



NJ Department of Children & Families
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Commissioner

NJ Department of Education
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Acting Commissioner



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New Jersey Departments of Education, Children & Families Issue Joint Statement on Death of Central Regional High School Student

Trenton, NJ – New Jersey Acting Education Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan and New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, M.S.W., issued the following joint statement on the recent passing of Central Regional High School student Adriana Kuch:

“The New Jersey Department of Education and New Jersey Department of Children and Families are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of another young person in New Jersey to suicide. Adriana Kuch is the latest victim of the mental health and wellness crisis that has resulted in so much pain and loss for countless youth and their families, friends, and communities. Our thoughts and prayers are extended to everyone who knew and cared for Adriana, and each of the young people lost too soon to suicide.

A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicated that the number of suicides among 10- to 24-year-olds increased more than 16% between 2018 and 2021. Tragedies such as this are reflective of an alarming increase in social, emotional and mental health challenges that young people across our state and around our nation have faced, exacerbated by the pandemic and other environmental stressors.

The New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families remain committed to providing the resources, training and tools necessary to support young people experiencing stress or anxiety, and to help prevent additional loss of life. Through the Children's System of Care, parents can call 1-877-652-7624 to access mental health services or addiction treatment services for children and teens under the age of 21, or services for children and teens up to age 21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Youth and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24 can call or text the 2ND FLOOR youth helpline at 888-222-2228 if they need someone to talk to. Services are available 24-7, 365 days a year.

We encourage anyone experiencing suicidal thoughts or mental health-related distress to dial 988 to be connected to the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in order to receive the support and care they need.

To the adults who live and work with our young people, we urge you to lead with empathy and kindness and to support the youth in your lives who may be struggling with hidden burdens they feel are too heavy to carry. To everyone, please know that suicide is never the answer. To any young people who may feel as if they are struggling please know you matter and you are not alone. Please seek help from parents, trusted peer supports, and trusted educators and know that hope and help are always within your reach.”

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