

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



DR. CHRISTINA M. KISHIMOTO
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/23/2021

Time: 09:00 AM

Location: 329 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Health, Human
Services, & Homelessness

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 0051 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A MODEL STATEWIDE SCHOOL POLICY ON STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION IN GRADES K-12.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HCR 0051, the purpose of which is to convene a working group to create a model statewide school policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in grades K-12; however, the Department would like to respectfully offer comments.

Protecting the health and well-being of all students is of utmost importance to the Department and is an ethical imperative for all educational professionals.

Given that the developmental trajectory for suicide risk can begin early in life, schools are uniquely positioned for building resilience among their students and developing a caring community within a positive school climate and culture necessary for the prevention of suicide.

The following Hawaii Board of Education (BOE) policies promote a positive school climate where students feel safe, supported and a sense of belonging.

Policy 101-7 School Climate and Discipline. "Schools shall create an environment where all members are respected, welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. When a school's data indicate significant concerns regarding school climate and discipline, the school shall develop school climate goals and take actions to improve school climate."

As part of the Department's effort to assess and support a positive safe school climate, for the school year 2020-21, a social and emotional learning student assessment survey for grades 3

through 12 and teacher perception of student survey for grades K through 2 will be offered through the Panorama Education, Inc. platform. The intent of the survey is to capture student/teacher perspectives on their understanding and application of social and emotional learning competencies. Social and emotional learning is a way for schools to create healthy environments for students and provide them with lifelong skills for successfully navigating life's challenges, including how to cope with suicidal ideation and self-harming behaviors. Schools will be able to use the data to inform curricular, instructional, and intervention needs.

Policy E-3 NĀ HOPENA A'O (HĀ) "is a framework of outcomes that reflects the Department of Education's core values and beliefs in action throughout the public educational system of Hawaii. The Department of Education works together as a system that includes everyone in the broader community to develop the competencies that strengthen a sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total-well-being and Hawaii ("BREATH") in ourselves, students and others"

Additional BOE policies are utilized to ensure the statewide implementation of a comprehensive, culturally responsive and equitable system that promotes prevention, intervention and responsive services to address the social-emotional, mental, and physical well-being of all students.

Policy E-101 Whole Student Development. "Effective instruction, in caring and supportive learning environments, ensures that all students develop the skills to become creative, capable, compassionate, and responsible members of society. The Department shall provide an educational experience that develops students' social, emotional, intellectual, creative, and physical skills and talents. The Department shall support schools in ensuring that students are connected to their school and community to develop a love of learning and contribute to a vibrant civic life."

Policy 101-5 Guidance, Counseling and Related Services. "All Department of Education schools shall provide a program of guidance, counseling, and related services as necessary for the academic, personal, social, and career development of each student. The program shall meet the common needs of all students as well as the unique needs of special populations."

The Department's School Based Behavioral Health professionals provide direct targeted and intensive services to address a student's prolonged stress and mental health needs. School Based Behavioral Health staff are often also key members of a schools Crisis Response team trained in Quality Behavior Solutions. Crisis teams are activated when any student is in imminent danger to self or others. Crisis team assesses, responds and works to de-escalate the situation. If de-escalate strategies are not enough, the Hawaii CARES hotline is called when a student presents with continued risk of suicide, self-harm or harm to others.

Policy 101-6 Comprehensive Student Support System, "The BOE understands the importance of providing effective instruction in a safe, positive, caring and supportive learning environment. ... The DOE shall provide a comprehensive student support system framework to support the implementation, with fidelity of ... appropriate student support through an array of services."

Policy 101.6 provides a clear direction for schools to implement a culturally responsive Hawai'i Multi-Tiered System of Support framework that integrates social, emotional, behavioral and mental wellness into a whole child approach. The Hawai'i Multi-Tiered System of Support includes a focus on universal supports, prevention and a positive school climate (Tier I), targeted supports for at risk groups and individuals (Tier II), and specialized supports and procedures for students in crisis or high risk (Tier III) allowing for vulnerable populations to receive early and appropriate intervention and support.

These policies collectively provide the guidance to engage and guide Department stakeholders

through a data driven process to reduce problem behavior and risk factors for various behaviors, including ones closely related to suicide, such as depression, internalizing behaviors, and substance abuse.

