

A 5-5 Meeting of  
the Livingston  
Board of Education  
and the  
Livingston  
Mayor & Council  
To Support the  
Emotional Well-Being  
Of All Residents

***NJ School Boards Association  
Task Force Report on  
Mental Health Services in Schools:  
Building a Foundation  
for Hope***

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***Vincent R. De Lucia  
Educator in Residence  
2020***



New Jersey School Boards Association

[www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) | 609. 695. 7600 | 888.88NJSBA

**“Anything that’s human is mentionable,  
and anything that is mentionable can  
be more manageable.**

**When we can talk about our feelings,  
they become less overwhelming,  
less upsetting, and less scary.”**

**Mr. Fred Rogers**



# Vincent R. De Lucia

- **34 years: School District Experience**
  - » South Brunswick 1972-1982, 1989-2001
  - » North Brunswick 2001-2013
- **8 years: Pharmaceutical/Medical Device/Imaging**
- **5 years: Small Business Owner- restaurant**
- *Assistant/Superintendent/Director- Curriculum & Instruction*
- *Director of Professional Development & Communications*
- *Principal-Middle School*
- *PIO – Public Information Officer*
- *Among the 1<sup>st</sup> - 79 Nationally Board Certified Teachers in USA (Early Adolescent English/LA-1993)*
- *District Sales Manager (pharmaceuticals, Ischemic EKG monitor, Nuclear Med)*
- *Regional Sales Trainer (pharmaceutical)*
- *Chair (numerous professional & community committees, taskforces, etc.)*
- *Mayor, South Brunswick: Implemented balanced development, open space, farm preservation, new government form, increased tax ratables, initiated successful FBI Corruption Investigation, Healthy Youth Programs, Senior Center built, etc.*
- *Legislative Aide, Assemblyman A.J. “Skip” Cimino, 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative District*



***Schools are reflective of the Communities  
they serve***

***Or***

***If a behavior is evident in the Community,  
it also exists in the Schools  
and Vice Versa***

***Thus, a Comprehensive, Unified  
Community (BoE/Local Governing Body)  
approach will have greater benefits for All  
REGARDLESS OF AGE!***



# Who Should Be in Our Audience?

## Who Can Help Make It Better?

As we reflect on supporting the mental health of children and adults, what are the potential roles and responsibilities of:

- those who work directly with children and adults, regardless of age, in our community?
- those who interact with youth – Coaches? Activity Advisors? (sports, drama, music, performing/visual arts)
- Families?, Extended Families? Neighbors? Educators? Support Staff? School Bus Drivers? Senior Citizens?
- Local Stores and Local Corporate Businesses?
- Law Enforcement? First Responders?
- Arts & Recreation? Planning & Zoning?
- Health Dept.? Social Services?



# Bergenfield: March 23, 1987



## 1990-1991: South Brunswick Connection & Actions



# What did the NJSBA Task Force study?

The NJSBA Task Force on Mental Health Services in the Public Schools  
*will study the impact of the effective delivery of mental health services and early intervention strategies on student health and wellness, school climate, and school security.*







# New Jersey School Boards Association

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## Building a Foundation for Hope



Draft Report of the New Jersey School Boards Association's  
Task Force on Mental Health Services in the Public Schools

July 1, 2019

**[www.njsba.org/building-a-foundation-for-hope](http://www.njsba.org/building-a-foundation-for-hope)**





**Why did NJSBA study the Mental  
Health Challenges that are evident in  
Schools and the Potential  
Services and Practices  
Available to Address:**

**Proactive **P**reventions?**

****I**nterventions?**

****P**ostventions/After Care?**



# Why Address Mental Health?

## *21<sup>st</sup> Century Job Skills for Success \**

### **Relationships, Communications** **& Critical Thinking**

- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Creative Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Storytelling: Exemplary verbal, written, listening.  
Multi-modal communication skills

\*Reports by:

- Fortune Magazine & National Education Association



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

When researchers first discovered a link in the late 1990s between childhood adversity and chronic health problems later in life, the real revelation was **how common those experiences were across all socioeconomic groups.**



# ACES

- ◎ **The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study** is one of the largest investigations ever conducted (more than 17,000 participants) to assess associations between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being.
- ◎ The ACE Study findings suggest that **certain experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States.**



