



## YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED ON ACCOUNTABILITY!

PTA members now have an opportunity to provide input into the independent evaluation of Colorado's K-12 Education Accountability System, which the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) is conducting on behalf of the Colorado Office of the State Auditor.

Your input will help us accomplish one of PTA's legislative priorities for this year: improving our state's accountability system. In particular, PTA seeks to "amend state accountability provisions applying to schools and districts on Turnaround status and removing punitive consequences and mandates that give outside 'management organizations' control over school boards and superintendents." (An accountability system is the set of policies and practices that a state uses to measure and hold schools and districts responsible for raising student achievement for all students, and to prompt and support improvement where necessary. Colorado's accountability system is based mainly on statewide CMAS tests in Language Arts and Math. Schools and districts are rated using these test results, and all are required to have a Unified Improvement Plan to either continue their good performance or to improve low performance.)

As part of this evaluation, they are seeking **feedback from parents and guardians** through an online survey. The purpose of the survey is to understand how families access and use information that the Colorado Department of Education provides about student and school performance. Participation in the survey is voluntary. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete; it will remain open **through April 15**. The survey is anonymous, and individual responses will remain confidential.

Please consider responding so your voice can be heard!

<https://platform.humrro.org/Login/t05/i/746?mspw=ParentFamily2022>

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please click on the link below to access this month's welcome message from Colorado PTA President Staci Ruddy.

<https://youtu.be/iNSkRRo5GVY>



## MEMBERSHIP CORNER



DID YOU KNOW ...

... That you that you can join more than one PTA?

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), in collaboration with suicide prevention researchers from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), brought together clinicians, researchers, survivors, federal partners and other stakeholders in community and clinical settings to create a [Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention](#) – a guide for pediatric health providers on how to implement suicide prevention in medical and community settings.

[Sources of Strength](#) announced [additional funding](#) to support the implementation of the Sources of Strength mental health promotion and youth suicide prevention program for Colorado schools and communities! This funding is part of the Healthy Youth/Strong Colorado initiative in partnership with the Colorado Department of Law and UnitedHealth. In addition to providing opportunities to expand access to the Sources of Strength program for middle and high schools across Colorado, this funding will support the adoption and implementation of the Sources of Strength Elementary curriculum in Colorado schools. **Application Deadline: April 15** (*Acceptance Notice: May 1*)

The Colorado Behavioral Health Council (CBHC) recently released a [promotional video for Teen Mental Health First Aid](#). Feel free to watch and share!

[Addressing the Intersectional Behavioral Health Needs of Racially/Ethnically Diverse LGBTQ+ Communities](#). Wednesday, **April 13, 2022, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. MDT**

[Suicide Prevention in Indigenous Communities, Strength and Protective Factors](#). Friday, **April 22, 2022, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. MDT**

## ELEVATING MENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENTING SUICIDE

PTA is deeply concerned about the increasing number of children suffering from problems with their mental health and social-emotional wellness, especially in the last couple of years. PTA has long been committed to providing improved mental health programs and services to children and youth. This month our newsletter is focusing on the topic of elevating mental health and preventing suicide.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between 9 and 19 years of age, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), surpassed only by accidents and homicides. We are very concerned about the high rate of youth suicide in Colorado, which is one of the highest in the nation. Because of our acute concern, we have done the following:

- Advocated for many state laws to improve students' mental and behavioral health.
- Worked to heighten awareness of youth suicide.
- Participated in the group that created the School Safety Resource Center.
- Joined the Suicide Prevention Coalition that first sought the creation of the Suicide Prevention Grant Program and other programs for suicide prevention.

Our COPTA website has many resources on this topic on the [Health, Wellness, and Safety page](#) under Programs. If this is an important issue for you, please see the Suicide Prevention handouts there, as well as the Health, Wellness, and Safety Corner in this newsletter and the Rise Against Suicide article at the end.

## Rise Against Suicide



Maya Angelou once said, "Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope." The young people in our community are deeply in need of hope. Through 2020 and 2021, Colorado has seen a steep rise in mental health emergencies at hospitals. The extent of this crisis triggered the Children's Hospital of Colorado to declare a state of emergency in 2021. Suicide is the leading cause of death among Colorado youth ages 10-19. And making it even worse... half of young people ages 3-17 in Colorado who need mental health counseling do not receive it.

Rise Against Suicide is a nonprofit based in Lafayette, Colorado. Our mission is to help young people at risk of suicide by removing the financial and social barriers to treatment, helping them to find hope and healing. We fulfill our mission by funding therapy sessions for youth up to the age of 19 who are uninsured or underinsured and struggling with suicidal ideation. We fund 8 sessions to start and fund an additional 12 sessions if the therapist determines that more treatment is needed.



