**[School or District name]**

**Business Case**

**Universal Screening and Student Self Assessments**

**<Your name or department>**

**<Date>**

**<Version>**

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this business case is to introduce electronic universal screening and student self-assessments into <insert either school or district name> . This proposal is based on research showing that electronic self-assessments can help to improve student engagement, while also being cost effective and not resulting in an increase in workloads for school staff.

The introduction of electronic universal screening and student self-assessments offers numerous benefits, including improved student engagement and a better understanding of individual student's abilities, strengths and weaknesses. Electronic assessments also allow for more accurate, timely and reliable data collection, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of student performance over time. In addition, these assessments can be used to measure the effectiveness of educational and student support programs and identify potential areas for improvement.

Furthermore, the use of electronic universal screening and student self-assessments can result in cost savings for the school district. For example, it eliminates the need for costly paper-based assessments, which can add up over time. Additionally, the use of electronic assessments can reduce the amount of time needed to review and evaluate student data, which can help to reduce overall staffing costs.

Finally, research has demonstrated that students are more likely to engage with electronic self-assessments than with paper-based assessments. Therefore, the use of electronic universal screening and student self-assessments can lead to increased student engagement and help to create a more positive learning environment.

In conclusion, the introduction of electronic universal screening and student self-assessments into <insert either school or district name> is a cost effective and efficient solution that can benefit both students and staff. The use of these assessments can help to improve student engagement, provide more accurate and reliable data, and reduce the need for costly paper-based assessments. Therefore, it is recommended that <insert either school or district name> consider implementing electronic universal screening and student self-assessments and take advantage of a no obligation, free 3-month trial offer from the only Student Support and Case Management system to be endorsed by the School Social work Association of America.

**2. Why** <insert either school or district name> **should be doing electronic universal screening and student self-assessments**

Note: Your business case should include an overview of the current state of mental health within your school district, particularly any existing gaps in service or areas that need improvement.

<Example roles, change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> play a critical role in supporting the mental health and well-being of students, particularly as the number of students seeking mental health support continues to rise. According to a recent study, nearly 1 in 3 students in the United States reported experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, or both in the past year. In addition, suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents aged 15-19 in the United States. These statistics highlight the urgent need for schools to provide effective mental health support to their students.

Unfortunately, <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> are often overworked and face significant challenges in providing adequate support to all students in need. With caseloads often exceeding recommended levels, <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> may struggle to provide timely and effective support to students, particularly those with more complex mental health needs. In addition, administrative tasks such as documentation and record keeping can further increase the workload of school social workers, taking time away from direct support for students.

Given these challenges, it is clear that <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> require innovative solutions that can help them to support more students more effectively, while reducing their administrative burden. The ECINS Student Support and Case Management System with an integrated student mental health screening tool and student portal has been designed to address these challenges head-on, providing a comprehensive set of tools to support <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> and improve outcomes for students. By leveraging technology to streamline the case management process and improve access to mental health resources and support, <I/we> believe that this system can make a significant positive impact on the lives of students and <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> alike.

1. **Benefits for** <insert either school or district name>  **introducing electronic universal screening and student self-assessments**

The introduction of electronic universal mental health screening and student self-assessments into <insert either school or district name> has the potential to significantly benefit the students, staff, and parents. This section of the document will outline the potential benefits of such an initiative, including improved student outcomes. Crucially, studies such as “The Impact of School-Based Mental Health Screening on School Social Worker and School Clinician Workloads” (Gillman et al., 2018) and “School-Based Mental Health Screening: A Systematic Review” (Borovac, Linsley, & Stiles, 2019) have shown that such screenings do not result in increased workloads for school social workers and school clinicians.

# Improved Student Outcomes

The introduction of universal mental health screening and student self-assessments into the school district can lead to improved student outcomes. Mental health issues can have a significant impact on students’ academic performance, social development, and overall health. By providing students with access to mental health resources and support, it is possible to reduce the negative effects of mental health issues on students’ lives, leading to improved academic performance, fewer absences, and better social and emotional development.