# ACEs Self Assessment

*The three types of ACEs include*

## ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

## NEGLECT



Physical

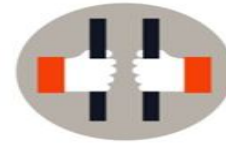


Emotional

## HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

## WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?



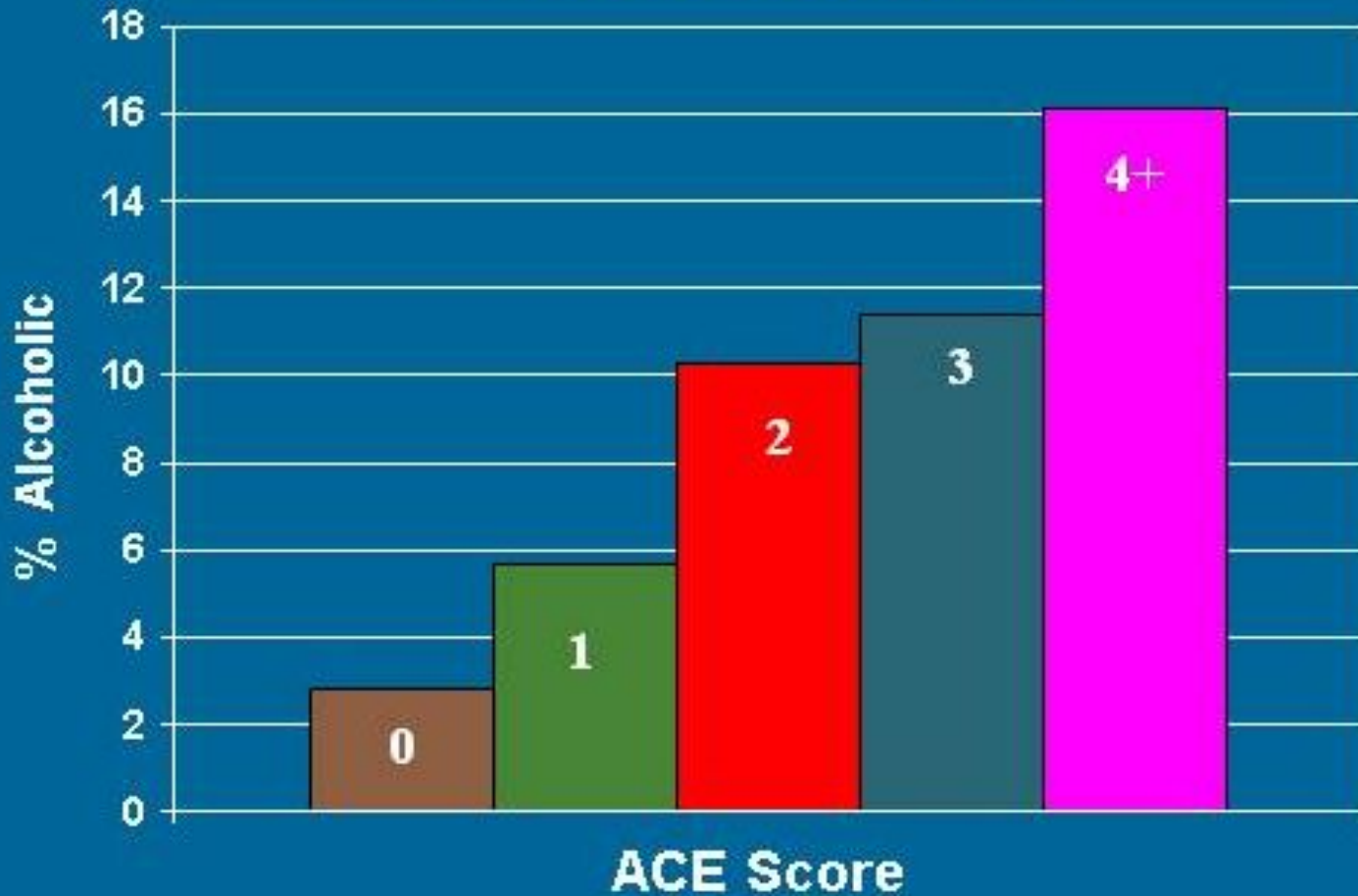
# Other ACEs Factors

- The death of a Parent
- The death of a Sibling
- Poverty
- Community/Neighborhood Violence
- Peer Rejection
- Lack of Healthy Friendships
- Peer Victimization- Bullying

