

The Heart of the Classroom: Student Mental Health and Belonging

August 4, 2026 | Webinar Insights and Resources

CONVERSATION OVERVIEW

On August 4, 2026, the Parikh Giving Alliance hosted The Heart of the Classroom: Student Mental Health and Belonging, bringing together Andre Molette, MPH, Executive Director of Zebra Youth; Tiffany Toussaint, MSW, LCSW, Director of Stetson University's Student Counseling Services; and Dr. Lua Hancock, Vice President, Phoenix Generation, Ginsburg Family Foundation.

Moderated by Reena Patel, Board Member of the Parikh Giving Alliance, the conversation explored student anxiety, academic pressures, bullying, identity and belonging, and the importance of supportive learning environments and community partnerships.

KEY CONVERSATION THEMES

Student Mental Health and Well-Being

Anxiety, social pressures and academic expectations can affect students' ability to learn, connect and succeed.

Creating a Sense of Belonging

Safe, inclusive environments help students feel accepted, respected and supported.

Early Intervention and Support

Counseling, trusted adults and youth-focused programs can help identify challenges and connect students with support.

The Power of Community Partnerships

Schools, families, mental health professionals and nonprofits can work together to strengthen support systems.

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

1. Prioritize Student Well-Being

Integrate mental health awareness and emotional support into learning environments.

2. Strengthen Connections and Belonging

Support anti-bullying and inclusion initiatives that foster positive relationships.

3. Expand Access to Resources

Increase awareness of counseling, early intervention and community support.

4. Encourage Cross-Sector Collaboration

Bring educators, healthcare professionals and nonprofits together to address gaps in support.

RESOURCES & LINKS

Zebra Youth – Support and mental health services for LGBTQ+ youth in Central Florida.

Stetson University Student Counseling Services – Counseling and wellness resources for college students.

Phoenix Generation – Youth development and community engagement.

CDC School Connectedness – Research and strategies for supportive school environments.

The Trevor Project – Crisis intervention and mental health resources for LGBTQ+ young people.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Confidential, around-the-clock crisis support.