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SDE distributes video PSAs for Suicide Prevention Month

(BOISE) – Four new public service announcements featuring Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra are being circulated statewide to highlight the importance of emotional health, recognizing the warning signs of suicide and resources that offer help.

The State Department of Education PSAs are part of Idaho’s Suicide Prevention Month commemoration.

“Suicide has a devastating effect on our school communities, and we can all work together to help prevent it,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “It is vitally important that students have trusted, caring adults and peers in their lives, and we want all Idahoans to be aware of available resources.”

The Idaho Lives Project, Sources of Strength and other efforts across the state aim to bolster emotional health and resilience, build supportive relationships and help parents and students access the resources they need. [The Idaho Lives Project](#), which includes SDE-administrated [Sources of Strength grants](#) to middle and high schools across Idaho, is a joint effort of the State Department of Education and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare’s Division of Public Health. The confidential Suicide Prevention Hotline, 208-398-4357, provides a vital, confidential place for students and adults to turn when they or someone close to them is considering suicide.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Idahoans ages 10 to 34. In the 2017 Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the most recently published edition of the biennial survey, 21.7 percent of surveyed students said they had seriously considered attempting suicide – up from 19.8 percent two years earlier and 14.2 percent in 2009. Nearly 10 percent of 2017’s surveyed students said they had attempted suicide at least once during the past year.

Suicide prevention efforts are part of Superintendent Ybarra’s broader emphasis on social-emotional health and student safety. The SDE’s upcoming School Safety Symposium will draw educators, first responders, policymakers and local leaders to Meridian Oct. 8th. The symposium aims to identify gaps

in training and resources needed to instill resiliency and self-management in students, preparing them to maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

A key part of Superintendent Ybarra's Fiscal Year 2021 public school budget request to the Legislature seeks \$1 million to develop and implement strong, flexible training in social-emotional learning to help Idaho educators recognize and respond to students' emotional needs.

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