The Department and employees are required to follow all State and Federal laws designed to protect vulnerable populations, prevent violence, bullying and to proactively address suicide prevention and awareness.

State of Hawaii Department of Education Code of Conduct,

“It is the policy of the Board of Education that all employees, contractors, and volunteers of the public school system, public library system, and Board of Education shall conduct themselves in an ethical manner and comply with federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and departmental policies, procedures, regulations, rules, and guidance to promote public trust and confidence in public education. The Board’s policy requires that all personnel strictly adhere to the Hawaii State Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics for public employees of the State as prescribed in Chapter 84 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The employee, contractor, or volunteer shall make all reports required under Hawaii Administrative Rules, Chapter 19, Student Misconduct (Hawaii Administrative Rules §8-19) and any other federal or state laws or DOE policies or procedures which require mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect.”

Policy 305-10 Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying, and Anti-Discrimination Against Student(s) by Employee(s). Protected classes covered by BOE Policy #305-10 include discrimination/harassment on the basis of sex, as well as a student's gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. This is the policy that is applied when the CRCB conducts student/employee protected class investigations.

Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 8, Chapter 89, Civil Rights Policy and Complaint Procedure for Student(s) Complaints Against Adult(s), which delineates the steps the Department is to take for resolving student complaints of discrimination and harassment on the basis of a protected class (NOTE: Chapter 89 only pertains to student v. employee situations). Protected classes covered under Chapter 89 include gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Under Chapter 89, immediate interventions (supports) may be provided to the student complainant, as appropriate.

§302A-856 HRS, Youth suicide awareness and prevention protocol.

“The department, in collaboration with the department of health, shall develop a mandatory youth suicide awareness and prevention training program and a model risk referral protocol for complex areas and charter schools based on the department of health's existing suicide awareness and prevention curriculum and materials, which shall be provided to teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and counselors.”

In the January 6, 2020, *Act 270 (2019), Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Protocol* memorandum, all schools were introduced to Act 270 (2019) and provided the following five Suicide Prevention curriculum options:

- Question, Persuade, and Refer
- SafeTALK
- Suicide Prevention Foundation 101
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention

As noted above, Tier II interventions include selective strategies targeting (1) groups who may be at higher risk, and (2) those experiencing stressful life events that may put them at elevated risk. The Department recognizes that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning

(LGBTQ+) youth are often at higher risk for being the target of bullying, and they have higher rates of suicide than their peers.

Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 19, Subchapter 8 - Complaint procedure for bullying, harassment (sexual harassment), discrimination and retaliation. Immediate interventions and remedies are provided to either or both the complainant and respondent deemed necessary. All complaints that fall under this subchapter are inputted the Infinite Campus Behavior Management System.

The Department's *Guidance on Supports for Transgender Students* provides direction and instruction to schools regarding educational supports that may be provided for transgender students.

Recognizing each student has their own unique and personal circumstances which influence how they are impacted by risk factors, the Department is committed to enhancing student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention supports.

By ensuring all students have access to a continuum of interventions and that all schools are implementing a comprehensive and inclusive social-emotional, mental health program, the Department is able to identify and address a range of risk and protective factors for suicidal behavior.

In light of the Department's ongoing work and commitment to promote positive mental health, provide suicide awareness and prevention training aimed to ensure student safety, and create caring environments, the Department respectfully suggests that this resolution is not necessary at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

March 19, 2021

To: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 63/SR 45 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A MODEL STATEWIDE SCHOOL POLICY ON STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION IN GRADES K-12

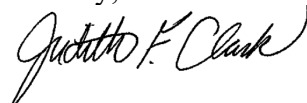
Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SCR 63/SR 45 Requesting the Department of Education to Convene a Working Group to Create a Model Statewide School Policy on Student Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention In Grades K-12.

According to the Youth Behavioral Risk Survey over the past 10 years, Hawaii's students have consistently had a rate of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts that is greater than the national average. In the Hawaii Street Youth Survey, 39.7% of homeless youth had suicidal thoughts. Among those who considered suicide, 58.3% had actually attempted suicide.

The stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on education and other stressors have increased mental health issues and may have increased suicide risks among our children and youth. We need a comprehensive suicide prevention and intervention plan now more than ever.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/19/2021 10:31:42 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maddalynn Seseapasara	HHHRC	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass SR45 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Mahalo,

Maddalynn Seseapasara

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Kua'ana Project, Project Manager

HCR51/HR40

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A MODEL STATEWIDE SCHOOL POLICY ON STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION IN GRADES K-12

Ke Kōmike Hale o ke Olakino, ka Lawelawe Kānaka, a me ka Pilikia Ho‘okuewa
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Malaki 23, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Lumi 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HCR51/HR40, which would require a working group of community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts to convene and create a statewide school policy on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in grades K-12.

OHA has long advocated for meaningful policies that can reduce the health inequities of Native Hawaiians. For example, OHA spearheaded the legislative effort to codify “social determinants of health” through Act 155 (Reg. Sess. 2014), and require state agencies to take a holistic and systemic approach to addressing health disparities seen in Native Hawaiian and other communities. Therefore, OHA appreciates the intent of HCR51/HR40 to address the range of harms and health issues that may drive young people, including a disproportionate amount of young Native Hawaiians, to suicide and suicide attempts.

Recent data has highlighted the negative impacts of suicide, attempted suicide, and suicidal ideation on the Native Hawaiian community. **Alarmingly, Native Hawaiian youth are substantially more likely to ideate and attempt suicide than their peers.**¹ About 24% of Native Hawaiian females in public high schools have seriously considered attempting suicide, compared to 18.7% of non-Hawaiian females.² Statewide, the percentage of 10th grade Native Hawaiian males that previously attempted suicide (11%) was more than double that of their non-Hawaiian peers (5.2%).³ Anecdotal reports have also suggested an apparent increase in suicide attempts and deaths among Native Hawaiian youth in recent months, possibly influenced by the abrupt lifestyle changes and social isolation brought on by the pandemic. The tragic impacts of suicide and suicide attempts do not just affect the individuals involved, but carry long-lasting consequences for families and the broader community as well.

¹ Id. at 19-25.

² Id. at 19-20.

³ Id. at 22.

HCR51/HR40 may facilitate the implementation of OHA recommendations made over recent years to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians, and that may specifically address the higher incidence of youth suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and suicide deaths within the Native Hawaiian community. For example, in “Haumea: Transforming the Health of Native Hawaiian Women and Empowering Wāhine Well-Being,”⁴ OHA recommended specific mental health interventions for our keiki in schools, by: (1) creating and improving mental health screening programs, (2) **addressing self-harm with gender-sensitive and grade-appropriate strategies in public schools**, (3) working with trained professionals in mental and behavioral health fields to ensure appropriate treatment and follow-up, (4) providing assessments of drug alcohol use disorders among adolescents, and (5) improving educational programs that address the risks and consequences of substance abuse.⁵ Establishing an expert- and stakeholder-informed policy for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention can help provide school principals, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders with clearer and consistent guidance on comprehensively addressing self-harm and suicidal thoughts and actions within our public school student body, and thereby mitigate the impacts of suicide, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation on Native Hawaiian and other students, as well as on their families and communities.

OHA appreciates this resolution’s particular focus on youth with disabilities, who experience houselessness, and who may identify as LGBTQ+, who may be at disproportionate risk of suicidal thoughts and actions. In light of the disproportionate rates of Native Hawaiian youth represented in suicide ideation, attempts, and deaths, OHA does respectfully recommend the inclusion of the following amendment after page 3, line 31, to read as follows:

“(4) Native Hawaiian youth; and”

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HCR51/HR40. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

⁴ OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, HAUMEA—TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND EMPOWERING WĀHINE WELL-BEING 19-25 (2018).

⁵ *Id.* at 25.



Hearing Date: March 23, 2021

Hearing Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Via Videoconference Conference Room 329

Re: HCR 51 & HR 40, Requesting the Department of Education To Convene a Working Group to Create a Model Statewide School Policy on Student Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention in Grades K-12

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam and members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness,

On behalf of Sutter Health Kāhi Mōhala, we are writing in support of HCR 51 & HR 40, requesting the Department of Education to convene a working group to create a model statewide school policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in grades K-12

In Hawaii, one person dies by suicide every two days. That translates to an average of 190 suicides among Hawaii residents each year. Another nine non-residents die from suicide in the islands annually.

