



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 25, 2024
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Principals, Teacher, School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Nurses
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Suicide Prevention Resources

As reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide continues to be the second leading cause of death for New Jersey youth ages 10-24. This statistic further emphasizes that we all must work together to raise awareness, share resources, and increase protective factors for students.

In alignment with Governor Murphy's Youth Mental Health initiative, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has partnered with the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS) to develop a comprehensive and impactful Suicide Prevention and Awareness Campaign. This initiative intends to address the critical public health concern surrounding youth mental health and suicide prevention in New Jersey by creating and disseminating educational materials, conducting training sessions to equip stakeholders with the necessary skills, and implementing community outreach initiatives to raise awareness about suicide prevention. The campaign will culminate with a statewide mental health and suicide prevention conference.

In addition to these efforts, the NJDOE encourages educators to utilize several evidence-based resources to enhance suicide prevention strategies within their schools. [SAMHSA's Toolkit for High Schools](#) provides comprehensive guidance on supporting students' mental health and preventing suicide. [Edutopia's Suicide Awareness and Prevention Guide](#) offers practical advice on risk factors, protective factors, and best practices for discussing suicide. Additionally, the [Rural Health Information Hub's Suicide Prevention Toolkit](#) highlights effective programs such as "Sources of Strength" and "Signs of Suicide," which have demonstrated success in reducing suicide attempts and increasing awareness among students.

As always, the [2nd Floor Youth Helpline](#) and [988 Lifeline](#) are available 24 hours/7 days a week. These hotlines provide free and confidential support for people in distress as well as prevention and crisis.

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