



Board of Education Report

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In Control: Board of Education

Mr. Schmerelson - Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month (Res-002-25/26) (Noticed August 26, 2025)

Whereas, Suicide loss profoundly impacts families, friends, teachers, and the entire school community, and providing comprehensive support to survivors is essential for healing and preventing future tragedies;

Whereas, In 2021, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) indicated that 42% of high school students in America experience persistent sadness or hopelessness every day for two straight weeks in a row with these numbers being high amongst females (57%), Hispanics (46%), multiracial (49%), and LGBTQ+ (69%);

Whereas, The same report from the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System indicated that 29% of high school students in America experience poor mental health, with these numbers being especially high amongst females (41%) and LGBTQ+ (52%);

Whereas, The same report from the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System indicated that 22% of high school students seriously considered suicide in 2021, with the highest demographic being LGBTQ+ students (45%);

Whereas, In 2023, the CDC identified suicide as one of the top eight leading causes of death for people ages 10 to 64 and the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 34;

Whereas, Factors such as discrimination, adverse childhood experiences, stigma, familial and community rejection, mental illness, social networks, and other factors that compromise life functioning may result in elevated suicide risk, particularly for vulnerable student populations;

Whereas, In September 2016, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2246, now California Education Code 215, that took effect in 2017-18, setting a requirement for all Local Educational Agencies (LEA), including county offices of education, school districts, state special schools and charter schools that serve pupils in grades 7 to 12 to adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention that specially addresses the needs of high-risk students;

Whereas, Suicide rates increased by 36% between the years 2000 and 2021, responsible for being the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 14 and 20 to 34, according to the CDC;

Whereas, The phone number of the Suicide and Crisis Hotline has changed to 988, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week;

Whereas, The focus on mental health aligns with the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD or the District) Strategic Plan on Pillar 1B, which focuses on student happiness at their schools, and Pillar 1C, which seeks to eliminate opportunity gaps. Furthermore, this also aligns with Pillars 2A, which

establishes welcoming environments, 2B, the whole-child well-being, and 2C, strong social-emotional skills;

Whereas, In July 2017, Michelle King, Superintendent of Schools, approved the implementation of the annual online Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training for all District staff;

Whereas, The Los Angeles Region suffered through extreme wildfire events in January 2025, with mental health organizations warning of increased mental health stress or crisis due to victims losing loved ones, homes, pets, etc;

Whereas, The District's LCAP Executive Summary for the 2024-25 school year reflected iSTAR data districtwide that 8,328 suicide risk incidents were reported, with elementary school incidents at 2,467, middle school at 2,509, and high school at 2,397;

Whereas, The District's School Mental Health team launched the "Mental Health Is.." campaign with a focus on suicide prevention in September 2024 that spotlighted raising awareness, reducing stigma, and connecting students to existing resources on the District's Instagram account;

Whereas, The District employs over 750 Psychiatric Social Workers (PSWs), over 200 Student and Family Navigators, Coordinators, Health Care Advocates, and Organizational Facilitators, including 59 Black Student Achievement Plan (BSAP) PSWs who help with culturally responsive intervention strategies;

Whereas, The District has implemented the "myCREW" program within BSAP, a student led campaign that focuses on suicide prevention at secondary schools, allowing a space for **all** students to share their emotions and concerns as well as the Health, Optimism, Perseverance, and Empowerment (HOPE) Group, which helps students learn and enhance self-awareness and communication skills at mental health clinics and wellness centers;

Whereas, The District has extended the hours of PSWs to help provide support for students during extended learning programs, such as Beyond the Bell;

Whereas, Suicide prevention involves inclusive school-wide activities and programs that enhance a sense of belonging, contribute to a safe and nurturing environment, and strengthen protective factors that reduce the risk for students; and

Whereas, National Suicide Prevention Week will be observed from September 7-13, 2025, to help call public attention to the increasing incidence of suicide and to inform about suicide prevention and warning signs of suicide; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District hereby declares September Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in the Los Angeles Unified School District;

Resolved further, That throughout National Suicide Prevention Month, but especially during National Suicide Prevention Week (September 7-13, 2025), the District will use social media channels and direct communication to District families to raise awareness and promote resources on suicide prevention, especially resources focused on the needs of our most vulnerable students;

Resolved further, That the District will establish measurable benchmarks for tracking secondary students (grades 6th - 12th) growth in awareness of how to access mental health resources over time using data collected through student surveys;

Resolved further, That the Superintendent or his designee provide an update report to the Board in the spring semester of 2026 outlining how District mental health resources are being promoted, distributed, made available, and accessed by students and staff; and, be it finally

Resolved, That by the adoption of this resolution, the Board encourages all students, faculty, administrators, and parents to promote a climate of positive behavior support and intervention; monitor students' emotional state and well-being; and make referrals for crisis support and mental health, as needed.