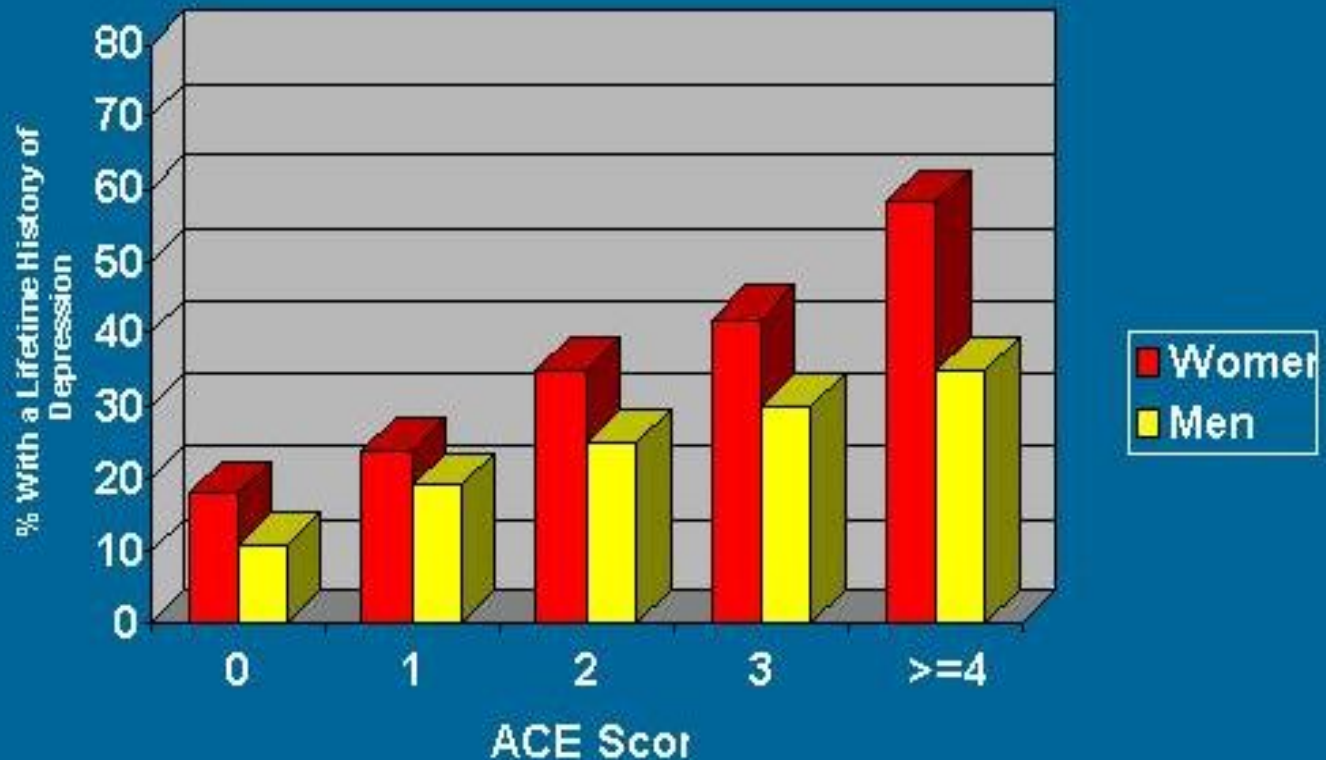




## Childhood Experiences vs. Adult Alcoholism

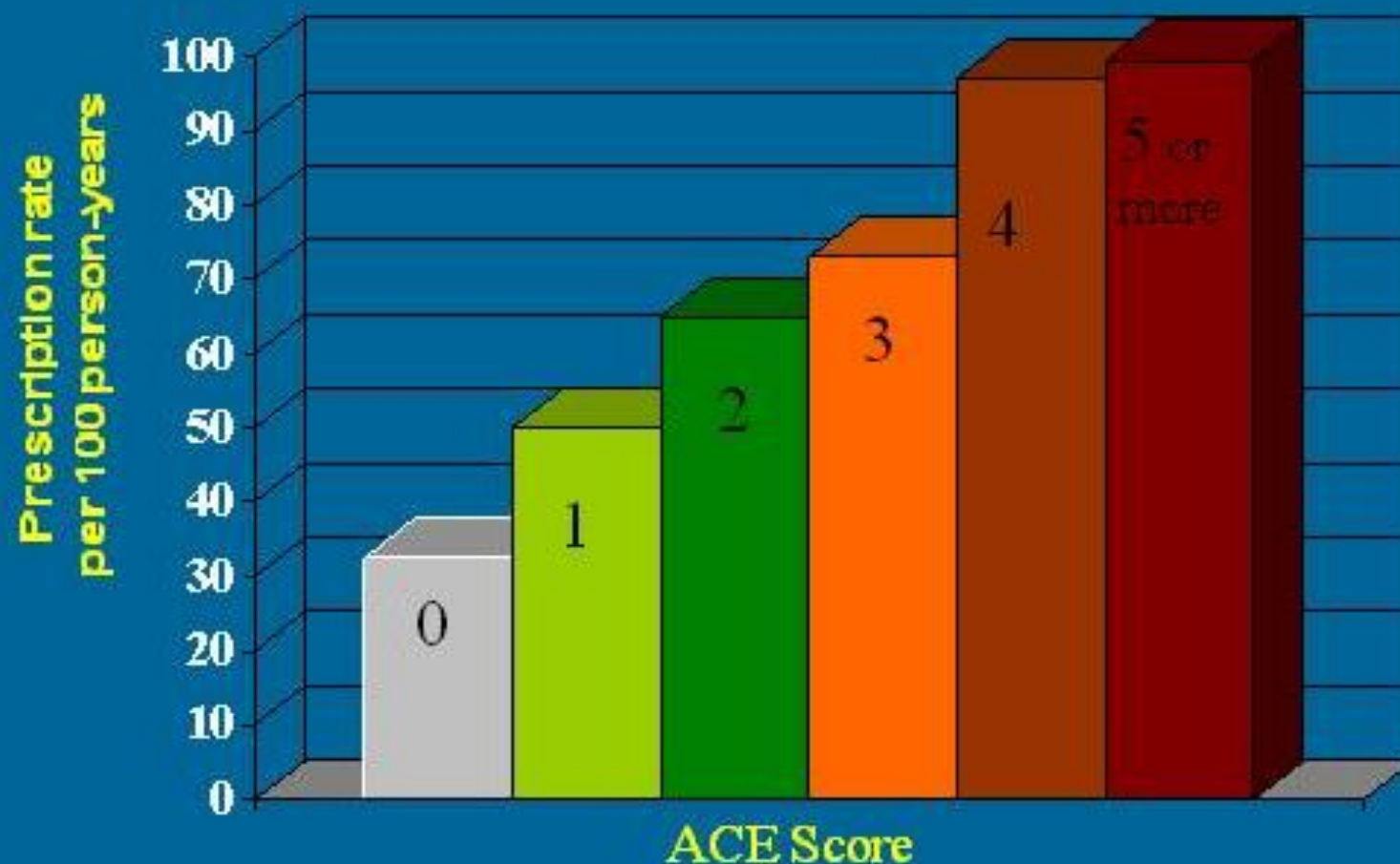


# Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression

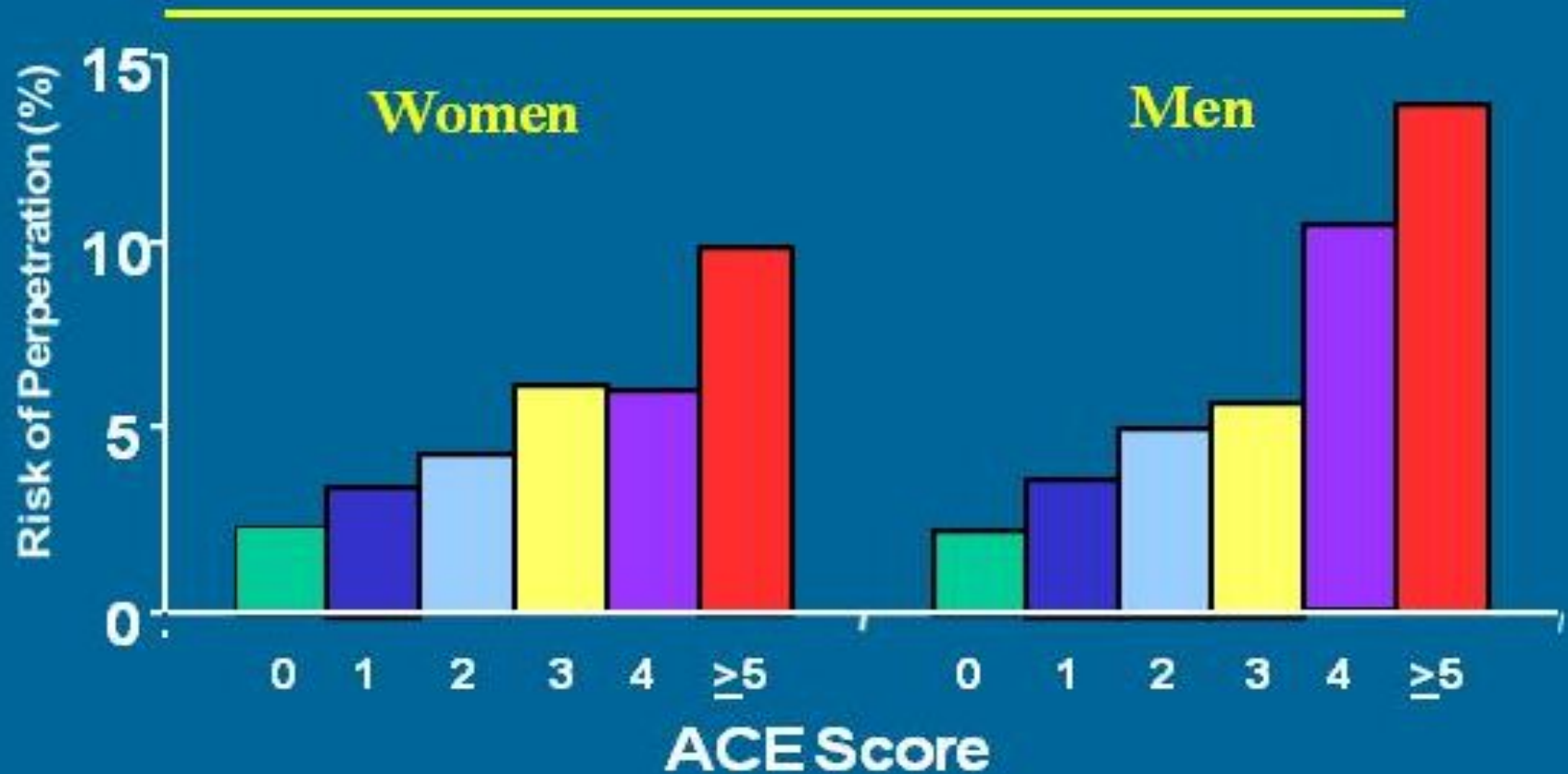


## ACE Score and Rates of Antidepressant Prescriptions

approximately 50 years later



## ACE Score and the Risk of *Perpetrating* Domestic Violence

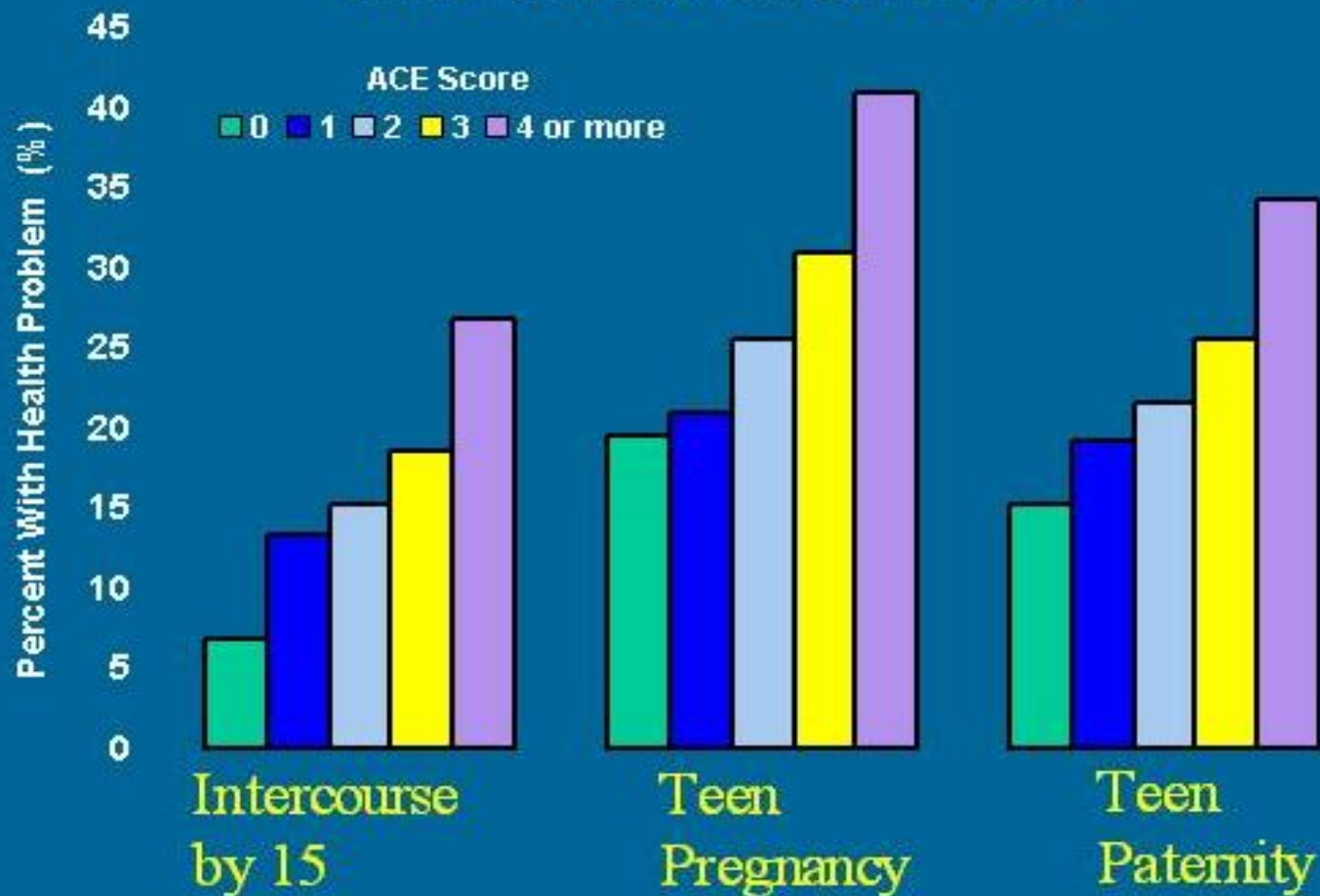




# Adverse Childhood Experiences vs. Smoking as an Adult

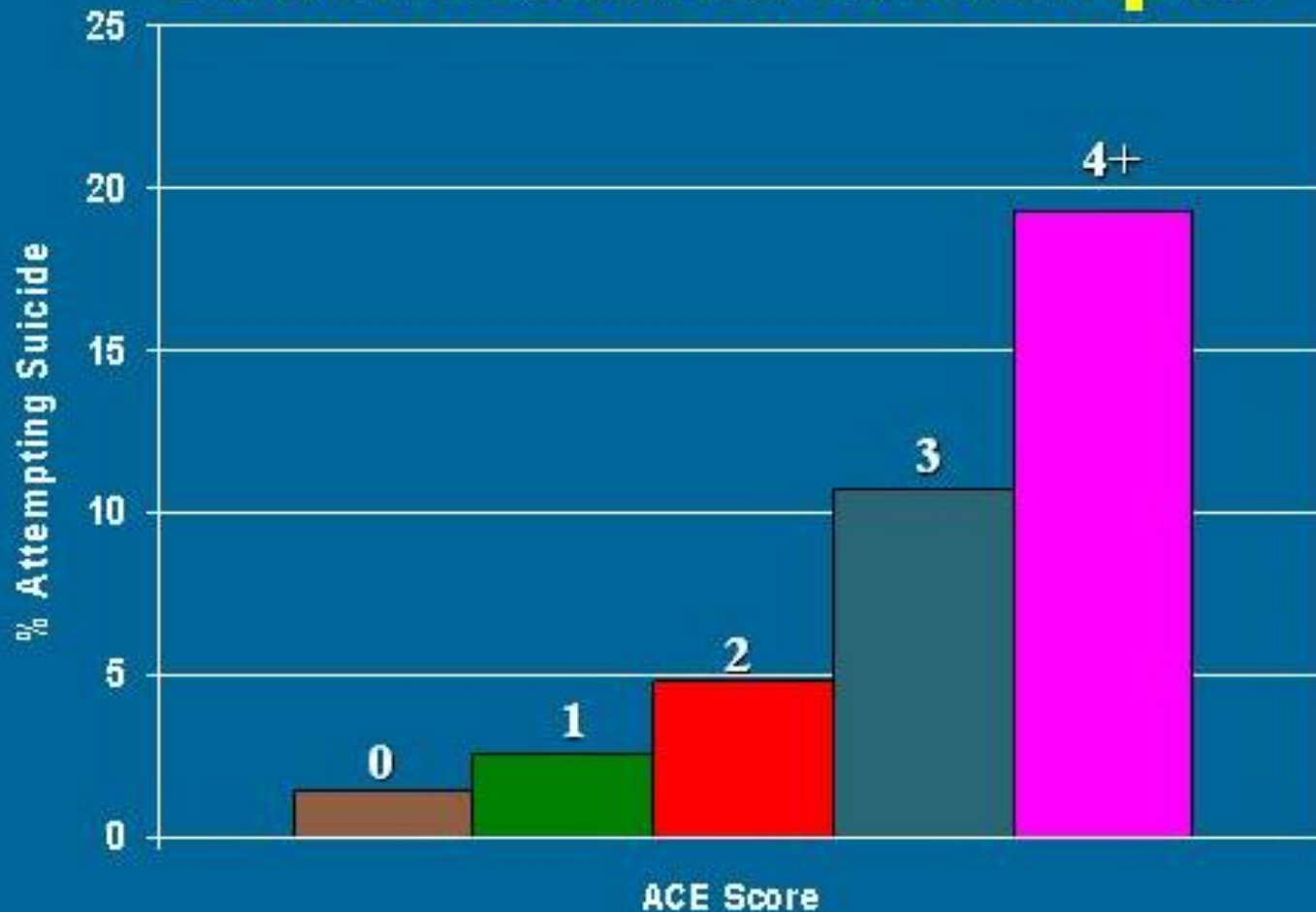


## ACE Score and Teen Sexual Behaviors





# Childhood Experiences Underlie Suicide Attempts



# **4 or More ACEs Experiences Increase a Person's Risk of Suicide by 1200%**

- 25% of adults have at least three such experiences in childhood (ACEs)
- Increases their risk for most common chronic diseases, from heart disease and cancer to depression and substance abuse.



# Why Study Mental Health in Schools?

- **16%** of students: seriously considered suicide
- **15%** of teens reported a self injury (cutting)
- **12%** of children & **25%** of teens have diagnosable anxiety disorders.
- **20%** of students between the ages of 13 and 18 live with a mental health disorder.
- **37%** students w/ MH disorder age 14+ DROP OUT- highest of any disability group
- **50%** of youth aged eight to 15, who have a diagnosed mental illness, **did not receive mental health services in the previous year.**

