

Dear Parents and Community Members,

During the past several weeks, the Livingston School District has received wonderful support from local and regional agencies and organizations. These agencies have given countless hours in student and school support. Our students, families and staff have felt that love and support. I thank everyone for these efforts. I also thank those who have been involved in giving support, thoughts and prayers on behalf of the families and friends who have experienced loss. Due to these efforts our school and community have been united in the healing process. Working together, we can increase our efforts in suicide prevention.

The following is an appreciated overview of school/district efforts:

1. We have used The Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Schools as a resource guide in our actions.
2. Students have access to grief counseling.
3. Social media is being monitored to minimize hateful comments that have been posted by some.
4. The district has been meeting regularly with local and regional groups. Among these groups have been Park County Emergency Management, Community Healthcare Partners, Livingston Health Care Hospital, MSU Extension Services, Mental Health Help Line, City Commissioners, Park County Sheriff's Department, Livingston Police Department, Ministerial Association, State Suicide Prevention, Boy and Girls Club, Le'Spirit Services, Community Mental Health Coalition, and school counselors. These coordination meetings have helped to maximize the student/community support during this crisis. The resources that have been offered are being collected, categorized and assessed to determine how to best apply them.
5. Students are invited to access support when they feel the need and are given immediate assistance when requested. A person has been hired to facilitate these requests.
6. Formal peer to peer support programs are being currently reviewed. At the appropriate time, peer leaders will be formally trained to give support to those students who respond well to peer to peer support.
7. We have held two parent/community meetings. Suicide prevention information was given to those in attendance. The County is in the process of organizing additional community meetings.
8. A mailer has gone out to all parents of the school district. This mailer has information regarding suicide prevention with youth.
9. Understandably, there has been an increased concern regarding bullying, both face to face and through social media. We ask students and parents to report bullying incidences. If you feel that your concern has not been dealt with in a timely manner, please call the district office and ask to speak to the superintendent.
10. We have ordered SOS (Signs of Suicide) curriculum for grades 8-12. This curriculum will be used as part of our health/counselor curriculum coverage.
11. Students who need additional support will be referred to mental health agencies for further screening.

While our schools are doing all that we can do to support our students mental health and safety, we are not mental health professionals. We strongly encourage all parents and guardians to become familiar with suicide risk factors and to be proactive in connecting their loved ones with appropriate professional help if you suspect there to be a problem.