

# ***PISCATAWAY HIGH SCHOOL***



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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the A.I.R. organization. A.I.R. is a dynamic group of people who are dedicated to reaching our youth and educating them on their mental health. Piscataway school district is a culturally and socio-economically diverse district. Our high school has over 2,200 students in grades 9-12. The demographic breakdown is as follows Asian 23.6%, Black 40.3%, Hispanic 14.4%, American Indian/Alaskan >1%, Multi-racial 8% and White 22%.

A.I.R. is working with the students and Health teachers to increase mental health awareness at our school. At Piscataway High School we promote optimum wellness in our health programs and mental health is an important aspect of overall wellness. Working together to promote student awareness and reduce the stigma of mental health is important to us as educators and to A.I.R.

Piscataway High School promotes the newly developed program that reaches out to high school students. The program presents mental health issues and suicide to the students in a manner they can relate to. The opening is a Power Point presentation of famous names throughout history that have had a mental illness. As the students enter the classroom, they read the names appearing on the screen. The headline reads: What do these people have in common? The common link is mental illness.

It is a brief presentation that lasts approximately 60 minutes and it engages the students from the beginning. It starts off by asking who knows someone who struggles on a daily basis with extreme stressors, anxiety or depression and continues into asking if the students know someone who has attempted or completed suicide. Conversations continue about statistics relating to suicide, addictions and teen mental health. The clear message for students is that they are not alone and that there are resources to get help.

It has truly been a pleasure working with A.I.R. and I plan to continue the relationship we are building. I believe they are truly dedicated to their cause and have helped myself and other teachers gain knowledge on how to reach and educate students on mental illness.

Sincerely,

**Julie Schick**