SUICIDE PREVENTION

Note: Effective July 1, 2016, AS 14.30.362 requires suicide awareness and prevention training for specific school personnel. AS 14.30.362 also provides civil immunity for districts and employees from a death or personal injury that results from an act or omission in providing or obtaining that training. The training provided or failure to provide training cannot be construed to impose a specific duty of care on any person.

The School Board finds it important that the tragic situation of adolescent suicide be openly addressed and that staff, students and parents/guardians be made aware of warning signs and procedures by which they may help suicidal students at this especially vulnerable age.

The Board believes that school staff, students and parents/guardians all can contribute significantly towards the prevention of adolescent suicide. The district shall make available suicide prevention training in accordance with law.

Staff Awareness & Training

Note: Effective October 26, 2016, AS 14.30.362 requires districts to provide training on a schedule adopted by the Board on youth suicide awareness and prevention to the following staff: each teacher, administrator, counselor, and specialist who is employed by the district to provide services to students. The training must be approved by the Commissioner of Education and provided to teachers at no cost. Training may be offered through videoconferencing or an individual program of study.

(cf. 4131- Staff Development)

The Board strongly encourages teachers to help students of all ages develop healthy social emotional skills for the prevention of suicide.

In order that district staff may learn suicide prevention strategies, to recognize the warning signs of suicidal crisis, to understand how to help suicidal youths, and to identify helpful community resources, the Superintendent or designee shall arrange suicide awareness and prevention training as required by law. Additional certificated and classified staff may also be included. The district suicide prevention policy and procedures shall be thoroughly reviewed at this time. Staff shall be expected to learn to identify potentially suicidal students, to assess the degree of risk, to take preventive precautions and to report suicide threats to the appropriate authorities.

Curriculum

The Board finds it appropriate that suicide prevention instruction be incorporated into the curriculum. This instruction shall help students:

Understand how feelings of depression and despair can lead to suicide.

Identify alternatives to suicide and develop new coping skills.

Recognize the warning signs of suicidal intentions in their friends.
Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent.

Identify community resources where teenagers can get crisis intervention help.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.30.362 Suicide awareness and prevention training

SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Adoption Date: