



**Parent/Professional  
Advocacy League**

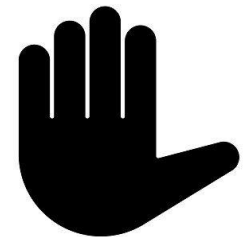
Lisa Lambert, Meri Viano,  
Pamela Bows

# The Inside Track

March 2022

# Housekeeping

- Please introduce yourself in the chat – name and role (parent, family support) and where you're from
- Please keep yourself on mute - unless you are speaking - to reduce background noise
- Use the 'raise hand' or chat to let us know when you'd like to speak
- Please type questions into the chat box



# Agenda

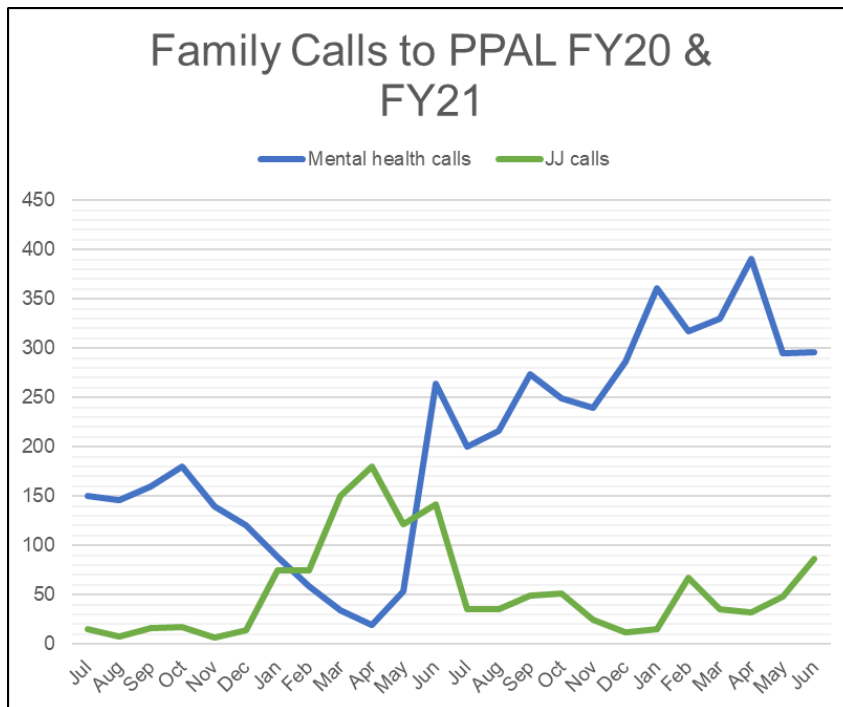
- Welcome to the Inside Track
- Policy Updates – Lisa
- Questions and discussion
- Policy Updates – Meri
- Questions and discussion
- What's New at PPAL - Lisa
- Networking – what's up in your community?

# Welcome to the Inside Track

- Bi-monthly meeting focused on policy, updates and networking
- Knowledge is power – and impact
- PPAL believes that families should have access to all information that affects them and be able to provide feedback
- You will get a link to slides and resources in a few days
- Funded by the Klarman Family Foundation



# Family need at all time high



PPAL Family Calls	FY20	FY21
# of calls	2030	4013
Service: basic needs	18%	3%
Service: education/school	45%	34%
Service: emotional/behavioral help	11%	14%
Service: community support	5%	34%

# CRA's and habitual truancy

Millis vs. MP in 2018 ruled

- CRA habitual truancy petitions are improper unless it's due to "playing hooky" or conduct beyond the parents' control
- Case of 15 yo girl with autism & bladder condition who missed large number of school days
- SJC ruled her absences were because of her medical and associated mental and emotional impairments not and not willful
- Noted CRA petitions are not an appropriate tool to try to compel a child to attend school