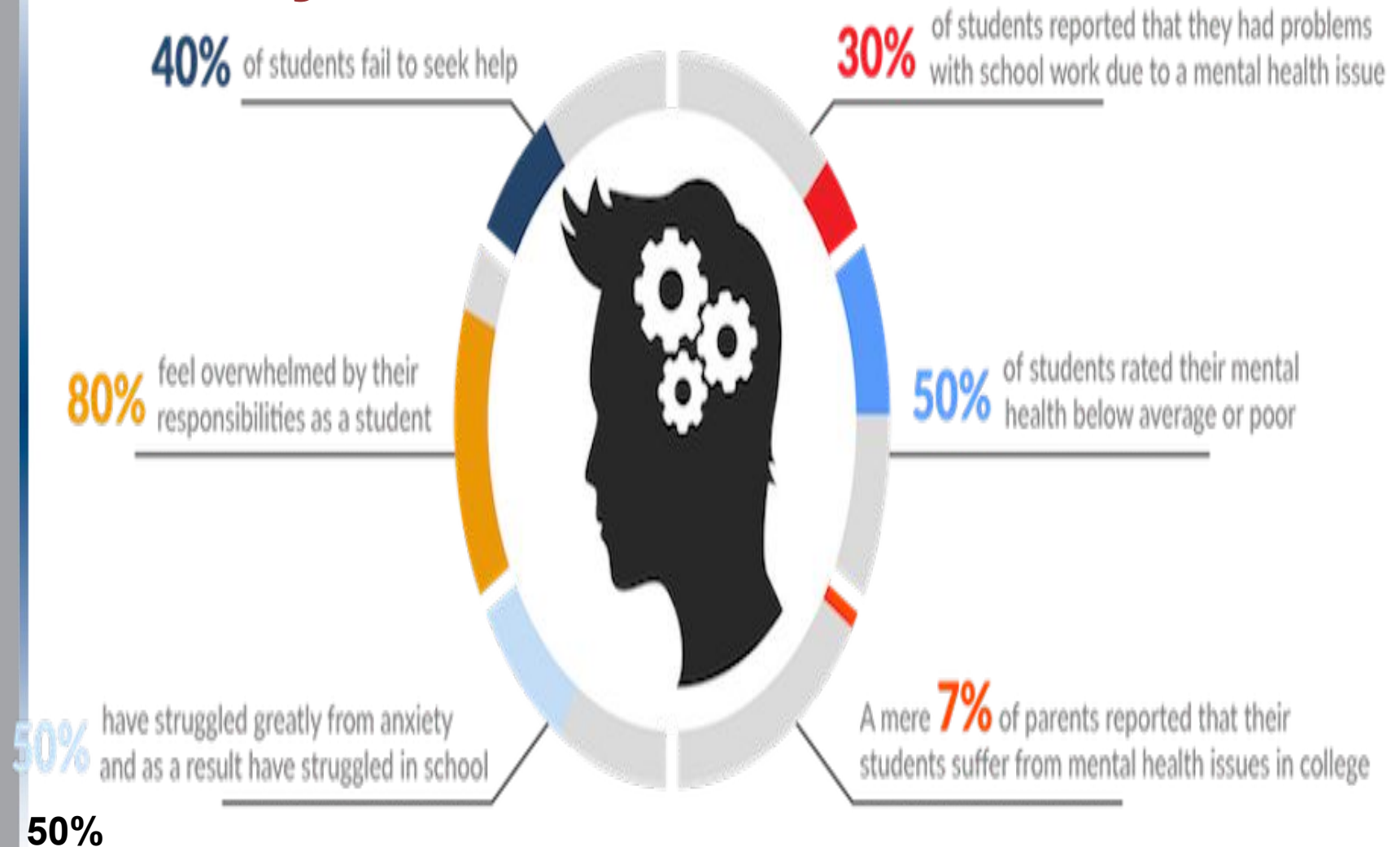


# Why Study Mental Health in Schools?

- Increases in risky behaviors
- Increases in Opioid and Substance Use and Overdoses
- Increases in children self reporting emotional challenges for themselves and for family members
- Teaching Empathy in a Technological Society
- Social Media Isolation
- Who Plays Outside today?
- Kids texting each other at the dinner table
- Prepare students for a healthy, independent future
- Mission Creep
- “It is our responsibility to advocate for all.”
- **And that was before the complications of the isolation due to pandemic quarantines**



# Why Address MH in Schools?



## Parents' confidence in the ability of their child's school to handle various health situations

Percent of parents who are very confident

	Elementary School	Middle/High School
Give first aid	84%	70%
Respond to an asthma attack	63%	54%
Assist with suspected mental health problem	45%	32%



Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2017





# Listen to the Students!

- *“As important as alcoholism and drug abuse are, we spend two weeks on those units. We spend one class – 40 minutes – on mental health awareness.”*
- *“No one says kids are cutting (themselves). I understand that it’s not socially acceptable...but when it’s a crisis, I don’t think it’s fair to expect everyone to be polite anymore.”*
- *“By saying, ‘Oh, this kid passed away,’ it’s not addressing the issue. This kid committed suicide. ... It’s almost like we have a ticking bomb going off. This is what’s happening. And we’re not doing enough.”*
- *“I cry when I feel overwhelmed... I just need someone to talk to, to have somebody listen to me.”*

*-West Windsor-Plainsboro HS students, May, 2019*



## Mission Creep: Placing More Responsibilities On Schools for Life Skills Once Taught at Home

- High Academic Expectations and “Whole Child” Practices are **complementary**
- We must educate & include **parents** and the **community** in efforts to support kids
- ***Let’s Give Permission to Educators to Incorporate Healthy Practices in Classrooms:***
  - Time Invested in Social Emotional Practices Benefits ALL students



# The 3 Supportive Legs of Suggestions for Communities and Boards of Education to Consider

- Proactive **Prevention** Programs
- Proactive **Intervention** Programs
- Proactive **Response, Support and After-Care** Programs