A study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry found that a school-based mental health screening program was effective in identifying students with mental health needs and connecting them with appropriate services. The study found that students who were identified as needing mental health services were more likely to receive these services compared to students who were not screened.

Schools nationally are being encouraged to adopt Universal Mental Health Screening to proactively identifying students in need of support, treatment or intervention. Universal Mental Health Screening involves all students in a school, regardless of their risk status, being screened for specific criteria such as characteristics of well-being or mental health indicators using short, reliable and valid tools or measures (rating scales) to:

a) determine individual strengths and needs and

b) identify those who may require preventative, targeted or intensive services and support i.e., multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)

* Evidence shows Student Self-Assessments are more reliable than other informant (teacher, parent) assessments
* If a school team is primarily focused on or interested in understanding the risk for internalizing symptoms, Student Self-assessments are the best option
* Reseach shows that electronic screening is more likely to result in increased rates of student self-disclosure when Student Self-Assessments are used

Another study published in the Journal of School Health found that a universal mental health screening program was effective in identifying students with mental health needs and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help. The study found that students who participated in the screening program were more likely to seek help for mental health concerns compared to students who did not participate in the program.

A study published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research found that a computerized mental health screening program was effective in identifying students with mental health needs and connecting them with appropriate services. The study found that students who participated in the screening program were more likely to receive mental health services compared to students who did not participate in the program.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of student mental health screening programs in identifying students with mental health needs and connecting them with appropriate services. By integrating a student mental health screening tool into our school social worker case management system, we aim to enable social workers to identify mental health concerns early on and provide students with the support they need to be successful both in and out of the classroom.

A study published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research found that students were more likely to complete an online mental health screening tool compared to a paper-based tool. The study found that completion rates for the online tool were significantly higher compared to the paper-based tool.

Another study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that a web-based mental health screening tool was effective in identifying students with mental health needs and had higher completion rates compared to paper-based screening tools. The study found that completion rates for the web-based tool were 73%, compared to 48% for paper-based tools.

A study published in the Journal of Technology in Human Services found that a web-based mental health screening tool had higher completion rates compared to a paper-based tool, and that students preferred the web-based tool. The study found that completion rates for the web-based tool were 91%, compared to 50% for paper-based tools.

Overall, these studies suggest that online mental health screening tools are more likely to be completed by students compared to paper-based tools. By integrating a student mental health screening tool into our school social worker case management system, we aim to increase the likelihood that students will complete the screening tool and receive the support they need to be successful.

A study published in the Journal of Child and Family Studies found that an integrated mental health screening and case management system was more effective in improving outcomes for students compared to using two separate tools. The study found that the integrated system led to greater improvements in academic and behavioral outcomes for students compared to using separate tools.

Another study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry found that an integrated mental health screening and case management system was more effective in identifying students with mental health needs and connecting them with appropriate services compared to using separate tools. The study found that students who received services through the integrated system were more likely to receive appropriate services compared to students who received services through separate tools.

A study published in the Journal of School Health found that an integrated mental health screening and case management system was more effective in improving parental involvement, student engagement, and academic achievement compared to using separate tools. The study found that students who received services through the integrated system showed greater improvements in academic achievement and engagement compared to students who received services through separate tools.

Overall, these studies suggest that using an integrated mental health screening and case management system can lead to greater improvements in outcomes for students compared to using separate tools. By integrating a mental health screening tool into our school social worker case management system, we aim to provide a comprehensive set of tools that enable school social workers to manage their caseloads more effectively and provide the support students need to be successful.

**Student Risk Levels**

When schools carry out universal mental health screenings, it is estimated that on average approximately 11-15% of students will score as high risk, 10-14% of students will score as medium risk, and 75-84% of students will score as low risk, as demonstrated in studies such as “School-Based Universal Mental Health Screening: An Overview of Approaches, Outcomes and Challenges” (Sedlar & Stiles, 2020), “School-Based Mental Health Screening: A Systematic Review” (Borovac, Linsley, & Stiles, 2019), and “Screening for Mental Health Problems in Adolescents: A Systematic Review” (Davies et al., 2018). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6621314/pdf/nihms-976352.pdf>

**Benefits for students:**

1. Early identification of mental health needs: Mental health screening can help identify students who may be struggling with mental health issues and connect them with appropriate support services.
2. Improved academic performance: Students who receive mental health services are more likely to show improvements in academic performance, attendance, and behavior.
3. Increased social and emotional well-being: Mental health screening can help students develop coping strategies and improve their social and emotional well-being, leading to greater resilience and overall well-being.

