

THE ISSUE AND OPPORTUNITY

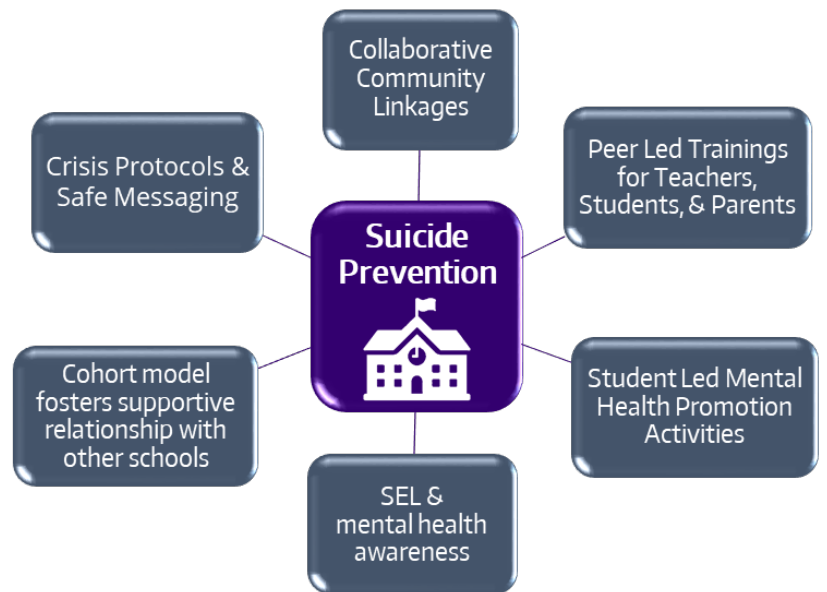
Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24 in Washington state and the U.S. In Washington, we lose on average two youth to suicide each week. Additionally, rates of youth depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts are at an all-time high and are increasing. Academic performance suffers when student mental health concerns are not addressed.

Legislation enacted in 2013 requires schools to update their safety plans to reflect best practices in suicide prevention. From our work over the last 3 years, we have learned that most schools have robust procedures to deal with fires, disasters and active shooters, but procedures for responding to mental health crises are typically limited or non-existent. Similarly, schools rarely have curriculum or trainings for teachers, students and parents around suicide prevention and mental health awareness.

To address these gaps, Forefront in the Schools (FIS) supports Washington high schools in implementing a capacity-building, comprehensive and sustainable approach to mental health promotion and suicide prevention. Through engagement by multi-disciplinary teams and a robust model of on-going training and consultation, each school is able to transform its climate and practices to reduce student risk for suicide.

FOREFRONT IN THE SCHOOLS MODEL

- Multi-disciplinary teams of 6-8 members from each school - comprised of parents, students, teachers, an administrator and school counselors
- Cohort model that includes shared learning and support between schools
- Forefront’s LEARN® Saves Lives curriculum:
 - Peer led trainings for teachers, students and parents
 - School counselor training
- Two annual gatherings for all school teams
- Extensive revisions to, or creation of, suicide prevention, intervention, assessment, re-entry, and recovery safety plans
- Enhanced linkages with mental health referral network
- Student-led behavioral health promotion week and awareness activities
- Behavioral Health Screening support
- Short courses and consultation on social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health awareness curricula



INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Improved school climate, reduced suicide attempts, ideation and absenteeism
- School crisis plans that address suicide and enhanced community linkages
- More students asking for and receiving help
- Parents/guardians who are more engaged and support in meeting their child’s mental health needs

PROGRAM COST

\$15,000 per school each year for 3 years*

**Subsidies and scholarships may be available*