their future**; that no matter what has happened in their lives or what they have experienced so far . . . **they can succeed in life**. They can make new decisions. Previous mistakes do not have to define them going forward. OK, Inc.'s programs give youth tools to help get them on the path toward success.