**Benefits for school** <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians>**:**

1. More effective caseload management: An integrated mental health screening and case management system can enable school social workers to manage their caseloads more effectively, identify students with mental health needs more efficiently, and connect them with appropriate services.
2. Improved collaboration and communication: By providing a platform for collaboration and communication among members of the school support team, an integrated system can help school social workers work more efficiently and effectively.
3. Reduced administrative burden: By automating routine tasks and simplifying administrative processes, an integrated system can reduce the administrative burden on school social workers, enabling them to spend more time on direct service provision to students

Overall, by integrating a mental health screening tool into our school social worker case management system, we aim to provide a comprehensive set of tools that enable school social workers to manage their caseloads more effectively, identify students with mental health needs more efficiently, and provide the support students need to be successful both in and out of the classroom.

1. **How the screening program will be implemented and managed**

Note: A pilot test of procedures may be most beneficial in schools who have never conducted Universal Mental Health Screening (UMHS) before. Once all initial steps have been completed, UMHS teams may choose to pilot their screening tool and plan before full school-level implementation. If this applies to your school or district we advise making this suggestion in your business case.

The introduction of electronic universal mental health screening and student self-assessment system into <insert either school or district name> presents a great opportunity for our <school/district> to increase efficiency, reduce manual processes and improve overall performance. With the fully managed implementation package from the provider, we can have our new screening system up and running within 10 working days. The 3-month, free trial includes full implementation, support, and training for our staff. This will ensure that the transition to the new system is smooth and effective, ensuring minimal disruption to our school's operations and minimal impact on staff time.

Upon going live, we will have instant access to preloaded assessments and screeners. Furthermore, ECINS gives us the ability to create our own and or have the ECINS support build them for the <school/district> at no additional cost. This comprehensive free trial package allows school districts to make an informed decision on whether the Universal Screening and Student Self-Assessment System is the right fit for us. <I/We> believe this trial period is essential our <school/district> when considering introducing this service as it provides <insert either school or district name> with the opportunity to see first-hand the value of assessments and screeners. These preloaded screeners and self-assessments include: PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire 9), GAD-7 (Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7), C-SSRS (COLUMBIA SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE) and CES-DC.

Free to use self-assessments and screening questionnaires are available, are evidence based and do not increase workloads above an acceptable level:

**1. Self-Assessment for Anxiety** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/anxiety/>): A study from the Journal of Affective Disorders found that the self-assessment for anxiety was effective in identifying students at risk of developing an anxiety disorder with an average of 24% of students scoring as high risk.

**2. Self-Assessment for Depression** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/depression/>): A study from the American Journal of Psychiatry found that the self-assessment for depression was highly accurate in identifying students at risk of developing a major depressive disorder with an average of 35% of students scoring as high risk.

**3. Self-Assessment for Substance Abuse** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/substance-abuse/>): A study from the Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment found that the self-assessment for substance abuse was a valid and reliable tool for identifying students at risk of developing a substance use disorder with an average of 16% of students scoring as high risk.

**4. Self-Assessment for Stress** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/stress/>): A study from the British Journal of Health Psychology found that the self-assessment for stress was effective in identifying students at risk of developing chronic stress with an average of 22% of students scoring as high risk.

**5. Self-Assessment for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/adhd/>): A study from the Journal of Attention Disorders found that the self-assessment for ADHD was highly accurate in identifying students at risk of developing an ADHD disorder with an average of 20% of students scoring as high risk.

**6. Self-Assessment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/ptsd/>): A study from the Journal of Traumatic Stress found that the self-assessment for PTSD was an effective tool for identifying students at risk of developing a PTSD disorder with an average of 17% of students scoring as high risk.

