

Creating Opportunities in Preventing and Eliminating Suicide (COPES)

Year Three Highlights July 2023 - June 2024

COPES is a four-year capacity-building initiative led by the San Diego County Office of Education's (SDCOE) Student Wellness and School Culture Department in partnership with County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services and 31 local education agencies (LEAs), funded by the State of California Mental Health Student Services Act (2021-2026).

**Participating LEAs
represent over
440
schools
and over
290,000
students**



Districts

- Bonsall
- Chula Vista Elementary
- Fallbrook Elementary
- SDCOE Juvenile Court and Community Schools
- Lakeside
- La Mesa-Spring Valley
- Lemon Grove
- Mountain Empire
- National City
- Poway
- San Marcos
- San Diego Unified
- Santee
- Spencer Valley
- Sweetwater

Charters

- Altus Schools (Audeo)*
- City Heights Preparatory
- Compass
- Empower
- Feaster
- Helix
- High Tech High*
- Learning Choice Academy*
- Motivated Youth Academy
- Mueller-Bayfront
- San Diego Global Vision Academy
- San Diego Virtual School
- Scholarship Prep Oceanside
- School for Entrepreneurship and Technology
- SIA Tech*
- Urban Discovery

*multi-site

Training and Technical Assistance

SDCOE provided **27 trainings** to increase mental health literacy to:

1,205

COPES school/district staff

&

894

Parents/caregivers



Through capacity building efforts
COPES LEAs provided:

385

mental health and suicide prevention
trainings and events in their school
communities that engaged over...



33,300

Students

9,100

Staff

900

Parents/caregivers

Peer Programming

Four distinct suicide prevention
and mental health peer programs
were implemented in:

134

K-12 schools in

24

districts and charters



SOURCES
OF STRENGTH



NAMI ON CAMPUS
National Alliance on Mental Illness



bring change to mind
let's talk mental health

"I love how BC2M has introduced me to so many new resources I can use for my own mental health, and has taught me how to help others who may be struggling with their mental health."
- 11th grade student

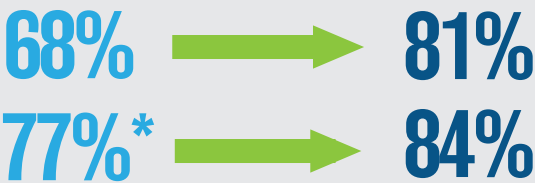
Improving Mental Wellness

COPES LEAs conduct an annual needs assessment to evaluate their strengths and challenges in promoting mental wellness. Improvements were reported in several cases over time.

Strategies to Reduce Mental Health Stigma

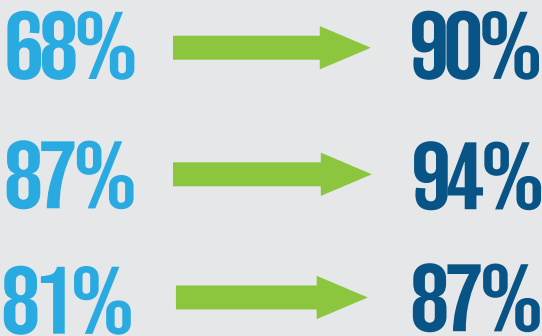
- Staff are knowledgeable about youth mental health challenges
- District/school leadership models and normalizes conversations on mental health

Spring 2022 Summer 2024



Percent who responded "Mostly" or "Definitely"
*Data represents Spring 2023, when this question was first asked

- Positive mental health messages and resources offered on campus
- Encourage students to talk openly about mental health
- Use of positive language when talking about mental health

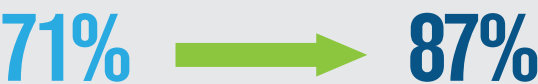


Percent who responded that they used this strategy

Mental Health Resources

- District/school's website has current resources and information on mental health and wellness

