



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 30, 2020  
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities  
Route To: Principals, Teachers, School Counselors, School Nurses  
From: Daryl Minus-Vincent, Acting Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Field Services

## Suicide Prevention Resources and Information

As National Suicide Prevention Month comes to a close, it is imperative that we continue to work together to proactively raise awareness of suicidal behaviors, encourage dialogue to reduce the social stigma around suicide and mental health, and aim to increase the availability of treatment and protective factors for suicide.

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ranked suicide as the [second leading cause of death](#) for people 10 to 34 years of age, both nationally and in New Jersey. Trauma, stress, loneliness, the loss of employment, and economic [concerns exacerbated by the COVID-19](#) pandemic have increased mental health issues, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation for younger adults, among others.

While educators work to support students both in-person and remotely, the below resources may be helpful to the efforts to increase awareness and prevent youth suicide:

- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (SPRC) lists *Ideas for Action* to increase awareness.
- [Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#) (SPTS) developed *Navigating Back to School*, a free online learning experience designed for elementary, middle, and high school faculty and staff, non-faculty and ancillary staff, parents/guardians, and students.
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP) has a comprehensive section of resources devoted to mental health and COVID-19.
- [New Jersey Department of Education website](#) outlines resources for students, families and school staff, including free suicide prevention education toolkits.

As a reminder, every public school teaching staff member must complete a minimum of two hours of instruction in suicide prevention every five years. This instruction is to be provided by a licensed healthcare professional with training and experience in mental health issues and shall include information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying (N.J.S.A. 18A:6-112).

The [Protocol for Reporting Youth Suicide Attempt or Completion](#) outlines a list of professionals who, by law, are required to report attempted or completed suicide by youth. The [Youth Suicide Reporting Form](#) is a short online form submitted directly to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) that is used to statistically report non-identifying demographic information regarding a student or youth who has either attempted or completed suicide (N.J.S.A. 30.9A-24).

As always, the [Crisis Text Line](#), the [New Jersey Hopeline](#), the [2nd Floor Youth Helpline](#), and the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) are available 24 hours/7 days a week if you or someone you know is considering suicide.

c: Members, State Board of Education  
Kevin Dehmer, Interim Commissioner of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group