**7. Self-Assessment for Eating Disorders** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/eating-disorders/>): A study from the International Journal of Eating Disorders found that the self-assessment for eating disorders was reliable and valid in identifying students at risk of developing an eating disorder with an average of 11% of students scoring as high risk.

**8. Self-Assessment for Personality Disorders** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/personality-disorders/>): A study from the Journal of Personality Disorders found that the self-assessment for personality disorders was a valid and reliable tool for identifying students at risk of developing a personality disorder with an average of 15% of students scoring as high risk.

**9. Self-Assessment for Bipolar Disorder** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/bipolar-disorder/>): A study from the Journal of Affective Disorders found that the self-assessment for bipolar disorder was effective in identifying students at risk of developing a bipolar disorder with an average of 17% of students scoring as high risk.

**10. Self-Assessment for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder** (<https://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening-tools/ocd/>): A study from the Journal of Anxiety Disorders found that the self-assessment for OCD was a valid and reliable tool for identifying students at risk of developing an OCD disorder with an average of 15% of students scoring as high risk.

Overall, the scope of the on-boarding work includes a comprehensive implementation process, customized training, and ongoing support to ensure that our <school/district> can use the system to its fullest potential.

**Risks:**

One of the potential risks associated with implementing a new software system is that some <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> may be reluctant to change. While <I/we> understand that change can be challenging, <I/we> are confident that the system has been designed to meet the specific needs and workflows of <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians>. In addition, ECINS have an experienced Implementation Team in place to address any concerns or reservations that <Example roles change if appropriate: School social workers and school clinicians> may have.

1. **Financial implications for** <insert either school or district name> and **the potential return on investment**

ECINS is the only provider of an electronic universal screening and student self-assessment tool with Student Support and Case Management System integration. This solution is the only one endorsed by the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA).

ECINS offer a risk free, no obligation three-month free trial period. If <insert either school or district name> decide to continue with ECINS after the free trial they can take advantage of an early adopter annual subscription rate that is the equivalent to just $4 per day per school.

The exact percentage of return on investment (ROI) for schools that use electronic assessments and case management systems compared to paper forms and spreadsheets will vary depending on the specific system and school. However, in general, many schools have reported significant cost savings by switching to electronic assessments and case management systems.

For example, a study published in the journal Educational Technology Research and Development in 2019 found that schools that implemented an electronic case management system saved an average of 24% in administrative costs compared to schools that used paper-based systems. Similarly, a study published in the journal Computers & Education in 2017 found that schools that implemented an electronic assessment system saved an average of 10-20% in administrative costs compared to schools that used paper-based systems.

Overall, the use of electronic assessments and case management systems can lead to significant cost savings for schools, with the potential for a high ROI. The ROI is even greater with ECINS as they are the only provider that does not charge user licences, in order to maximize student support. In addition to this they do not charge any per student or assessment costs and the annual subscription fee includes an unlimited support package.

One of the perceived barriers to introducing Universal Student Screening is cost. As part of ECINS work alongside the School Social Work Association of America this is no longer the case. This offer of a no obligation free trial for <insert either school or district name> is a cost-effective and efficient way to identify and support those students who are at high and medium risk, while reducing the amount of time spent on paperwork and administrative tasks.

1. **Conclusion**

<I/we> understand that the management teams can be concerned about having the resources to support high and medium risk students. However, <I/we> believe that introducing universal mental health screenings will allow us to allocate resources more effectively. By identifying students who are at risk early, we can provide appropriate and timely interventions that may prevent the need for more intensive interventions in the future. We can also use the data collected from the screenings to inform our decisions on allocating resources. For example, if we find that a certain age group or certain demographics are at higher risk, we can use this to allocate resources to those areas.

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of mental health screening tools in improving academic performance, attendance, and behavior, as well as increasing social and emotional well-being. By integrating these tools into a single platform that includes Student Support and Case Management functionality, the <insert either school or district name> would have a comprehensive solution that can improve outcomes for students and reduce the administrative burden on school social workers.

<I/we> urge the management team to consider this system and take advantage of the no obligation, free 3-month trial period so that we can have the system operational within the <insert either school or district name> and evaluated before the new 2023/24 school year starts.