

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University Contact: Melissa Kimber – Project Coordinator Phone: (905)521-2100 ext. 74359 E-mail: kimberms@mcmaster.ca

Most comprehensive school mental health study in Ontario is now launched

Hamilton, ON – February 13, 2015 – The School Mental Health Surveys are the very first school-based Canadian study that includes surveys from students, teachers and principals. They will be able to tell us about the effect that schools have on child and youth mental health. Lead by McMaster University's Offord Centre for Child Studies, the School Mental Health Surveys are a part of the 2014 Ontario Child Health Study; which is surveying families in 180 neighbourhoods across Ontario.

The research team has carefully chosen 240 schools from the same neighbourhoods where families were selected for the Ontario Child Health Study. School experiences are being collected from more than 26,500 students, 3,500 teachers, and 240 principals.

"Schools and educators are playing a very important role in promoting and supporting student mental health," said Kathy Georgiades, co-principal investigator for the School Mental Health Surveys. "By including schools from neighbourhoods participating in the Ontario Child Health Study, we will be able to document the unique role that families, schools and neighbourhoods play in supporting child and youth mental health"

Results from the original 1983 Ontario Child Health Study contributed to over \$1 billion of investment in federal and provincial programs and services. The School Mental Health Surveys will help

Ontario make decisions about funding and resources to better meet the mental health needs of our children and youth in the school setting. Say 'yes' if you are asked to participate in the School Mental

Health Surveys.

For more information about the School Mental Health Survey, the Ontario Child Health Study, and for our media kit, go to our website: <u>www.ontariochildhealthstudy.ca</u> Follow us on Facebook: <u>https://www.facebook.com/2014OCHS</u> Or on Twitter: @2014OCHS

-30-