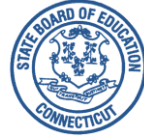




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

DATE: May 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Preventing Youth Suicide in Connecticut

Tragically, Connecticut has already lost five students to suicide in 2025. The passing of these students is being mourned by countless classmates, educators, friends, and family members, not only in their own communities but across the state. In the 2023 [Connecticut School Health Survey](#) (i.e. Youth Risk Behavior Survey), of the 3,182 high school students who completed the survey, 15.7 percent reported that they seriously considered attempting suicide and 7.7 percent reported that they had actually attempted suicide within the last twelve months. These percentages are an increase from 14.1 percent and 5.9 percent respectfully, as reported in the 2021 Connecticut School Health Survey. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) provides the following information and resources to assist districts in supporting the important role of schools in youth suicide prevention.

Connecticut is fortunate to have five [Regional Suicide Advisory Boards](#) (RSAB) which operate as part of the [Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization](#) (RBHAO) to support the [CT Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention](#) by providing training and evidence-based guidance for mental health promotion including suicide prevention, intervention and response. The local RSAB's are available to partner with schools to strengthen the foundational knowledge for students and staff for suicide warning signs, intervention strategies, and postvention best-practices.

To further enhance schools' capacity to support youth suicide prevention the CSDE, in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), hosted a webinar on February 27, 2025, for school mental health staff and other school professionals dedicated to youth suicide prevention.

Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention for Schools

A discussion of best practices, community supports, and available resources

[Access the webinar recording and view related materials](#)

As part of this fall's *Virtual House Call Series: Supporting Your Child's Health and Wellbeing During the School Year*, CSDE hosted a panel of experts from DCF and DHMAS to discuss warning signs, tips for caregivers on how to talk with adolescents about their mental health and well-being, and where families can turn to for additional support. Districts are encouraged to share [this flyer](#) with their community so families can access the recording of *Protecting Our Youth: A Community Approach to Suicide Prevention* as well as the other events in the series. Translation services for the videos are available through the closed captioning feature.

As a reminder, please also note the following:

- [Connecticut General Statutes \(C.G.S.\) Section 10-221\(e\)](#) requires each local and regional board of education to adopt a written policy and procedures for addressing youth suicide prevention.
- [C.G.S. Section 10-220a](#) requires each local or regional board of education to provide an annual in-service training program for its teachers, administrators and pupil personnel including information on the incidence of youth suicide, methods of identifying youths at risk of suicide and developmentally appropriate strategies for effective interventions to prevent youth suicide.
- [C.G.S. Section 10-222x](#) requires each local and regional board of education to include the 988 National Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline information on all identification cards distributed to students in grades 6-12.
- [C.G.S. Section 10-212n](#) requires the CSDE to provide each local and regional board of education with a list of the recommended assessments for determining the suicide risk of students. Jointly with the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board, chaired by DCF and DMHAS, CSDE recommends that the [Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale \(C-SSRS\)](#) be used as the assessment tool for determining the suicide risk of students.

If you have questions or need further clarification or information, please contact Kate Bohannon, CSDE School Mental Health Consultant, at Kate.Bohannon@ct.gov.

Additional Local and National Resources

[Connecticut Suicide Advisory board](#) – an extensive list of resources for schools compiled by the CTSAB
[Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention](#)
[Suicide Prevention Toolkit for High Schools](#)
[After A Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#)

[CT Connecting to Care](#) - regional lists of community-based supports and services for families

[Youth Mobile Crisis](#) - trained counselors who can provide support and assessment to youth in crisis

[Urgent Crisis Centers](#) – four centers in Connecticut for families of children who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis but do not require emergency department level care

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) – national resource for youth and adults who are in crisis to call or text in order to speak to a trained professional

[Gizmo 4 Mental Health](#) – a kid-friendly, data-driven and evidence-informed resource to introduce mental health and wellness to youth and how to identify and ask a trusted adult for help

[Columbia Protocol \(C-SSRS\)](#) – free online training and information about the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) for school staff and community members