



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 27, 2025
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Principals, Directors of School Counseling, School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Social Workers, School Nurses
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Suicide Prevention Responsibilities and Resources

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. As the new school year begins, it is important to emphasize the critical importance of suicide prevention in our schools. We all must work together to increase knowledge and foster protective factors for our students.

To raise student awareness of available support resources, all public schools serving any of the grades seven through 12 that issue student identification cards must include the telephone numbers for mental health and suicide crisis resources printed on the back of the cards. **Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, student identification cards for students in grades 7-12 must include "988: Suicide & Crisis Lifeline."** [988](#) is available by call, text, or chat 24 hours a day, every day of the year. To access free materials to promote 988, such as posters and notecards, please visit the [SAMHSA Partner Toolkit](#).

In addition to including 988, school districts may choose to include additional crisis lines, such as:

- *Institution-specific counseling services*: Schools are encouraged to continue to list contact information for counseling or mental health resources the school district provides or contracts to provide.
- *2ND FLOOR Youth Helpline (1-888-222-2228)*: A confidential helpline for NJ youth and young adults, between the ages of 10 and 21. Youth can call, text, or visit the comprehensive message board to connect solutions to their problems.
- *24/7 Addiction Helpline (1-844-REACHNJ)*: Call line for NJ residents of all ages who are looking for help with a substance use disorder.

Additionally, please note that 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. It 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 NJDOE encourages educators to utilize several evidence-based resources to enhance suicide prevention strategies within their schools. The [SAMHSA Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit](#) and [Prevent Suicide New Jersey](#) provide informational resources and links 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.

Creating safe, responsive, and supportive learning environments is a collective responsibility. We thank school communities for continuing to prioritize suicide prevention and youth mental health as an essential part of school safety and student well-being. As always, 988 support is available by call, text, or chat 24 hours per day if you or someone you know is considering suicide.

Key Steps/Actions

- Ensure student identification cards for schools serving any of the grades 7-12 include, at minimum, information for 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or Text 988).
- Confirm that all teaching staff complete essential training on suicide prevention per the above requirements.
- Prioritize suicide prevention by reviewing the latest resources and taking steps to increase supports for students.

Contact Information

For any questions, please contact the Office of Student Support Services by emailing SafeSupportiveSchools@doe.nj.gov.

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