

## **Resolution Establishing Pemberton Township Schools as a Stigma-Free Zone For Mental Health Awareness**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of Pemberton Township Schools is committed to establishing the district as a Stigma-Free Zone supporting efforts for Mental Health Awareness; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Institute of Mental Health reports that nearly one in five or roughly 53 million Americans live with a mental illness, and 1 in 6 youth ages 6 - 17 experience a mental health disorder each year but only half receive treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, 36.7% of students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness; nearly 19% of high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among high school-aged youth ages 14-18; in 2018, a total of 48,344 persons of all ages died from suicide and where suicide was the 10th leading cause of death overall in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness is identified as the primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need to recover from disease; and

**WHEREAS**, when severe mental illness goes untreated or under-treated, it can lead to alcohol or substance abuse, dropping out of school, unemployment, homelessness, or suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, raising awareness of mental illness is an effective way to reduce the stigma associated with the disease and encourage those who are affected to seek services and support; and

**WHEREAS**, Pemberton Township Schools is committed to creating public interest and open dialogue about stigmas, raise awareness of the disease of mental illness, and create a culture wherein individuals who have the disease of mental illness feel supported by the community and feel free to seek treatment for the disease without fear of a stigma, so recovery can begin; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Pemberton Township School District in the County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, is hereby designated as a Stigma-Free Zone.