According to a recent report, statewide suicide rate was highest in 2020 during the months preceding the pandemic. The worst month was February, in which there were 25 suicide deaths in the state, according to the data. That compares to an average of 13 suicide deaths in 2015 to 2019 and an average of 14 suicide deaths in 2000 to 2014. Providing training for teachers is an important step toward helping students and families address the risks of suicide.

Sutter Health Kāhi Mōhala is a psychiatric hospital located in Ewa Beach, embracing an interdisciplinary perspective of care and incorporating an integrative approach to emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral healthcare treatment. We are committed to serving the mental health needs of our community.

We are in support of HCR 51 & HR 40.

Claudia Crist
Chief Executive Officer
Sutter Health Kāhi Mōhala

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/19/2021 10:12:17 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Linda Kim	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawaii Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority Reports showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass SR45 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ+ inclusive. It is imperative we act now to prevent suicide among this population in particular. Please vote to save lives. Pass SR45.

Sincerely,

Linda Kim

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/19/2021 9:21:08 PM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lorenzo Perillo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Mahalo,

Lorenzo

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/20/2021 4:25:21 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Itai Bradshaw-Lang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Mahalo,

Itai Bradshaw-Lang, BSN, RN

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/20/2021 12:11:26 PM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kevin Tomita	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/21/2021 9:46:14 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jen Jenkins	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Mahalo,

Jen Jenkins

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/21/2021 9:55:40 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shayna Lonoaea Alexander	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Mahalo,

Shayna Lonoaea Alexander

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 7:43:42 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tami Whitney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Thank you,

Tami

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 8:08:52 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nikki-Ann Yee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 8:20:48 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kunane Dreier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Honorable Members,

Hawai'i Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority [Reports](#) showed that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender youth experience higher rates of suicidality than their peers. Please pass HCR51/HR40 to ensure a comprehensive statewide policy of suicide prevention and postvention that is LGBTQ inclusive.

Mahalo,

Kunane Dreier

HCR-51

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 8:00:48 PM

Testimony for HHH on 3/23/2021 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cayenne Dabalos	Mckinley High School	Support	No

Comments:

Ryan I. Yamane, House Health, Human Services & Homelessness Committee Chair

Scott Saiki, Speaker of the House

Cayenne Dabalos, Mckinley High School

cayennedabalos@gmail.com

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Support for H.C.R. No. 51, H.R 40

My name is Cayenne Dabalos, I am a 10th grade student at Mckinley High School. I am in support of H.C.R. No 51, H.R 40, which will address the issues of mental health, trauma, stress, and suicide for DOE students. This resolution is especially important for high-risk students, including those with disabilities, those battling homelessness, and those who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

This resolution is important to me personally because I myself and classmates of mine have struggled firsthand with mental health and prolonged stress. In my own experience, I do see that mental health struggles are more common in students who have learning disabilities or are a part of the LBTQ+ community.

At around 6th grade I started showing symptoms of depression, but it wasn't until I was in 8th grade when I told my doctor because of how bad it was getting. I was scared to tell people because those who did know did not believe me. Additionally, I struggled with my sexual orientation and for about 6 months, I was questioning it. I had no one to share my experience with nor did I know who to go to for help. I would lash out in class because of how frustrating things were for me. This later led me to have panic attacks, which I struggled with multiple times a month.

2 years later, I am still struggling with anxiety and depression. I continue to lose motivation, if it's with my school work, or everyday things like getting out of bed or eating. It severely impacts me and I fear that it will affect my career and my life in the future. I feel as though this could have been prevented with the necessary resources.

I wish someone taught me about mental health and coping because it would have saved me the trouble from researching resources on my own. I believe it is important for students to have access to help and resources to teach them about these topics. This resolution will help students have those exact things and hopefully help students cope with suicidal tendencies. I feel strongly about training school employees to recognize suicide risk and I believe that troubles going on at home should also be addressed.

I strongly request you to pass H.C.R No. 51.