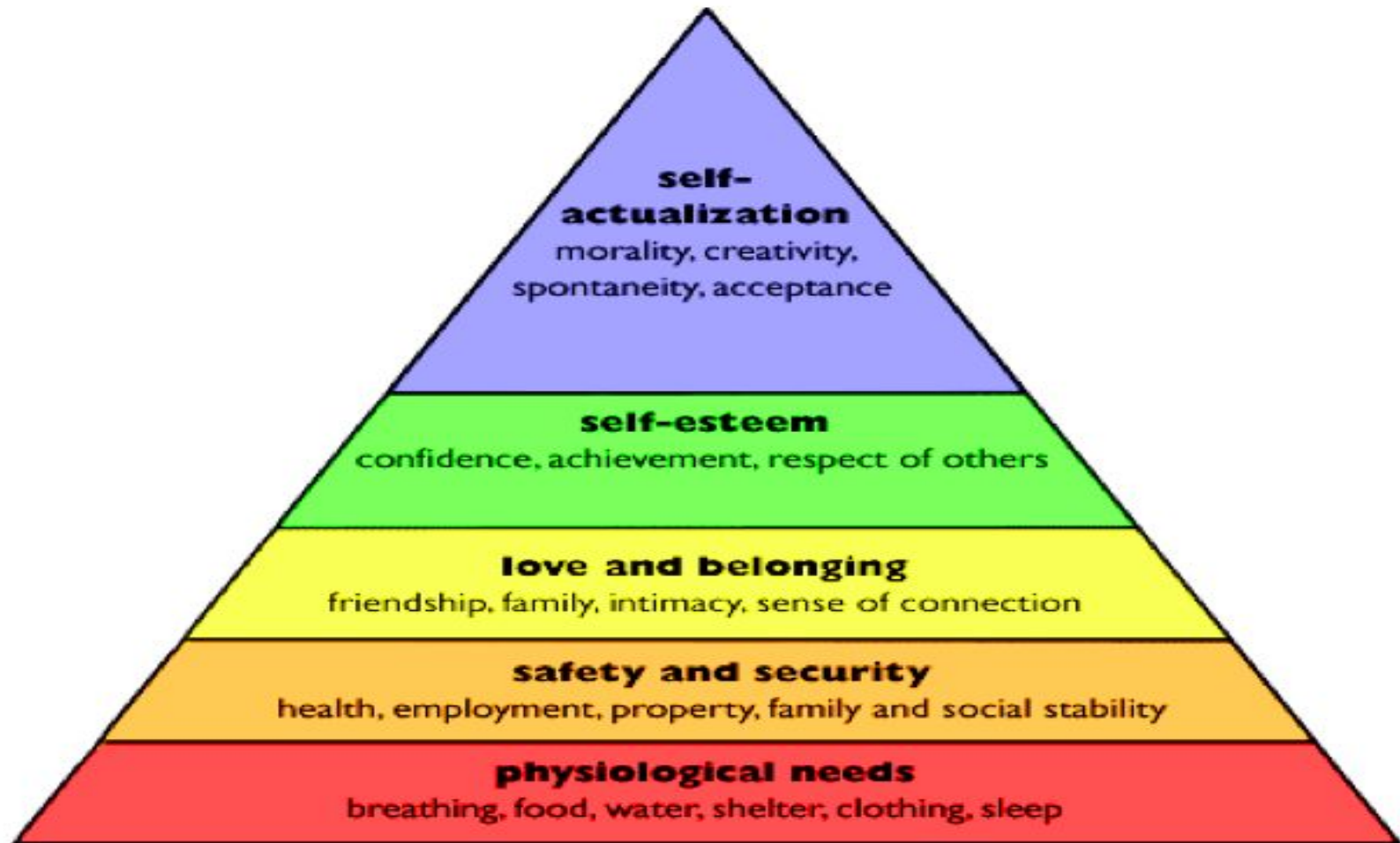


***“Kids Do Not Care  
How Much You  
KNOW,  
Until They Know How  
Much You  
CARE”***

***Unknown***



**Suggestion #50) Provide professional guidance on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs so that teachers can understand the basic needs of their students that support student learning and good decision-making**



# Task Force Findings

- Students' access to MH is severely limited.  
**1/2** of diagnosed youth 8-15 **DO NOT** receive **any** **mental health services**
- No school is immune (ages 10-24):
  - In NJ 2013-2015:
    - **2,731 treated in Hospital ERs for attempts**
    - **283 suicides confirmed**
- Schools cannot address MH alone: collaboration among schools, parents, state & local gov't, law enforcement & community organizations
- Trust among students and staff is essential for a safe, healthy school climate





# A Return to a Focus that Includes Social Emotional Development

- **From** a Primary Emphasis on **Accountability** **To** a Balanced Focus on the **Whole Child** including **Student Learning** and progress to being **independent citizens**
- What's New is Old!
  - **The Affective Domain of the 1970s**
    - Values Clarification
    - Emphasis on Team Building & Social Skills
    - Collaborative Professional Adult Relationships
    - Building trust among/between students, families, schools staff
  - **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) – 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

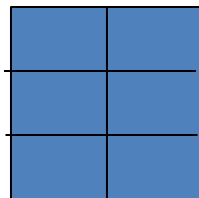


# How? It's OK for Learning to be Fun & Social!

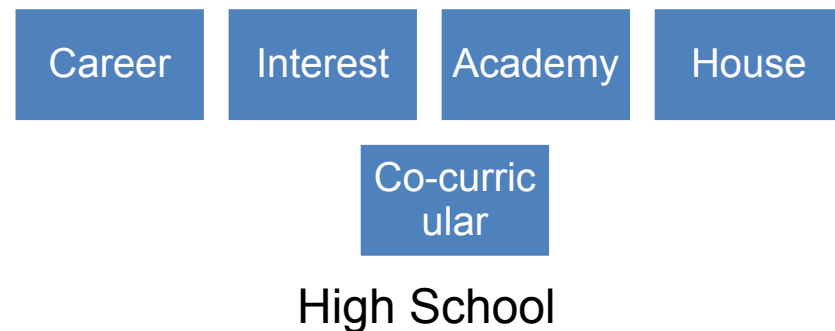
- All kids need opportunities to learn how to interact with each other and adults
- Teambuilding, social events, collaborative learning structures for all N-12
- We should build on the Nurturing Elementary Classroom N-12 so **EVERY** child **feels known** or that the adults in the school know him/her!



Elementary



Middle School



# Categories of Report's Recommendations

1. A Responsive Structure
2. Social-Emotional Learning
3. Assess School Climate
4. Improve School Climate
5. Community Outreach/Communications
6. Health, Wellness and Safety
7. Curriculum
8. Professional Development/Learning
9. Equity



# Sampling of 71 Suggested Recommendations

- Adopt with fidelity a Whole Child Approach to All Aspects of School
- Respectful, Research Informed Student Management Practices
  - Discipline: To Teach
  - Restorative Justice
  - Teach Resiliency
  - Consequences vs. Punishments
  - Catch kids doing good things!
  - Restitution: “make it better”
  - Redemption: “you’re a good person who made an unhealthy choice”
  - Behaviors do not define the essence of the child
- **SEL practices embedded in every lesson**
- Alternative Learning Structures: technology, reversed classroom, independent learning, etc.
- Parents/teachers/students how to reduce the academic stress and pressure while maintaining high academic district standards



# Programs & Practices For Kids

- Team building
- Mindfulness Rooms
- Cooperative Learning
- Every child is know by at least one adult
- Every child has at least one positive adult contact /week
- Every child is greeted individual daily by at least one adult
- Advisor/Advisee, Peer Leadership, Peer Mentors, Adult Mentors
- Strategize ways for staff to maintain empathy and contact with all students throughout the year
- Ensure certified MH support personnel (social workers, counselors, SACs, nurses, psychologists) are available to students and staff
- Create a resource of all private and public services in the community
- **Post rosters for staff to identify students they know**
- **Playground “buddy bench”**
- **Post staff list for students to identify the teachers they know**
- **WINGMAN – Dylan’s Wings of Change: Everyone has a Buddy**
- **“Start with Hello” 1 week program (Sandy Hook Promise Foundation)**



# Suggested Programs & Practices

- Develop a funded, comprehensive district-wide action plan that would ensure long-term success of a social-emotional learning (SEL) program that includes **social-emotional learning part of every course to increase academic performance**
- **Establish Parent Academies:** Inform parents of the unique stages of development of each age group so that they understand what their children are experiencing and can adjust their parenting styles
- **Opportunities to socialize** with peers and the adults with whom they work- ON GOING, embedded – not ONE TIME AND DONE!
- A Familiarity with the Search Institute's **40 Development Assets** that are the foundations of youth healthy decision-making
- **Climate surveys:** Staff, students, and their families with reviews of the data with building principals
- Ensure the **role of law enforcement** in schools are known:  
SROs/Cops are not there for discipline
- **Professional Learning** for all in the School Community





# Curriculum Recommendations

49) Adopt the “**whole child approach**” to educating students, training teachers and staff to recognize that mental health is an important part of preparing a child for future success.

50) Provide professional guidance on the **Maslow’s** developmental theory so that teachers anticipate children’s needs as they mature. Make parents aware of the stages of development so that they can understand what their children are experiencing.

51) Incorporate **cooperative learning structures**, where students have the opportunity to work together and help each other understand academic materials, while building relationships.

52) Augment district curriculum to stress the importance of teacher-student relationships, school-to-student **connectivity and respect**.

53) **Make mental health as important** a part of the health curriculum as drug and alcohol abuse prevention.