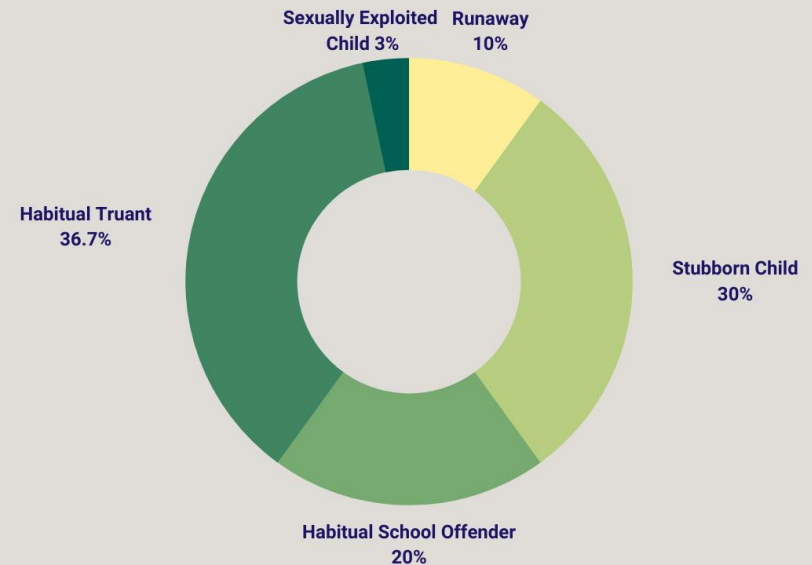


PPAL Question of the Month, Feb. 2022

**What's your experience with CRA's?**

(Child Requiring Assistance)

**There are 5 kinds of CRA's. Which was filed?**



[www.ppal.net](http://www.ppal.net)

# Lexington Public Schools vs. K.S.

## Lexington vs KS (3/18/22)

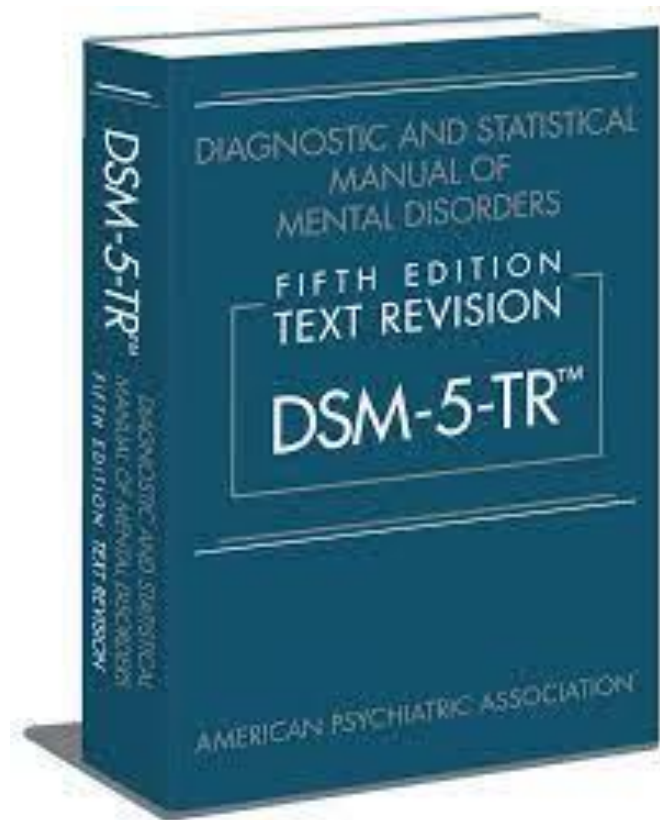
- School filed CRA truancy on 12 yo boy who was in school only 48 days of school year
- Several plans put in place to get child to school but each failed after a few weeks
- School determined no learning disabilities and no IEP
- Parents fighting over custody; DCF involved; probation involved; had not participated in truancy program
- Child's attorney said school is a corporation and could not file b/c assistant principal is a non lawyer; corporations must be represented by lawyers in court

## Highlights

- Schools (non lawyers) may file CRAs as do parents (non lawyers)
- CRA hearings are for fact finding: age of child, more than 8 unexcused absences in a quarter and if the absences were willful.
- Judge determined child's refusal to attend school was "willful" and need assistance under a CRA
- Filing a CRA allows JJ court to interfere with custody (DCF)
- School districts are a municipal corporate body governed by different laws than moneyed coporations.

