



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 22, 2021
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: Principals, Teacher, School Counselors, School Nurses
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Suicide Prevention Resources

In January of this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranked suicide as the [14th leading cause of death in New Jersey](#) and the third leading cause of death for those ages 10 to 24. While New Jersey continues to have a lower rate of suicide compared to the national average, suicide remains a priority area to combat within the State.

We must 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.

As schools return to in-person learning, it is imperative to be mindful of the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 18 months. Emotional and physical well-being of students and staff are paramount to ensuring a successful academic year. To support schools in their efforts to increase awareness and prevent suicide, educators may find it helpful to visit the New Jersey Department of Education's updated [Suicide Prevention](#) website which includes resources for students, families, school staff, and 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 Event 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 [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
Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group