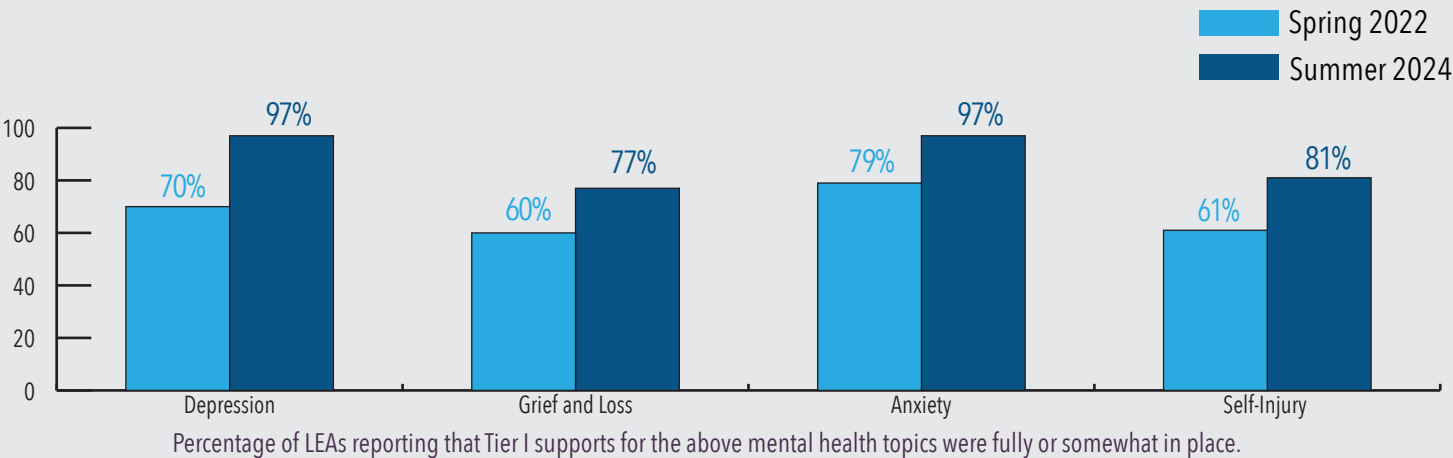
Spring 2022 Summer 2024



Percent who responded "yes"

Improving Tier 1 Mental Health Supports & Resources

COPES LEAs have increased Tier 1 mental health supports for the most common challenges faced by youth.



Suicide Prevention and Intervention

COPES LEAs have continued to expand suicide prevention policies and practices.

97%

of COPES LEAs are using tools and resources from the [Policy to Practice: Suicide Intervention Toolkit](#)

"No matter the level of risk, the student received the appropriate level of support."

- COPES LEA School Counselor

"It has helped us... have the guided, step-by-step direction needed to help support the student, teachers, and families."

- COPES LEA School Psychologist

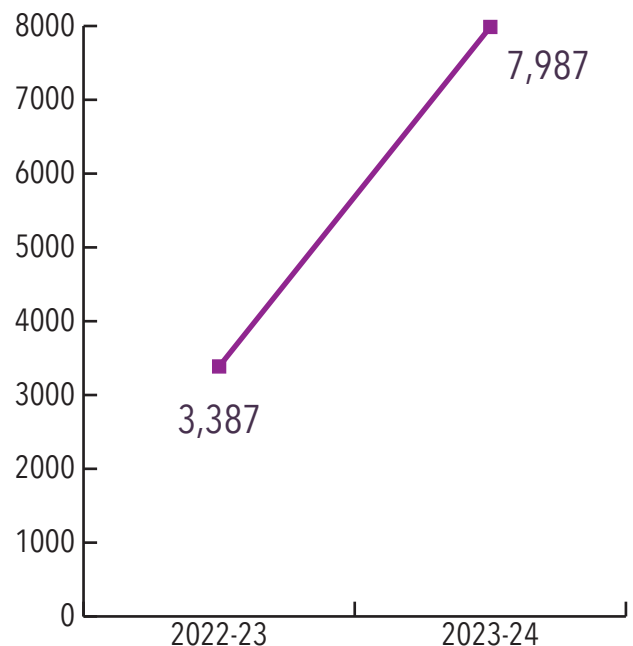
"This is my first year as a school counselor, so having these resources was crucial when I was in high-risk situations for the first time."

- COPES LEA School Counselor

"It's nice to have a system that is standardized."

