

SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1983

Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2013

- WHEREAS,** Many young people in secondary schools have suicidal ideas, thoughts and expressions and do not know how to handle them; and
- WHEREAS,** At the present time there is no formalized structural education on suicide prevention, not only for students who have these thoughts but for all students who may be approached by their peers with suicidal thoughts; and
- WHEREAS,** It is a recognized fact that depression, fear, anger and stress are the major reasons for suicide in the young; and
- WHEREAS,** Students' positive attitudes toward life are vital to their survival and they must be taught how to cope with their own thoughts, feelings and emotions; and
- WHEREAS,** Suicide education in the schools has been shown to be one of the best preventive measures against suicide; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and the California State Department of Education together explore ways in which suicide prevention education may be included in the Health Instruction Framework in secondary schools; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to initiate, develop and present programs on suicide prevention education and awareness for students, parents and community; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation to provide suicide prevention education.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In most countries throughout the world, suicide in adolescence has tripled over the past twenty years and now ranks second among the leading causes of death during teenage to adult years.

In 1979 suicide in ages 8-12 was up 400%. One of four families is affected by suicide in some form.

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One of three students is told by a friend at some time in his school years that he is thinking of suicide.

California has the highest teenage suicide rate in the nation. In 1980 there were approximately 4,000 deaths from suicide in California, and as many as 15,000 to 20,000 attempts are made by young people each year. Because many deaths are reported as accidental, these figures may even be higher.

Included in the Health Instruction Framework for California Public Schools, 1978 edition, and approved by the State Board of Education in March 1977 is the following:

To Grow In Self Awareness —

Each student will have opportunities to develop a positive sense of identity and self-esteem so that her/his self concept may be enhanced and she/he may experience success, not failure. Each student will have opportunities to develop competencies to deal positively and creatively in handling life situations related to physical, mental-emotional and social health. Students will develop an understanding that emotional health is influenced by genetic, biological, social, cultural, environmental and ecological factors; make decisions which contribute to building self-acceptance and reducing individual stress and anxiety; and establish and continually develop patterns of behavior which promote sound mental-emotional health.

Both the National and the State PTA are on record as favoring projects and programs to help young people achieve the optimum in sound mental and emotional health.