2026-2027
BPS Suicide Prevention Curriculum Adoption: Gizmo and SOS Program



Abigail Doig, BES Counselor
Caitlynn Jean, BES Social Worker

Sarah Altieri, RMS Counselor
Angie Cooper, RMS Social Worker

Kelley Fast, BHS Counselor
Kim Betustak, BHS Social Worker

Bridgman Public Schools

Content Notice

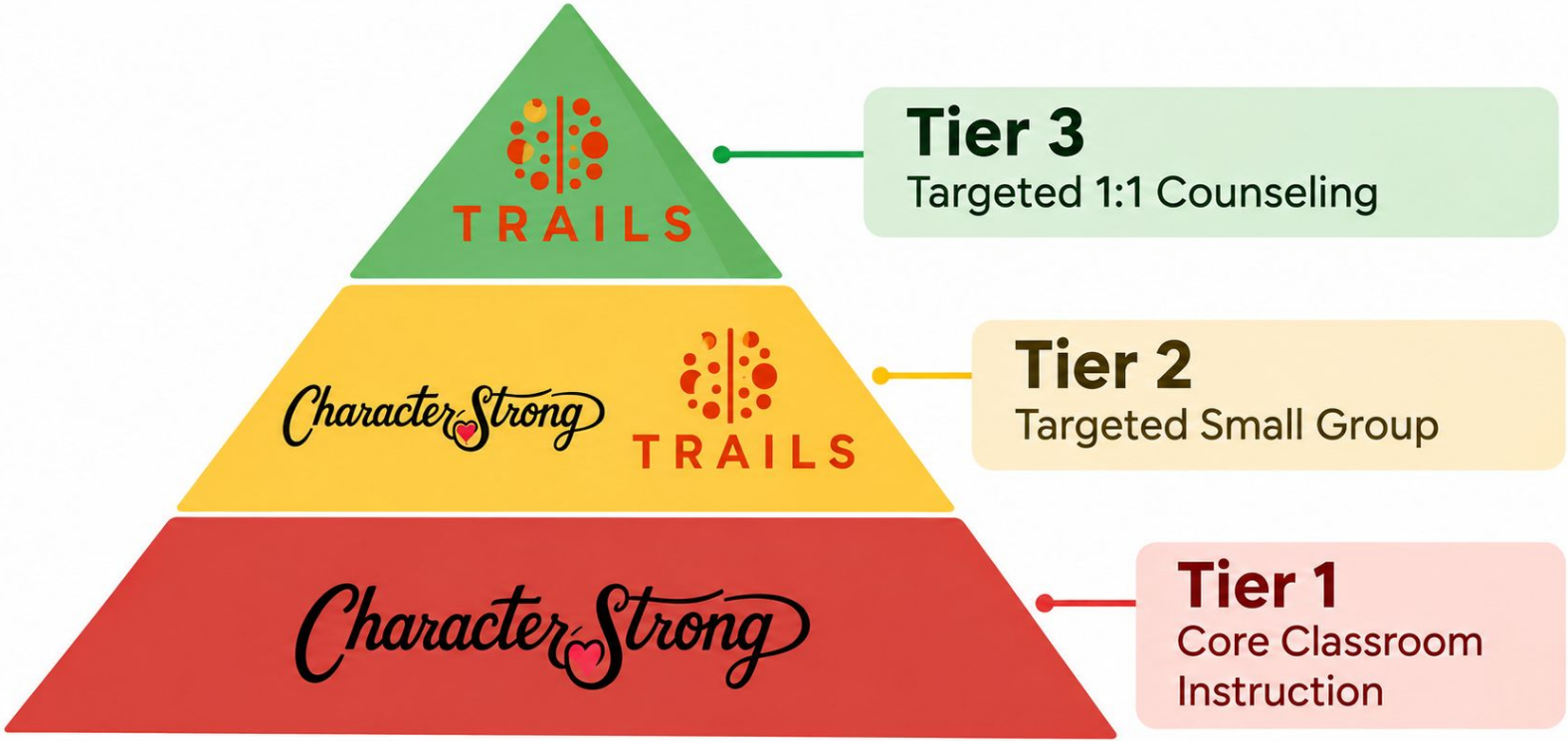
Today's presentation includes discussion of suicide and suicide prevention.

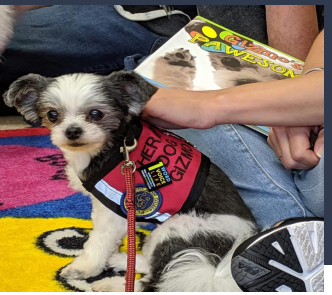
This content may be difficult or emotionally activating for some people.

