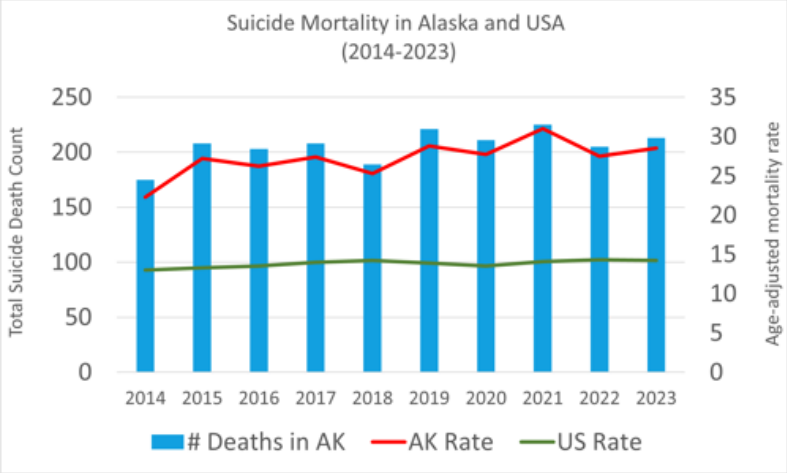
Alaska Association of Student Governments
Resolution #7
All high schools are required to implement mental health support
Submitted by: Grace Acker, coauthored with Eagle River Student Government
Submitted on: September 25, 2026

Be it Resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments that every middle and high school in Alaska, both private and public, are required to implement some kind of suicide training, suicide prevention, mental health support, or informative outreach led by a student organization with reasonable resource expectations.

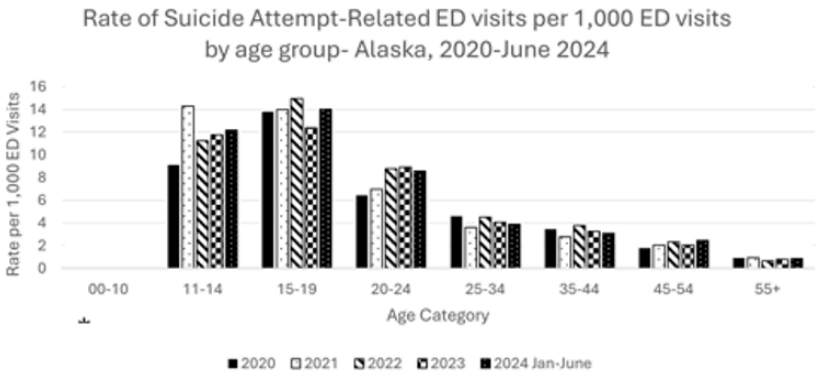
1. **Whereas,** student-led mental health support, suicide prevention, or informative outreach organizations is in reference to a student led organization, club, program, committee based in a preexisting organization, or recurring informative initiative led by students with the purpose of promoting mental health awareness, suicide prevention, peer connection through student involvement, access to mental health resources, and a positive and supportive school community;
2. **Whereas,** schools may meet this requirement through an existing organization or by establishing a new student organization, program, or initiative that fulfills the purposes outlined in this resolution;
3. **Whereas,** YANA, which stands for You Are Not Alone, is an example of a student-led organization that focuses on mental health awareness, suicide prevention, peer support, and creating a more connected school community;[15]
4. **Whereas,** STAR, which stands for Services for Teens at Risk, is an example of a student-led organization that focuses on mental health awareness outreach and clinical support when needed;[13]
5. **Whereas,** SOS, which stands for Signs of Suicide, is a program that follows all qualifications as a student led mental health organization;[9]
6. **Whereas,** SOS, which stands for Sources of Strength creates guidelines for a student led program that is built to support the specific community it is founded in;[10]
7. **Whereas,** any other organization or club that meets the requirements of being a student-led mental health, or suicide prevention focused organization also qualifies as meeting the requirements of this resolution;
8. **Whereas,** student-led organizations can provide students with opportunities to educate

their peers about mental health, reduce any stigma surrounding mental health struggles, promote connection, and direct students toward appropriate school and community resources;