- COPES LEA Social Worker

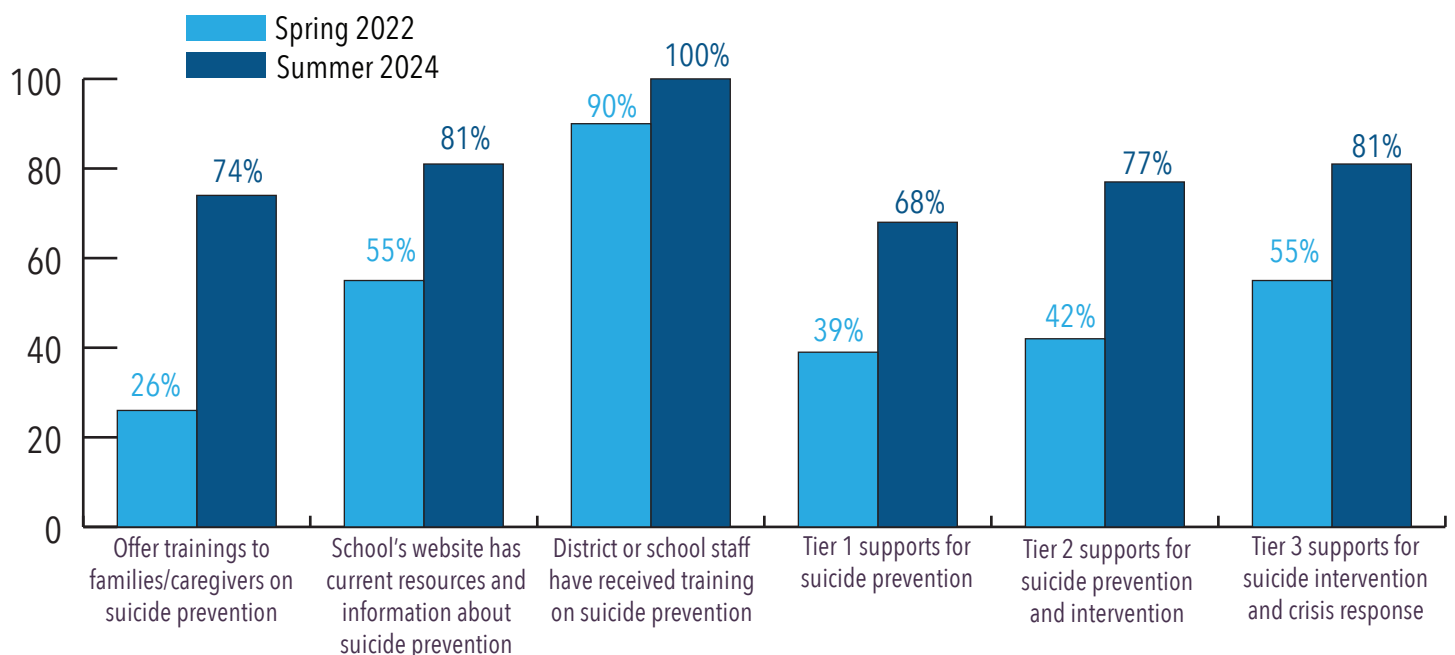
Cumulative Suicide Risk Screenings Conducted by COPES LEAs from July 2022 to June 2024



100%

of COPES districts and charters use an evidence-based suicide risk screening tool and have staff trained on suicide intervention

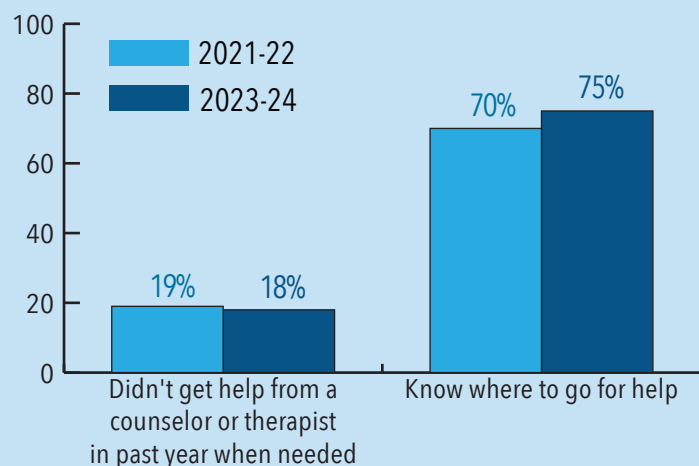
Suicide Prevention Awareness and Interventions



