

WHEREAS, suicide is the third leading cause of death among U.S. residents aged 10-24;¹

WHEREAS, in the past 60 years the suicide rate has quadrupled for males 15-24 and has doubled for females in the same age group;²

WHEREAS, the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention calls for increasing the proportion of school districts and private school associations with evidence-based programs designed to address serious childhood and adolescent distress and suicide prevention;⁴

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General has called for actions to prevent suicide;⁶

WHEREAS, 48.6% of school districts require that schools provide, when needed, individualized or small group discussions on suicided prevention to students (outside of classroom instruction);³ and

WHEREAS, only 42.3% of schools teach students how to recognize stressors and signs of depression that might be associated with suicide and only 37.8% teach students what to do if someone is thinking about suicide.³

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the American School Health Association recommends that schools include suicide prevention and intervention within a coordinated school health program as part of an integrated approach to student and staff mental health with the following elements:

- 1) A district-wide policy concerning student suicide prevention and intervention;
- 2) Education for all school staff about suicide risk assessment and recognition;
- 3) Professional Development for appropriate schools staff about intervention, referral, case management, and aftercare interventions;⁶
- 4) A school crisis intervention team;
- 5) Procedures school professionals should follow when a student threatens or attempts suicide;
- 6) Collaboration with community health care resources to provide access to mental health services for students, their families, and schools staff;⁶
- 7) Safe and effective programs for youth that address adolescent distress, crisis intervention, and incorporate peer support for seeking help;⁶
- 8) Strategies aimed at increasing school connectedness; and
- 9) Family resources and parent-training on recognizing signs of suicide ideation and accessing appropriate resources.

References

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