

EDITOR'S PICK

COUNTY SCHOOLS: Faculty to receive suicide prevention training

Adam Smith Aug 4, 2018



Limestone County teachers will soon receive training on how to recognize if a student is exhibiting suicidal behavior.

The school system's board voted unanimously Thursday to allow Crisis Services of North Alabama to offer suicide-prevention training to all faculty members at the elementary and secondary levels. The curriculum would also be provided to selected grade levels in the middle and high schools.

There is no charge for the training.

“(The curriculum) shows what the warning signs are and how (faculty) can help,” Dr. Jan Tribble, director of secondary education for Limestone County Schools, told the board. “It lets students know they are never alone.”

Superintendent Dr. Tom Sisk told the board the training puts the system in compliance with the Jason Flatt Act, which was enacted by Alabama in 2016. The act, passed by Legislatures in 20 states, requires all certificated public school personnel to receive annual training in suicide awareness and prevention.

Sisk said he believes it's important for educators to be able to recognize when a child is in distress. If a child is struggling, he said, it's important for educators to intervene and get to the root of the problem.

“One of the biggest problems we face is social media. It's a blessing, but it's also a dangerous communication tool,” he said. “People can say ugly things in the heat of a moment that they may not say to someone's face, and then hit send. When those ugly things are received, we have to teach (students) coping skills and also teach them it's not appropriate to say those things.”

Pre-K update

Elsewhere Thursday, Julia Wall, elementary curriculum coordinator and director of the Office of

School Readiness (OSR) Pre-K Program for county schools, provided an update on the system's Pre-K efforts. There are Pre-K programs at each of the system's eight elementary schools, with Creekside and Sugar Creek elementary schools being the most recent additions.

She explained tuition would be free at Creekside and Sugar Creek this year, but would be on a sliding scale next year, depending on household income. That scale ranges from \$40 to \$300.

Wall told the board there were 140 students enrolled in the program this year and 128 on a waiting list.

“There is a big demand for this,” she said.

Other business

In other business Thursday, the board:

- Tabled renewing its annual membership to the National School Boards Association at a cost of \$5,335. Board member Earl Glaze asked why the board should renew it if none of the board members attend the national conference. The board will take up the matter again at a future meeting;
- Approved a peer helper program at all schools at a cost of \$33,500 to be paid by a state grant;
- Approved an Advanced Placement physics textbook; and
- Had a first reading of a revision to school board policy concerning honor graduates. The revision expands the definition to include students who have “challenged themselves by enrolling in more difficult coursework such as AP and dual enrollment and met the requirements of the Limestone County Seal of Academic Honor as listed in the Student Handbook.”

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5

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6

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7

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9

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10

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