Please take care of yourself during this presentation—step out, take a break, or reach out to someone you trust if you need to.



Tiered Interventions Implemented





Gizmo Program Review (Grades 3-4)

- A fun, flexible, turn-key mental health curriculum built around Gizmo, a therapy-dog mascot.
- Uses animated PowerPoint lessons, an age-appropriate guide, interactive activities, and student mental health planning.
- The curriculum is designed to promote mental health literacy, coping, connectedness, and help-seeking.
- The program describes itself as data-driven and evidence-informed and reports alignment with CASEL and MTSS.
- The program is prevention/education—not therapy and not a replacement for individualized mental health services.

Gizmo Lesson Review

Lesson 1: Students learn that mental health includes feelings, thoughts, and actions

Lesson 2: Students identify when mental health needs attention and practice coping

Lesson 3: Students identify adults they can go to and practice asking for help

Lesson 4: Students create a simple personal plan for supporting their mental health

Lesson 5: Activities reinforce the concepts and keep the conversation going

Gizmo Implementation

- One approximately 50-minute session.
- Good for a schoolwide classroom rotation or dedicated mental-health lesson.
- Social worker/facilitator uses the provided script and slides.
- Follow-up is built into the curriculum when students request additional support.







Suggested pilot: 4th grade • one building • one semester

Signs of Suicide (SOS) Program Review

- ★ SOS is an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program for middle and high school classrooms, shown to reduce suicide attempts by 64%.
- ★ ***SOS can be taught in a single class period*** (about 45- 60 minutes) and consists of one core lesson and two to three optional refresher lessons throughout the school year.
- ★ **Opt-out** form will be provided for this programming & parents can view curriculum upon request.

Signs of Suicide (SOS) Lesson Review

- ★ Lesson components are video, guided discussion, depression screening activity and exit slips.
- ★ Includes age appropriate videos that feature real stories and model scenarios that serve as a conversation starter to normalize talking about mental health.
- ★ The program uses the **ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell)** framework to teach students how to recognize signs of depression and suicide risk, and how to seek help if they are concerned about themselves or a friend.
- ★ Educates that depression is a treatable illness.

ACT

- ★ A - Acknowledge: Teaches students how to recognize signs of depression and suicide risk.
- ★ C - Care: Provide care and support.
- ★ T - Tell: How to “tell”, seek help if they are concerned about a friend.

Benefits of SOS

- ★ Universal prevention
- ★ Promotes early identification
- ★ Teaches students to recognize warning signs
- ★ Encourages help-seeking
- ★ Provides a simple action model
- ★ Connects students to trusted adults and resources
- ★ Provides a structured, evidence-informed approach
- ★ This program aligns with: Suicide Risk Assessment Training with Dr. Melissa Reeves on September 23, 2025 At Corewell Health and the updates being made to our Suicide Policy 5350.

The Impact of Suicide Prevention

- ★ Per the National Alliance on Mental Illness report “there is a widespread stigma associated with suicide and as a result, many people are afraid to speak about it. Talking about suicide not only reduces the stigma, but also allows individuals to seek help, rethink their opinions and share their story with others.”

- ★ SOS prevention program is shown to reduce suicide attempts by 64%.

Out of 88,000 students taught SOS programming:

- ★ 90% of schools see an increase in students seeking help
- ★ 95% of schools report the program reduces stigma around suicide

Program Funding Plan

School Year	Program Cost	Funding Notes
2026-2027	$300*	Requesting funding
2027-2028	$1,000	Requesting funding
2028-2029	$1,000	Requesting funding
2029-2030	$1,000	Requesting funding
2030-2031	$1,000	Requesting funding/Planned adoption year
Total Request:	$4,300	

Thank You!



Thank you to our school board fo your time, support, and continued commitment to our students, staff, and mental health team.

Your investment in mental health services helps us create a school community where every student feels supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.

With appreciation,
BPS Mental Health Team

Additional Resources to Support This Program As Evidence Based

- “An Outcome Evaluation of the SOS Suicide Prevention Program” | Read
- “Evaluating the SOS Suicide Prevention Program: A Replication and Extension” | Read
- “SOS Shows Promise as a Middle School Suicide Prevention Program” | Read
- “Further Evidence of SOS Efficacy & Effectiveness” | Read
- “The SOS Program Pilot Study: High School Implementation Recommendations” | Read
- “Evaluating the SOS Program: Middle School Students at Risk and Staff Acceptability” | Read
- “Virtual SOS: Student Perspectives and Acceptability” | Read
- https://www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Gizmo-MH-Plan-Sheet.pdf
- https://www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Gizmo-Mindfulness-Exercises.pdf
- “5 Common Myths About Suicide Debunked” Read