

Filmmaker Stacie McClam Uses Minority Mental Health Month to Spotlight Educators Suffering in Silence

Upcoming film "MR. ADVOCATE" explores educator wellness, Black male vulnerability and the hidden human cost of pressure in K-12 schools

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CA, UNITED STATES, July 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In recognition of Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, former educator and filmmaker [Stacie McClam](#) is calling for more honest conversations about the emotional well-being of K-12 teachers, particularly Black and Brown educators whose struggles may remain unseen.

McClam's upcoming film, "[MR. ADVOCATE](#)," examines testing pressure, teacher turnover, grief, equity and the growing presence of artificial intelligence in schools. It also creates space for Black male educators to speak openly about vulnerability, emotional health and therapy.

"Mental health is important, and I want the film to show people that discussing mental health is OK and that it's healthy," McClam said. "My film includes Black male educators, and I wanted to show them being vulnerable, expressing their emotions, talking about therapy and discussing how therapy is not weak."

National data reflects the urgency. [RAND](#) Corp.'s 2026 State of the American Teacher survey found that 55% of K-12 public school teachers experienced frequent job-related stress, compared with 34% of similar working adults.

RAND's 2025 survey found that 25% of Black teachers and 25% of Hispanic teachers reported symptoms of depression, compared with 18% of White teachers. Twenty-seven percent of Hispanic teachers reported difficulty coping with job-related stress.



MR. ADVOCATE MOVIE

“Yes, I believe that educators are suffering in silence,” McClam said. “Teaching has been reduced to, ‘Get the scores up.’ That’s not why people become teachers, but that seems to be the only goal now — not the students actually learning, learning how to critically analyze and enjoying school.”

McClam taught in schools from Washington, D.C., to Kuwait before becoming a filmmaker. She said she did not fully recognize the effects of prolonged stress while she was in the classroom.

“While I know it’s not the case for all teachers, many suffer from mental health issues like I did,” McClam said. “I didn’t realize it while I was teaching. I just knew that I was stressed and wasn’t happy. My hair fell out while I was teaching, I got shingles due to stress from state test prep, and was diagnosed with PTSD when I left teaching.”



McClam believes educator wellness must become part of discussions about school performance and student success. She is urging school leaders to give educators opportunities to express concerns, discuss what is and is not working, and access culturally responsive mental health support.

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Stacie McClam, Filmmaker

“Teachers need to be heard, not just told what to do,” McClam said. “Teacher wellness and self-care is never discussed. If we don’t take care of teachers, then we can’t take care of students.”

She also hopes the film will challenge expectations placed on men and boys.

“Men and boys are not socialized to express their emotions, and it’s not healthy for them or society,” McClam said. “In fact, it’s inhumane.”

“AI is here and is not going anywhere,” she said. “I made this film to pull those hidden truths into the light, because our children and our educators deserve better than a system that undervalues them both.”

For more information about "MR. ADVOCATE," visit <https://mradvocatefilm.com/>

MR. ADVOCATE: Feature Film Premiere Screening
Cinemark Century Hilltop 16Richmond, CA
Saturday, August 15 • 2:30 PM - 5 PM

About Stacie McClam

Stacie McClam is a former educator, filmmaker and education advocate whose work explores the human impact of school systems, technology and public policy. Contact:
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