



Alaska Association of Student Government

Resolution #16

Accessing funding for mental health resources in rural Alaska schools

Submitted by: Qilaavsuk Vadiveloo

April 21, 2024

Be it Resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments that:

- 1. Whereas,** Alaska ranked 38th in the country for overall child well-being in 2023¹;
- 2. Whereas,** the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) identified student health and wellness as one of their top three legislative priorities of 2024²;
- 3. Whereas,** 53% of the North Slope's population is Alaska Native and American Indian, as of 2021³;
- 4. Whereas,** 81% of the Northwest Arctic Borough's population is Alaska Native and American Indian, as of 2021⁴;
- 5. Whereas,** 68% of the Yukon-Koyukuk region's population is Alaska Native and American Indian, as of 2021⁵;
- 6. Whereas,** 83% of the Bethel Census Area's population is Alaska Native and American Indian, as of 2021⁶;
- 7. Whereas,** in 2021, Alaska Native and American Indian youth had the highest rate of suicide attempts in the nation at 16%⁷;
- 8. Whereas,** in 2023, over 50% of Alaskan youth with major depression did not receive any kind of treatment⁸;
- 9. Whereas,** the Center for Disease Control(CDC) reported that 10% of American youth in grades 9-12 had made at least one suicide attempt in 2021⁹;
- 10. Whereas,** suicide was America's third leading cause of death in 2021 for ages 14-18⁹;
- 11. Whereas,** over 60% of rural areas in America have a shortage of mental health providers¹⁰;
- 12. Whereas,** since a student-led anti-suicide initiative began in 2009, the suicide rate in the Northwest Arctic Borough has decreased significantly¹¹;

13. Whereas, implementing a similar program in other rural schools and districts could help reduce suicide rates;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alaska Association of Student Governments supports the initiative to set up more mental health resources in rural areas.

Action Statement: if passed by the general assembly of AASG, they will support the pursuit of funding to set up student-led support groups similar to the one in the Northwest Arctic and bring mental health professionals into rural schools and school districts.

Sources:

1. <https://www.aecf.org/interactive/databook>
2. <https://aasb.org/2024-aasb-legislative-priorities/>
3. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/north-slope-borough-ak/>
4. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/northwest-arctic-borough-ak/>
5. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/yukon-koyukuk-census-area-ak>
6. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/bethel-census-area-ak>
7. <https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/>
8. <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/2023/mental-health-america-youth-data>
9. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/su/su7201a6.htm>
10. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7681156/>
11. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-suicide-rate-in-the-Northwest-Arctic-Borough-has-decreased-over-the-past-ten-years_fig1_324866358
12. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=1130>

The resolution passes with unanimous consent

Passed by the Spring 2024 General Assembly of AASG hosted by Barrow High School

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Danika Hamm", positioned above a horizontal line.

AASG Vice President, Danika Hamm

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kathleen Navarre", positioned above a horizontal line.

AASG Executive Director, Kathleen Navarre