# Curriculum Recommendations

54) Require communication among teachers and administrators to ensure that **workloads and testing do not create unhealthy levels of stress.**

55) Consider the adoption of **service-learning projects** that, research indicates, ***enhance self-esteem and learning.***

56) Review district definitions of success and how students should prepare for **future success.** Consult NJSBA's 2018 report, Educational Opportunities for the **Non-College-Bound/Career-Focused Learner** ([www.njsba.org/Non-College-Bound-Learner](http://www.njsba.org/Non-College-Bound-Learner)).

57) Review the recommendations of the 2017 report of the **NJSBA Task Force on Student Achievement** ([www.njsba.org/student-achievement2017](http://www.njsba.org/student-achievement2017)).

58) Consider adopting **student support programs**, such as Advisor/Advisee, adult mentor and peer mentor.



## 3 C's of Self Esteem

All adults must be self-aware of how their communications contribute or detract from the self-esteem of the students with whom they interact.

- Must Feel **Capable** of Success
- Must feel they are **Contributing** to the group: class, school, family, team, club, etc.
- Must Feel **Connected** to 3 or more non-parent adults who they feel they can ask questions or advice.



# Search Institute: 40 Developmental Assets

- **Preventative Measures, Positive Experiences, and Qualities that young people need to grow up Healthy, Caring and Responsible.**
- Research reports that **Assets are protective factors that consistently buffer youth from risky behaviors.**
- The more assets a child has the higher probability that s/he will not be involved in:
  - **Teen Pregnancy**
  - **School Dropout**
  - **Substance Abuse**
  - **Delinquency**
  - **Violence**

Search Institute:  
Collecting & Analyzing  
Data since 1984



# **40-Developmental Assets Help Mitigate the Impact of ACEs and All Negative Experiences**



## **Assets are concrete, positive, common sense experiences and qualities that:**

1. Provide understanding of what young people need to succeed and be healthy
2. Focus on solutions rather than problems
3. Are powerful predictors of behavior
4. Protective factors that inhibit behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual intercourse, and school failure
5. Enhancement factors that promote positive development
6. Resiliency factors that help youth to cope with and avoid difficult situations...GRIT





# External & Internal Assets

- **External Assets** are the positive experiences that others provide and the good experiences in a young person's life.
- **Internal Assets** focus on individual qualities that guide positive choices and develop a sense of confidence, passion, and purpose.
- **External and Internal Assets** provide:  
**Support, Empowerment, Boundaries, Expectations, Constructive Use of Time, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, Positive Self-Identity**



# External Assets

- **Support:** Family Support, Positive Family Communications, Other Adult Relationships, Caring School Climate, Parent Involvement in Schools
- **Empowerment:** Community Values Youth, Youth as Resources, Service to Others, Safety



# External Assets

- **Boundaries & Expectations:** Family, School & Neighborhood Boundaries, Adult Role Models, Positive Peer Influences, High Expectations
- **Constructive Use of Time:** Creative Activities, Youth Programs, Religious/Spiritual Community, Time at Home



# Internal Assets

- **Commitment to Learning:** HW, Bonding to School, Reading for Pleasure, School Engagement, Achievement Motivation
- **Positive Values:** Caring, Equality & Social Justice, Integrity, Honesty, Responsibility, Restraint



# Internal Assets

- **Social Competencies:** Planning & Decision Making, Interpersonal Competence, Cultural Competence, Resistance Skills, Peaceful Conflict Resolution
- **Positive Identity:** Personal Power, Self-Esteem, Sense of Purpose, Positive View of Personal Future
- **<https://www.search-institute.org/>**



# External Assets

1. Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication—Child/parents communicate positively; child seeks advice from parents.
3. **Young person receives support from 3 or more non-parent adults.**
4. **Young person experiences caring neighbors.**
5. **School provides a caring, encouraging environment.**
6. **Parent(s) actively helping child succeed in school.**
7. Young person feels adults in the community value youth.





## External Assets

8. Young people are given useful roles in the community.

9. Young person **CONTRIBUTES** to the community

**1+ hours/ week**

10. Feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

11. Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.

12. **Boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.

13. **Boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.

14. Adult role models—Parents/adults: positive, responsible behavior



# External Assets

**15. Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.**

16. Parents/teachers encourage the young person to do well.

**17. Spends 3+ hours weekly: lessons/practice in music, theater, or arts.**

**18. Spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.**

19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.

**20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights / week.**



# Internal Assets

21. Young person is motivated to do well in school.

22. **School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.

23. **HW**—Young person has at least **1hour of homework/ school day**.

24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.

25. Young person **reads for pleasure three or more hours per week**.

26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.



# Internal Assets

27. **Equality and social justice**—values promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.

29. **Honesty**—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”

30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.



## Internal Assets

32. **Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.

33. **Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has **empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.**

34. **Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and **comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.**

35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and **dangerous situations.**



# Internal Assets

- 36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
- 37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- 38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem
- 39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
- 40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal





# Social Emotional Learning

- SEL4NJ
  - NJ Jets: SEL classes for all pre-service teachers at NJ Colleges/Universities
- STAT: Students Taking Action Together
  - Maurice Elias, RU
  - Teaching MS/HS students how to address issues of social justice



# Challenges of Isolation

- Children of all ages feeling isolated is more widespread today due to Covid-19 that preceded the pandemic and will be a challenge long after!
  - Due to the pandemic
  - Due to parents working
  - Due to family responsibilities
  - Due to less safe neighborhoods
  - Due to social challenges
  - Due to other factors



# Isolation: In a Crowd or When Alone

- The Isolation of the Pandemic
  - Virtual School
  - Virtual Work
  - Zoom Play Dates
- Who played outside BEFORE Covid?
- Exacerbated the loneliness for some
- Practices and Considerations beyond pandemics to address the isolation many already experience regardless of age



# 8 Tips to Managing & Thrive in Covid Isolation

1. **Accept the reality of the situation** Acknowledging reality helps reduce stress and move forward.
2. **Embrace your feelings.** Acknowledging uncomfortable feelings gives you power over those emotions.
3. **Don't think about feelings as positive or negative.** Feelings represent how you connect to your surroundings and signals actions you should take to make yourself comfortable.
4. **Loneliness can impact physical health like increased heart rates.** Recognizing alarming sensations in the moment and allowing them to pass may help neutralize them.



# 8 Tips to Managing & Thrive in Covid Isolation

5. **Use isolation as an opportunity to better get to know and understand yourself.** Reflect. Rediscover your uniqueness.
6. **Focus on opportunities isolation provides, not things you lost.** Use time to make positive changes or pursue goals
7. **Find ways to stay relaxed and connect to your social networks.** Maintaining pre-pandemic routines as much as possible can help, but give yourself leeway to make adjustments.
8. **Practice self-care.** Receiving constant news updates can create more stress. Plan how you want to receive important information and take mental and physical breaks.



# 7 Ways Educators Can Help Students Cope in a Pandemic

1. Prioritize Relationships
  - Kids Don't Care How Much You Know Until They Know How Much You Care!
2. Tamp Down the Pressure
  - Be Aware of Challenging Home Learning Circumstances
  - Use Formative Assessments
3. Empower Students
  - E-portfolio
  - Address Covid: Make PPE Masks
  - Make Cards for Front Line Workers



# 7 Ways Educators Can Help Students Cope in a Pandemic

## 4. Moored in the Moment

- “fight, flight, or freeze” part of their brain takes over.
- more wiggly, disorganized, more self-critical, or more likely to blurt out (or post) something mean.
- mindfulness activities.
- encourage students to self-care: cry, scream into a pillow, call a friend, write in a journal, or draw a picture.
- “turn on” their prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain responsible for logical thinking, executive functioning, empathy by retrieving language: identify 3 adjectives to describe an object, listen to a song & listen to lyrics.