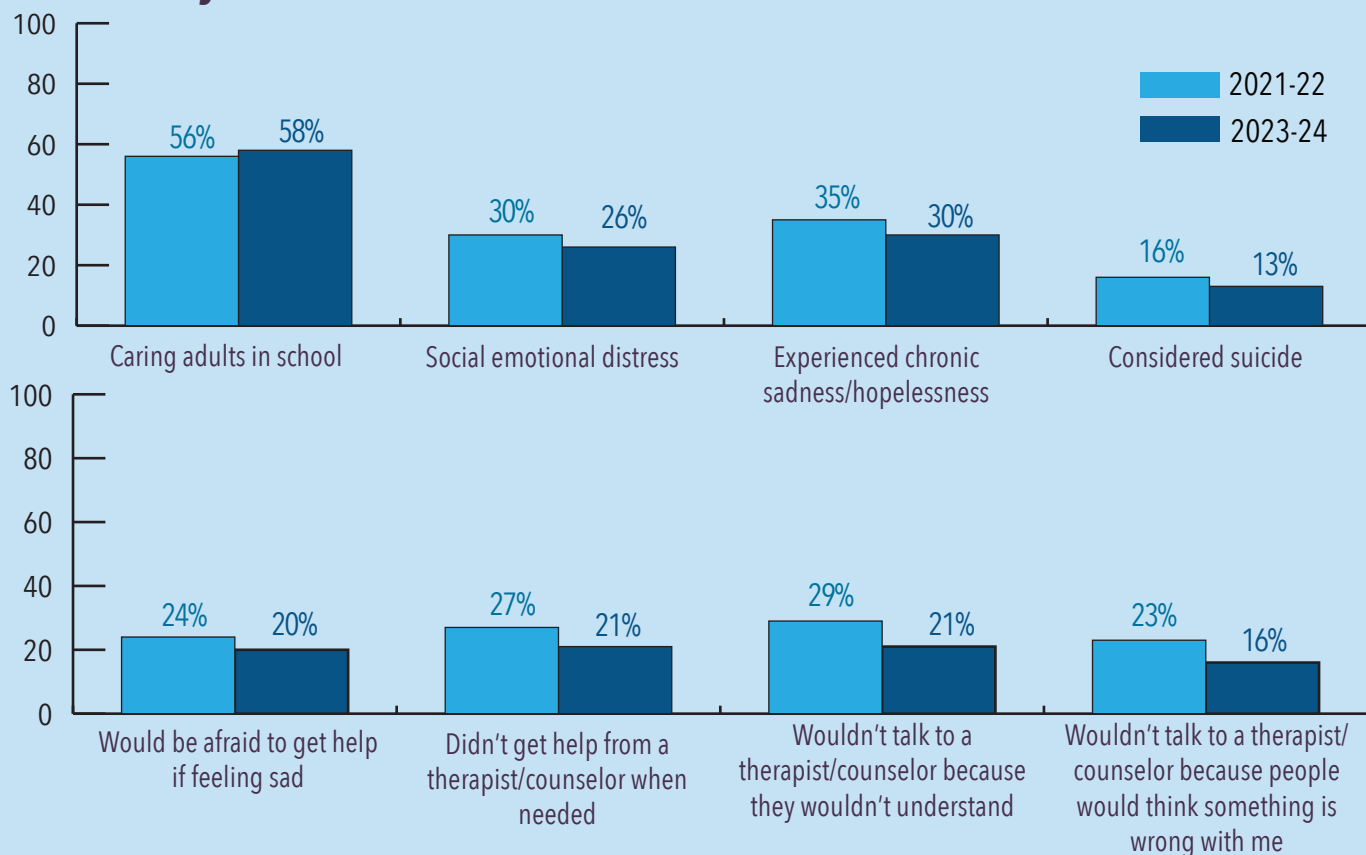
Student Mental Health

The SDCOE COPES team tracks specific **school climate** and **student mental health** indicators from the annual California Healthy Kids Survey¹ based on research demonstrating a negative association between student perceptions of school climate and suicide ideation.² Select areas of improvement from the 2021-22 to the 2023-24 academic years are highlighted below.

Elementary School Indicators



Secondary School Indicators



Note: Elementary school sample includes 5th grade students from elementary schools participating in COPES that administered the CHKS survey for 2021-22 and/or 2023-24. Sample sizes ranged from 4,712 - 8,963 students for each indicator. Secondary school sample includes 7th, 9th, and 11th grade students from secondary schools participating in COPES that administered the CHKS survey for 2021-22 and/or 2023-24. Sample sizes ranged from 21,590 - 41,221 students for each indicator.

¹California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). <https://calschls.org/>.

²Benbenishty R, Astor RA, Roziner I. A School-Based Multilevel Study of Adolescent Suicide Ideation in California High Schools. *J Pediatr*. 2018 May;196:251-257.

This report was produced by SDCOE in partnership with the School Health Evaluation and Research Team from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). <https://schoolhealthresearch.ucsf.edu>.