# DSM-V updates

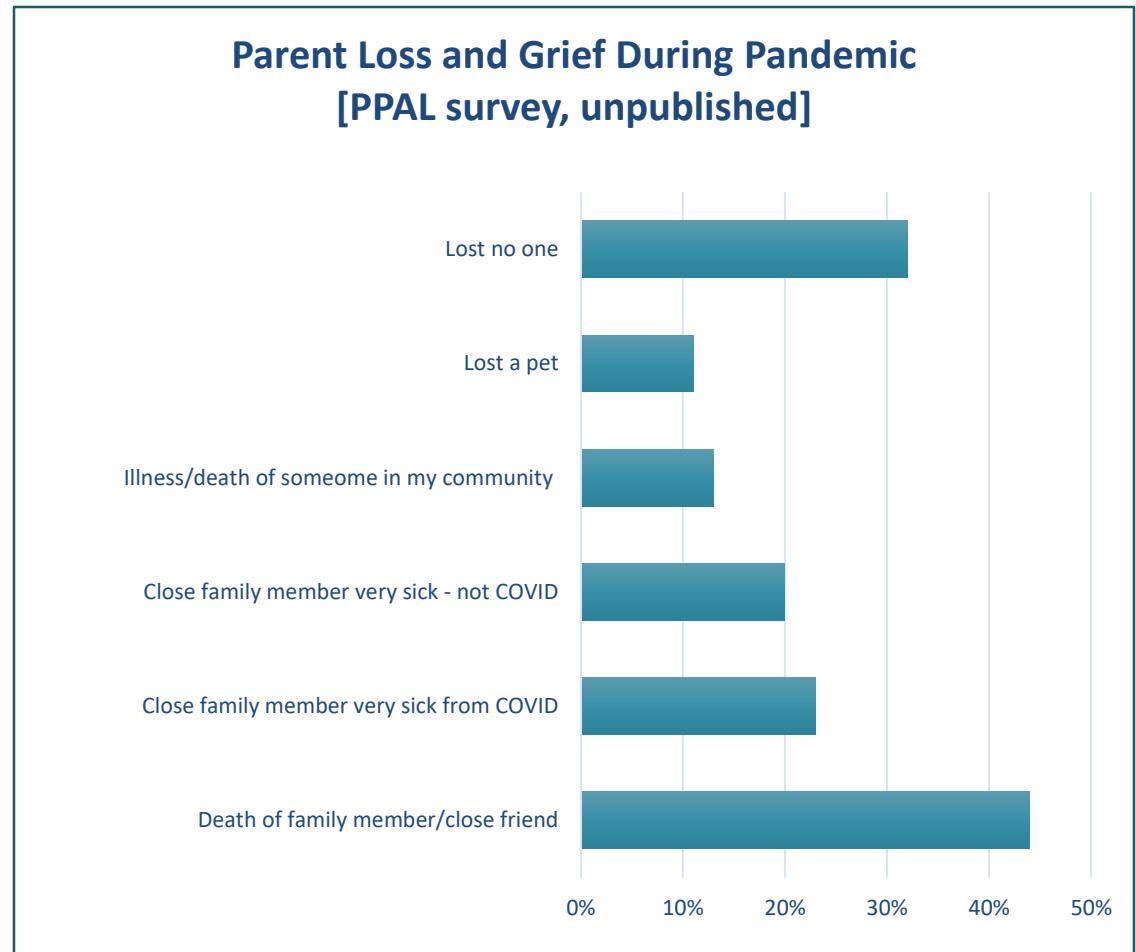
- Updates released March 2022 as DSM-5-TR
- Brings back 'unspecified mood disorder'
  - Was removed in 2013
  - Meant clinicians had to choose a specific mood disorder like bipolar
- Adds self-harm without suicidality
- Changed several terms about gender such as “desired gender” to “experienced gender”
- Addition of racial and cultural perspectives



