# Superintendent’s Memo #211-19


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: August 30, 2019

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Suicide Prevention Month Educational Campaign

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. All month, mental health advocates, prevention organizations, survivors, allies, and community members unite to promote suicide prevention awareness throughout the nation. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is announcing its partnership with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to raise awareness about the Suicide Prevention Month Educational Campaign in September. In order to extend the reach to families and communities, Virginia educators are asked to explore an [electronic toolkit](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/suicide-prevention/) that was developed to house materials related to the campaign. The *Suicide Prevention Toolkit* includes educational materials and print-ready social media communication templates that schools can use. The goal of this partnership is to raise awareness about the warning signs of suicide, how to access help during a crisis, and lethal means restriction.

During the month of September, schools across the Commonwealth are encouraged to use the educational materials in the *Toolkit* and highlight their prevention efforts, including both school-based supports and community partnerships. The VDOE continues to promote and provide resources and learning opportunities related to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

The VDOE recently redesigned its [Suicide Prevention](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/prevention/suicide/index.shtml) webpage. The revised webpage offers information about prevention, warning signs, and responding to and supporting students in crisis. It includes resources for educators, parents, and students. A link to a microsite will soon be added, which will serve as a hub for national, state, and regional resources on topics related to suicide.

The VDOE is also currently revising its Suicide Prevention Guidelines in collaboration with VDH, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), and the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS). When the revision is complete, professional learning opportunities will be offered to Virginia educators to support implementation of the guidelines.

Questions related to suicide prevention at VDOE can be directed to Martha Montgomery, School Psychology Specialist, by email, at [Martha.Montgomery@doe.virginia.gov](file:///%5C%5CWCS02021%5Cgroupdir%5CStudent%20Services%5CMontgomery%5CMartha.Montgomery%40doe.%20virginia.gov), or by telephone, at (804) 692-0396.

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