WASHINGTON, D.C.: D.C. Education Act First of Its Kind in U.S.,
Increases Focus on Suicide Prevention

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A Washington, D.C. law will require teachers and principals to complete a two-hour youth behavioral health training every two years starting this fall. The Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey Act of 2016 states that such training must “model policies for suicide prevention, suicide intervention, and suicide postvention, especially for at-risk youth sub-groups.” The act identifies seven categories of at-risk youth, including those experiencing homelessness or identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning. As a part of the new law, climate surveys that measure safety, environmental factors, and levels of engagement will be carried out in 36 public and charter schools. Councilmember At-Large David Grosso, who drafted the legislation with the D.C. Committee on Education, said that the law is intended to foster “a better culture in our communities so that people don’t get to the point where they want to attempt or think about suicide. But the reality is that if we can just save one life, this is huge.”

Spark Extra! Learn more about suicide prevention in schools [2].

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