

Policy Update for Schools Committee Feb 21, 2024

- A word about SB1503: The Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention is established
- -6Amendment includes call out for coordination with Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide



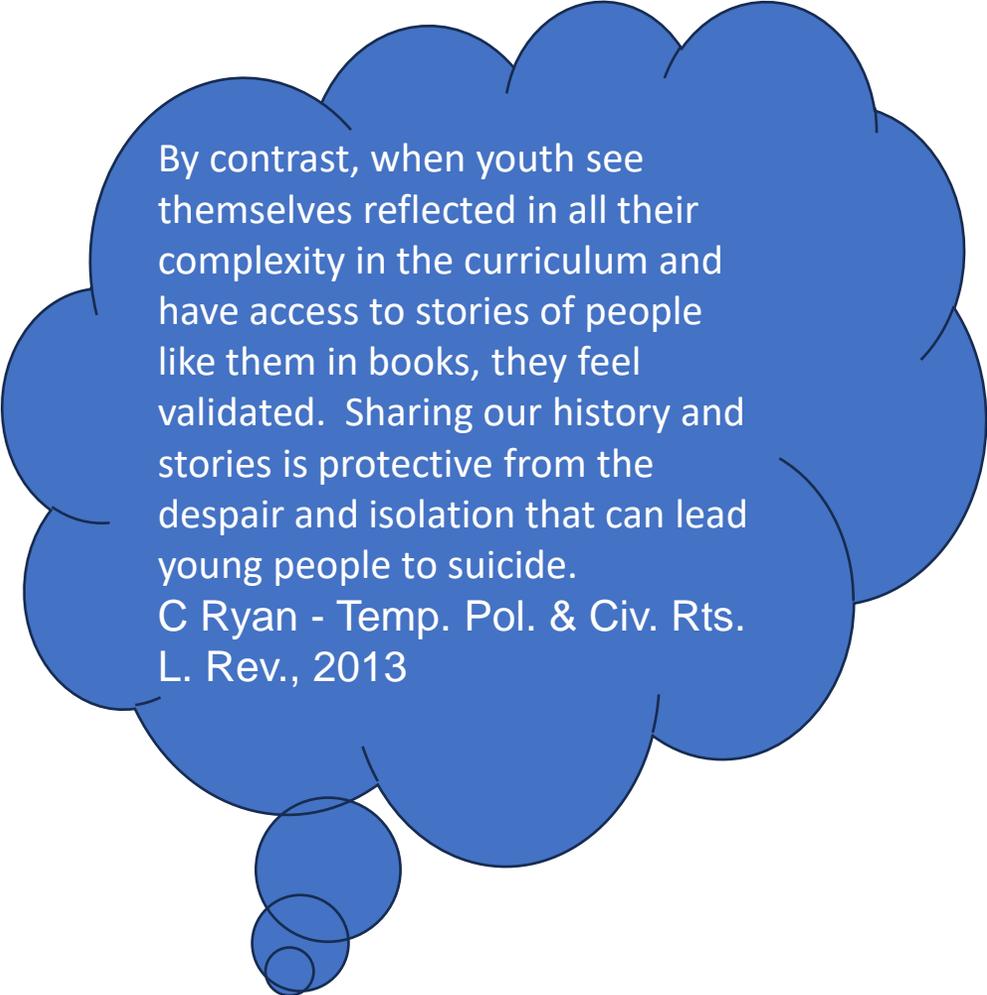
Oregon
Alliance
to Prevent Suicide
Hope • Help • Healing

School Based Health Centers – Testimony Provided

- HB 4070 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health. A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs with increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and **18% less likely to report a suicide attempt.**
- Suicide is preventable. We know with coordinated, cross-sector efforts, such as School Based Health Centers, *we can help reduce obstacles, provide lifesaving education* and connect students with needed resources. **By passing HB4070, we will be adding another protection for Oregon students experiencing a crisis, and may save lives by ensuring that the right help is available at the right time.**

SB1583 which will prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, ability, country of origin, sexuality or gender of the individuals featured in the content of the educational and library materials in Oregon Schools.

- Suicide is a complex issue and it's often difficult to draw a direct line between a policy and preventing youth suicide; however, there is ample evidence that one direct linkage that can be made is that affirming young people's identities and providing opportunities for them to see how others from their community have navigated the world through both good and difficult times can save lives.
- Research has shown that banning items (such as Pride flags or Black Lives Matter signs) that affirm the lives of these students will increase the risk of both internalized distress and victimization. Lack of representation and acceptance has been found to cause a number of health disparities, including suicidality. Based on decades long research on acceptance among LGBT youth, Ryan et al. (2014), identified and measured common behaviors that are not thought of as rejection, such as *not talking about or discouraging an adolescent from talking about their LGBT identity or denying and minimizing an adolescent's LGBT identity*. As such, these reactions are often experienced as rejection by LGBT adolescents, contributing to a host of physical and mental health issues, including depression, illegal drug use, and suicide.



By contrast, when youth see themselves reflected in all their complexity in the curriculum and have access to stories of people like them in books, they feel validated. Sharing our history and stories is protective from the despair and isolation that can lead young people to suicide.

C Ryan - Temp. Pol. & Civ. Rts.
L. Rev., 2013