9. **Whereas,** the Alaska YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) is administered to Alaska high school students every other year; collects information about mental health, suicidal ideation, and other health-related experiences among Alaska's youth;
10. **Whereas,** the 2023 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 19% of respondents reported attempting suicide at least once, compared to 8.7% of respondents in 2011;[5]
11. **Whereas,** the 2023 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 23% of respondents reported seriously considering suicide, compared to 14.5% in 2011;[5]
12. **Whereas,** the 2023 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 43% of respondents reported experiencing prolonged feelings of sadness or hopelessness that prevented them from participating in their usual activities, compared to 25.9% in 2011;[5]
13. **Whereas,** the 2023 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 56% of female respondents and 32% of male respondents reported experiencing prolonged feelings of sadness or hopelessness that prevented them from participating in their usual activities;[5]
14. **Whereas,** the Alaska Department of Health reports that Alaska's suicide mortality rate is substantially higher than the national rate and has shown an increasing trend since 2014;[11]



15. **Whereas,** the Alaska Department of Health reports that youth ages 11–19 had the highest rates of emergency-department visits related to suicide attempts among Alaska age groups from 2020 - 2024;[11]



16. **Whereas,** research examining 10,291 students across 38 high schools found that suicide attempts were higher in schools where students were more isolated, while stronger connections between students and trusted adults or peers were associated with lower rates of suicide attempts;[6]
17. **Whereas,** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies schools as an important setting for promoting adolescent mental health through education, prevention, early intervention, supportive environments, positive peer relationships, and connections to mental health services;[1, 2, 3]
18. **Whereas,** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies strengthening students' mental health literacy, increasing connectedness with peers and teachers, building skills for managing emotions and challenges, teaching coping and problem-solving skills, and connecting students to caring adults as strategies schools can use to support adolescent mental health and suicide prevention;[2, 3, 4, 14]
19. **Whereas,** student-led organizations can help make conversations surrounding mental health more accessible to students by using peer influence and student participation to build awareness and connection within the school community which promotes factors associated with suicide prevention;[3, 6, 14]
20. **Whereas,** a student organization should not and can not replace professional mental health services (including but not limited to the suicide hotline and teen hotlines as cited)[8, 11], school counselors, or emergency resources, should instead help students recognize available resources and encourage students to seek appropriate adult or professional support when needed;[8, 11]
21. **Whereas,** requiring a designated advisor for each student-led program provides students with an established adult connection and helps ensure that student organizations operate within appropriate policies, connect students with professional resources when necessary, and support students with coordinating events and initiatives;
22. **Whereas,** allowing schools to choose among multiple forms of programming—including mental health education, suicide prevention training, peer-support initiatives, awareness campaigns, resource outreach, or other organizations such as YANA, STAR, Signs of Suicide, Sources of Strength, and others—allows schools in urban, rural, and remote communities to develop programs appropriate for their individual circumstances;
23. **Whereas,** requiring every high school to have some form of student-led mental health or suicide prevention initiative would establish a statewide minimum level of mental health and suicide prevention outreach, while allowing individual schools and students to select and implement programs that reflect their student population, existing resources, unique

needs and wants as a student population, and what is most effective and feasible within their communities;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments that every middle and high school in the state of Alaska, both private and public, are required to implement at least one student-led mental health, suicide prevention, mental health support, or informative outreach program or organization with a designated advisor with reasonable resource expectations.

Action Statement: If passed by the Alaska Association of Student Governments, this resolution will be sent to the Alaska Board of Education and each School Board for further discussion at the winter AASB conference regarding implementation of a student-led mental health, suicide prevention, mental health support, or informative outreach program or organization in all high schools in the state of Alaska.

The resolution passes with unanimous consent.

Sarah Todd

AASG Vice President, Sarah Todd

Kassandra Mirosh

AASG Executive Director, Kassandra Mirosh

Sources

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