# 7 Ways Educators Can Help Students Cope in a Pandemic

## 5. Foster Social Connection

- Introverts and Extroverts are OK
- Kids not invited have challenges
- To help kids not being invited to Zoom playdates:
- facilitate inclusive class get-togethers such as group advisory meetings, small-group collaborative projects, or book club discussions.
- Cooperative Learning: Pair kids thoughtfully and engineer brief, highly structured interactions.
- Give kids opportunities to practice social skills without setting them up for failure.



# 7 Ways Educators Can Help Students Cope in a Pandemic

## 6. Promote Self-Care: Adults & Kids

- If adults don't self care, how can they care for others?
- Sleep, exercise, connect with friends and family, and time for self
- We are all learning as we go!
- Tell caregivers not to expect perfection from them,
- don't want them to battle their child over schoolwork.
- lower parents' stress levels and students will do better



# 7 Ways Educators Can Help Students Cope in a Pandemic

## 7. Focus on Joy and Simplicity

- car parades" through students' neighborhoods,
- held online talent virtual Spirit Weeks.
- recorded themselves singing in pajamas
- shared jokes and memes.
- Post a Teddy Bear in the front window
- Morning Meetings
- Cooperative learning
- Opportunities to virtually collaborate
- Practice Mindfulness



# Discipline: To Teach When Kids Make a Poor Behavior Choice

- The Goals of Behavior
  - To Seek Attention
  - To Seek Power
  - To Seek Revenge
  - To Seek to Avoid Failure
- Never Let a Behavior Choice Define A Child
- Teach a Child the APPROPRIATE Way to Achieve Their Goal At Home, In School, In the Community



# Redemption @ Home, @ School, in the Community

- **Parents, Educators, Law Enforcement, Coaches, Activity Advisor: Do Not Permit A Behavior to Define the Individual: Separate the child from the act!**
- Punishments vs. Consequences
- Does my teacher (parent, coach, etc.) like me?
  - Do they Believe in me?
- Bias of Low Expectations?
- A Climate of Caring?



# How Are We Addressing the MH of Adults Who Work with Students?

*If the adults in the lives of kids are  
not healthy,  
what is the mental health impact  
on those kids  
who interact with  
less than healthy adults?*



# How? Programs & Practices for Staff

- Is building trusting, respectful professional relationships among and between all staff a priority?
  - Are the adults feeling healthy?
  - Does the district prioritize addressing the **climate, morale, emotional** and **mental health** of the staff?
  - Are there **teambuilding** activities and **socials** throughout the year?
- Does the staff feel ...
  - Supported? Respected? Valued ?
  - Professionally? Personally?





## How? Programs & Practices For Staff

- Professional Learning Communities
- SEL4NJ
- Distributed Leadership
- Distributed & Collaborative Decision Making
- Teacher Leaders
- Teambuilding- ON GOING
- NJ Labor Management Collaborative (NJSBA, NJASA,, NJPSA, NJEA, AFT-NJ, RU School of Labor)
- Mentors: Novices & Experienced New to the Bldg.
- Connected Action Roadmap (CAR)
- Employee Assistance Programs?



# Professional Learning Recommendations

61) Provide professional development in the New Jersey Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

[www.njsba.org/NJ-SEL-Competencies](http://www.njsba.org/NJ-SEL-Competencies)

62) Ensure that all educators **know their roles and responsibilities** in addressing student anxiety, depression, suicide ideation, substance abuse, etc.

63) **Provide professional development to all staff members who interact with students –from the food service worker to the teacher to the administrator – to ensure that they help create a healthy, encouraging school climate.**

64) Incorporate **cooperative learning** into professional development and teacher performance appraisals.

65) **Support the emotional health of staff** by providing structures and opportunities to build collegial relationships through professional development and team building.



# It Takes A Village...

- Local Municipal Governing Bodies and Boards of Education Must Collaborate
- Community Response/Resource Team
- Parent Academies
- Spiritual/Clergy Community
- Local Service Groups
- Youth Activity Groups – arts, sports, etc.
- Local Businesses- especially those that kids use like convenience stores, fast food, gaming and activity related centers
- Who else in your community?



# BoEs / Mayor / Council

- “Healthy Communities...Healthy Children”
- Township Departments that Directly Serve Families and Youth
- Police, Health, Arts & Recreation, Human Rights Commission, Public Library
- Senior Citizens
- Parent/Community Academies
- Community Response/Resource Team



# The Role of Communities

ALL Stakeholders can contribute to  
Encouraging Healthy Behaviors

- Youth Sports
- Youth Arts Programs
- Youth Organizations
- Spiritual Community
- Service Organizations
- Local Business: especially that serve youth
- Corporate Citizens



# Community

- Schools are reflective of the Communities they serve...
  - Schools cannot address these challenges in isolation
  - Local Governing Body
    - Municipal Alliance
    - Community Response Team
    - Recreation & Culture
    - Health Department
    - Social Service
  - Youth Activity Groups (recreation, arts, spiritual, etc.)
- Parent Involvement: When can they be included on Committees, Task Forces, etc.



# Support

- Mental Health First Aid
- SACs, Child Study Teams, Safety Teams
- School Based Counseling Partnership
  - During & beyond school day
  - Family and Student Counseling
  - 1978- School Based Youth Services Grant
- Parent Academies
- Health & Wellness Events for All
- Staff and Family PD: Developmental Needs of all Age Groups





## **\*Prior NJSBA Reports that Include Mental Health “Suggestions for Consideration”**

- NJSBA School Security TF- 2014 & 2018- 45 Total Suggestions
- Special Education- October 2014- 20 Suggestions
- Health & Wellness TF- August, 2015- 104 Suggestions
- Student Achievement TF- March 2017- 83 Suggestions
- Educational Opportunities for the Career Focused/Non-College Bound Learner- Oct. 2018 -69 Suggestions
- Mental Health in Schools- July 2019- 72 Suggestions
- January 2021: *Impact of Isolation of Kids, Their Families, and the Adults Who Work with Them*
- **\*Links to each report can be found at the end of this presentation or at [WWW.NJSBA.ORG](http://WWW.NJSBA.ORG)**



# **We Are All Responsible to Impact Change**

## **6 Reports- over 100 Mental Health Related**

### **Suggested Recommendations**

#### A Call For **Bold Actions**...

- NJSBA
- Boards of Education
- Local, County & State Governing Bodies
- Community & Service Groups
- Youth Activity Groups
- Parent Groups
- Student Organizations



Above all else, **ACT.**

***Institutionalize and Formalize  
the Incorporation of Practices  
and Procedures that Support  
the Healthy Emotional and  
Mental Health for All.***



# Reflection

- How are school structures, policy, organization, curriculum, etc. contributing to the overall emotional, mental, and physical health of the students, their families and all staff in your district?
- What is the status of collaboration among and between the BoE and local governing body on challenges including mental health?



# QUESTIONS



# Contact Information

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To access the NJSBA Reports:

[www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org)



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