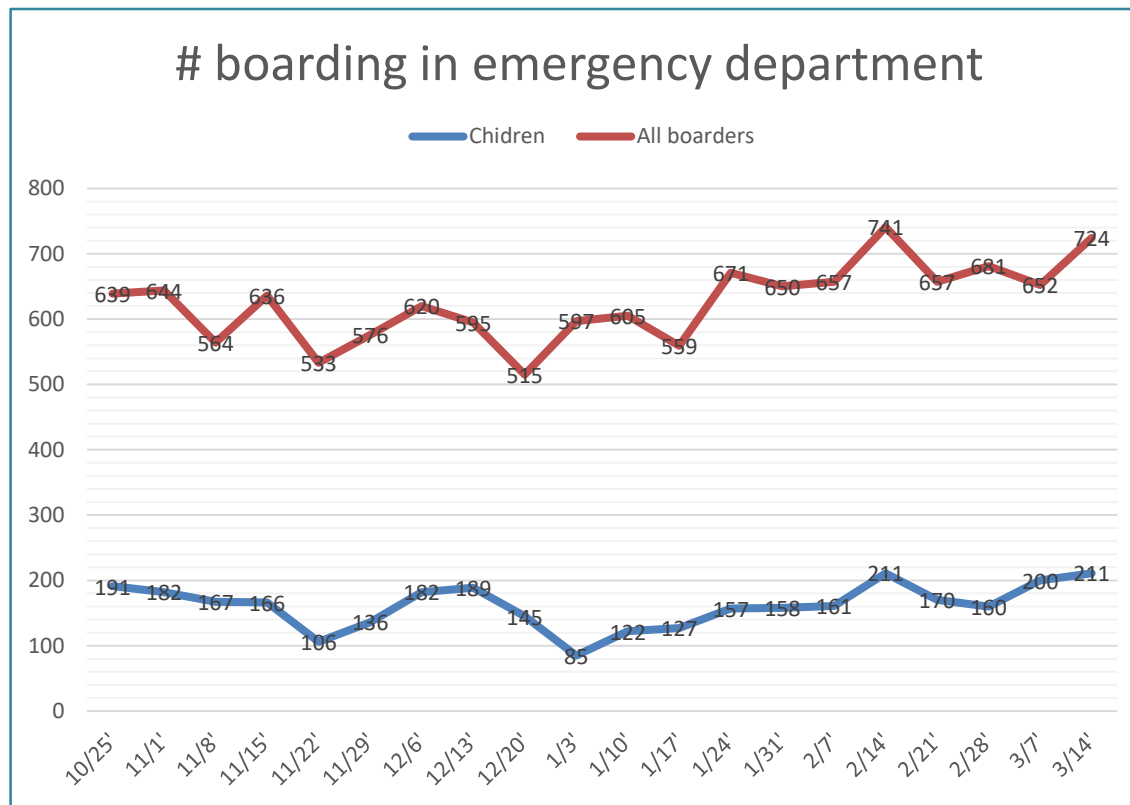


# DSM-V-TR

- Added 'prolonged grief disorder'
  - Intense thoughts of person you lost throughout each day
  - Sense of disbelief
  - Intense emotional pain
  - Avoiding reminders of the person
- 970k deaths from COVID-19



# ED boarding and kids



- MA Health and Hospital sends out a weekly report to its members only
- Began October 2021
- Data provided by member hospitals
- Developed as a strategy to focus on the boarding situation across all ages
- Last week the highest number of kids EVER were waiting in EDs and medical beds.

Source: MA Health and Hospital Association

# Budget FY22 and FY23



## **Boarding Innovation Fund - \$10M**

For grants administered by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to support behavioral health workforce, programs, and pilot initiatives necessary to expand upon and maintain behavioral health acute care beds and intensive community based treatment alternatives in order to enable individuals to be diverted from hospitals or those boarding in hospitals to be discharged, including but not limited to inpatient services, community based acute treatment, crisis stabilization services, pediatric and adult respite, hospital diversion programs, and virtual or in-person partial hospitalization capacity through rate incentives in the Commonwealth; provided further that priority shall be given to grants that support children and adolescent behavioral health; provided further that funds shall be inclusive of workforce recruitment and training, and other funds necessary to expand acute behavioral health support with the goal of reducing ED boarding; provided further that funds may be expended for investments including but not limited to crisis stabilization services for children and adults who are boarding, telehealth devices, specialized training for clinical and ancillary staff including in community crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques, and for capital and operational funds for acute care hospitals to develop and maintain needed services for psychiatric patients while they are in emergency departments or medical-surgical units in order to receive inpatient psychiatric services, including but not limited to investments in surge space and group therapy spaces in emergency department and medical-surgical settings.

# What happened to the beds?

- 300 new beds were promised
- Cambridge was scheduled for 42 to open last fall. First, water main break, then COVID outbreak. Starting to accept new patients this week and hope to have all beds open June 30
- Other units cite staffing issues and COVID.



# Time for advocacy?

- Dozens of stories in newspapers, television
- Testimony in front of legislative committees
- Many calls to state representatives and state senators
- Calls to DMH, OCA, DPH, MassHealth, insurers and more



What should we do next?

# Mental Health Emergency

## Introducing Christine and Kathe

- Inpatient Beds: our story, the story - Christine
- Accountability and the current crisis – Kathe
- Organizing voices of parents - Christine

[christinepaulart@me.com](mailto:christinepaulart@me.com)



# Questions and Discussion





# Education Updates

- Attendance and excused absences
- Immigrant Rights in education
- Guidance on Seclusion and Timeout rooms





# Filing Complaints

- Emergency Departments
- Inpatient Hospitals
- State agency complaints



# Questions and Discussion



# What's New at PPAL?

- Question of the Month
- Children's Mental Health Week – May 1-7 – now live at [ppal.net/childrens-mental-health-week](https://ppal.net/childrens-mental-health-week)
- Annual Conference coming June 3



# Networking

Please share:

- Upcoming events
- Job openings
- Accomplishments
- Questions or ideas





Parent/Professional  
Advocacy League

Contact info:

Lisa Lambert [llambert@ppal.net](mailto:llambert@ppal.net)

Meri Viano [mviano@ppal.net](mailto:mviano@ppal.net)

Pamela Bows [pbows@ppal.net](mailto:pbows@ppal.net)

[www.ppal.net](http://www.ppal.net)