In 2021, Rise Against Suicide funded over 1,100 therapy sessions for uninsured and underinsured youth experiencing suicidal thoughts. So far in 2022 Rise Against Suicide has received 103 referrals. 80% of our referrals come from school counselors and interventionists. Within hours of receiving a request for help, each of those 102 youth can be connected with private, highly qualified therapists. Therapists offer in-person and telehealth appointments, including providing therapy at a student's school. A therapist can be available within 72 hours, a timeframe that is distinctly unique to Rise Against Suicide. At-risk youth have urgent needs, and healing must begin immediately, not weeks or months later.

Rise Against Suicide relies on our community to help uplift our young community members and to support them in feeling deeply valued and worthy. To learn more or to donate, please visit [www.riseagainstsuiticide.org](http://www.riseagainstsuiticide.org)



## Advocacy Award Nominations Open Now!

Each year, National PTA honors outstanding state, district/council/region, local and individual PTA advocates for taking action to improve the education, health, safety and well-being of every child.

### Award Categories

- Outstanding Local PTA Advocacy
- Outstanding State PTA Advocacy
- Outstanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advocacy
- Shirley Igo Advocate of the Year
- Outstanding Youth Advocate of the Year

**Advocacy Awards: Now Accepting Nominations**

Do you know an outstanding advocate? Nominate them today! Deadline is April 5, 2022.



Do you know an individual or a PTA whose advocacy efforts over the past year have successfully engaged and empowered families and communities? Have you successfully advocated to improve the lives of children and families?

If so, submit a nomination form by April 5, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. EST!





One of Colorado PTA's [highest priorities](#) is to ensure that resources are designated to promote children's mental/behavioral health and to prevent suicide and self-harm. We have written into our [legislative platform](#) that we support adequately funded programs and services for the prevention of youth suicide and the support of mental and social-emotional health concerns. To this end, we are supporting several bills during the current legislative session, including the following:

- HB22-1052, [Promoting Crisis Services to Student](#) – This bill requires identification cards issued to public school students to have the contact information for the 24-hour Colorado Crisis Services printed on them.
- HB22-1243, [School Security and School Behavioral Health Services Funding](#) – This bill continues the temporary youth health mental health services program that facilitates youth access to mental health services. It also appropriates money to the Department of Education for the Behavioral Health Care Professional Matching Grant Program.
- HB22-1283, [Youth & Family Behavioral Health Care](#) – This bill will create in-home and residential respite care for children and families, provide support for psychiatric residential treatment programs for youth, and provide funds for building and staffing a neuro-psych facility that will have residential beds for youth.
- SB22-147, [Behavioral Health-Care Services for Children](#) – This bill will create the Colorado Pediatric Psychiatry Consultation and Access Program (CoPPCAP) that will provide supports to primary care providers in identifying and treating mild to moderate behavioral health conditions in children in primary care practices or school-based health centers. It appropriates money to the School-Based Health Center Grant Program and the Behavioral Health Care Professional Matching Grant Program to expand access to health-care services for children and families.

Colorado PTA has a long history of supporting bills that elevate mental health and suicide prevention. In recent years, we have supported:

- HB21-1119, [Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention](#)
- HB21-1258, [Rapid Mental Health Response for Colorado Youth](#)



- SB20-001, [Expand Behavioral Health Training for K-12 Educators](#)
- SB20-014, [Excused Absences in Public Schools for Behavioral Health](#)
- HB20-1006, [Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants](#)
- HB19-1017, [Kindergarten Through Fifth Grade Social and Emotional Health Act](#)
- HB19-1120, [Youth Mental Health Education and Suicide Prevention](#)
- HB19-1129, [Prohibit Conversion Therapy for A Minor](#)

The Colorado PTA [Legislative Committee](#) meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays from January through April, during the annual session of the Colorado General Assembly (State Legislature), and on the 2nd Mondays during the other months. PTA members who attend 3 or more meetings per year are entitled to vote at the meetings. If you would like to sign up for the Legislative Committee email list – which will allow you to receive information from the committee including meeting invitations, agenda, minutes, and other relevant information – please sign up [HERE](#).

See also National PTA [Position Statements](#); [Resolutions](#)  
See also Colorado PTA [Resolutions and Positions](#);  
[Legislative Priorities for 2022](#)



## Colorado PTA Annual Convention

Friday, April 1 – all day

Saturday, April 2 - all day

DoubleTree - Denver Tech Center



*I Belong*

An overview of the 100th Convention will be in next month's newsletter, but we wanted to give a special thank you to our sponsors and exhibitors who participated this year. We couldn't do it without them!

