



STATEWIDE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION  
AND  
SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINATING COUNCIL



## Suicide Prevention Education Legislation SB 434/HB 1061

### WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?

This amendment to the current statute adds suicide prevention education to school districts' professional development plans as an option for school personnel to choose from when deciding how to fulfill their in-service training requirements. It does not mandate training, nor does it cost anything. It is a non-controversial amendment to the current statute that simply puts suicide prevention education on the radar screen as an option for school personnel if they want it.

This can be accomplished at no cost as there are numerous free, online trainings that teachers and administrators can utilize. Two trainings that we highly recommend, *Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention* and *Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention*, can be found on our website at: <http://www.helppromotehope.com/resources/schools.php>

### PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

An act relating to student discipline and school safety; amending s. 1006.07, F.S.; requiring district school boards to provide access to suicide prevention education for instructional and administrative personnel; requiring use of resources approved by the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention; providing an effective date. Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (7) is added to section 1006.07, Florida Statutes, to read: 1006.07 District school board duties relating to student discipline and school safety.--The district school board shall provide for the proper accounting for all students, for the attendance and control of students at school, and for proper attention to health, safety, and other matters relating to the welfare of students, including:

7) SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION.—Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, provide all instructional and administrative personnel with access to educational resources regarding suicide prevention which are approved by the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention through the school district professional development plan under s. 1012.98.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.

**SENATE SPONSOR:** SB 434 / Senator Eleanor Sobel, District 31

**HOUSE SPONSOR:** HB 1061 / Representative Bill Heller, District 52

## THE NEED FOR THIS LEGISLATION:

- In 2008, 2,723 Floridians died by suicide; 231 of these deaths were youth
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people ages 10-24
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease combined
- Across the U.S., each day approximately 11 young people between the ages of 15-24 die by suicide
- Every 2 hours and 15 minutes a person under the age of 25 dies by suicide somewhere in the U.S. (National Vital Statistics Reports, National Center for Health Statistics; [www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs))
- The average cost of suicide deaths to the State of Florida from 1999-2003 was \$2.2 billion (Calculated by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- Florida's suicide rate is more than double its homicide rate
- Suicide is preventable

Suicide is a widespread public health problem that affects people at all levels of society. The 2007 Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey reports that 204,100 students surveyed in grades 9-12 have experienced possible clinical depression in the past 12 months, 88,400 considered suicide, 63,800 made a plan to commit suicide and 39,200 reported they had made an attempt.

Nine out of ten adolescents who die by suicide give clues to someone before they attempt. School personnel are key gatekeepers in a young person's life. They are the ones interacting with students on a daily basis and are likely to notice changes in behavior or attitude. Many suicidal students will likely go to a teacher, coach or janitor before they go to a school counselor. Yet, they often have a lack of training to deal with these issues. Schools often train their teachers how to react to suicides but not how to prevent them. If the significant people in a young person's life are able to recognize these signs and act on them, many lives could be saved.

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE OPTIONS:

1. The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide provides a free online teacher training: <http://spts.pldm.com/>
2. The Jason Foundation provides a free online teacher training: <http://www.jasonfoundation.com/life/login.aspx>
3. The American Foundation of Suicide Prevention developed an educational program to help teachers and other school personnel learn more about teen suicide and how they can play a role in its prevention. *More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel* features two films, each approximately 25 minutes in length, and a manual that integrates both films into a comprehensive suicide prevention program. The program is designed to comply with states that have requirements or recommendations for teacher education in suicide prevention, and can be used for group trainings or individual study. Cost is \$99.99. More information can be found at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).
4. Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention provides Gatekeeper Training (Learning warning signs of suicide) –free if a trainer comes into the schools (Contact Jackie Rosen, [jrosenfisp@aol.com](mailto:jrosenfisp@aol.com))
5. Alachua County Crisis Center provides Gatekeeper Training
6. Parents and Teachers as Allies (In-Service Mental Health Education for School Professionals) presented by National Alliance for Mental Illness- 2 hour course that reduces the stigma of mental illness (only cost is the books which are \$1 a piece) For more information, please contact: Dana Crud at [danac@nami.org](mailto:danac@nami.org) / 703-600-1117

(Contact the Office of Suicide Prevention at 850-922-0498 if additional information is needed or visit [www.HelpPromoteHope.com](http://www.HelpPromoteHope.com) and click on the Teachers and Schools Resources page)

Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention 3/1/2010 Contact Erin MacInnes (850) 922-0498