

E. Youth Mental Health - Proposal for City and School District Partnerships with The Jed Foundation



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City Schools Liaison Committee Staff Report

From: Councilmember Stone and PAUSD Board President Segal

Report Type: Action

Meeting Date: April 1, 2025

Report #:2503-4401

TITLE

Youth Mental Health - Proposal for City and School District Partnerships with The Jed Foundation

DISCUSSION

Summary

To address the ongoing need for youth mental health support and suicide prevention in Palo Alto, we propose two separate but complementary initiatives in partnership with The Jed Foundation (JED). These initiatives will provide targeted support to the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), leveraging JED's expertise to improve mental health systems and community resilience.

1. **City of Palo Alto Proposal:** A one-year partnership (with the possibility of a phase 2 in a second year) with JED focusing on postvention support, youth engagement, and citywide mental health awareness.
2. **PAUSD Proposal:** A two-year collaboration through the JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative, providing a comprehensive districtwide assessment, strategic planning, and long-term sustainability for mental health improvements.

We request that the City-Schools Committee approve these proposals and refer them to the Palo Alto City Council and PAUSD Board of Education for final approval.

City of Palo Alto Partnership with JED (12 months)

Funded by the City, this initiative will provide immediate and strategic mental health support, including:

- **Postvention Support** – Assistance following mental health crises, including grief processing, lethal means safety education, and responsible public messaging.

- **Youth Engagement** – Collaborating with students, PAUSD, and community organizations to center youth voices in mental health initiatives.
- **Citywide Mental Health Campaign** – A research-based awareness campaign developed with JED’s guidance.
- **Training & Skill Building** – Workshops for educators, parents, and community members on youth mental health, suicide prevention, and inclusive community-building.

There is the potential for a phase two in this partnership if the city wishes to extend the relationship with JED. Phase two would include:

- **Youth Mental Health Summit** – Collaborate with all stakeholders on a citywide summit to showcase available mental health services in the city, school district, and county, to include workshops, panelists, presentations, and more.
- **Strengthen Suicide Prevention in Schools** – JED will work with PAUSD to develop and strengthen prevention measures across all schools. The city can work with JED to identify ways in which the City and PAUSD can better partner on these collaborations.
- **Build Capacity for Sustainable Engagement, Prevention, and Postvention** – JED will work with all stakeholders to ensure key components of this work will be sustainable and continued after the formal partnership concludes, including: mental health workshops and other trainings, recommendations for ongoing data collection and assessment, and facilitation on how to further enhance cross-sector collaboration between the City, PAUSD, community leaders, and nonprofits.

PAUSD Participation in the JED and AASA District Mental Health Initiative (24 months)

This initiative, developed by JED in partnership with AASA (The School Superintendents Association), is a transformative program tailored to assist district leaders in improving school mental health systems. PAUSD will benefit from the following:

Comprehensive Assessment

- District-wide surveys for staff, principals, and students (middle and high school levels).
- Formation of a steering committee focused on district-wide mental health improvements.
- Student focus groups to amplify youth perspectives.

Strategic Planning & Policy Review

- Evaluation of current programs and policies, with recommendations aligned with best practices.

- Development of a system resource map to visualize mental health services and improve resource allocation.
- Data-driven feedback to inform district leadership and enhance mental health initiatives.

Implementation & Ongoing Support

- Creation of a district-level Mental Health Strategic Plan for sustainable change.
- Expert consultation on suicide prevention, crisis response, and well-being initiatives.
- Staff training, technical assistance, and in-person site visits to support plan execution.

Long-Term Impact & Sustainability

- A second round of assessments to measure progress and provide post-program evaluation.
- Development of a sustainability plan to ensure lasting improvements.
- Participation in a national cohort of districts working on mental health improvements, gaining access to ongoing learning, resources, and professional development.

Next Steps

At the April 1 meeting, we will present both proposals along with a presentation from The Jed Foundation. We ask the committee to discuss and approve these proposals and refer them back to the City Council and School Board for final consideration.

We look forward to working together to ensure the well-being of Palo Alto's youth.

Councilmember Greer Stone
Board President Shana Segal

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

The attached Jed Foundation proposal (Attachment A) mentions a phase 1 cost of \$125,000 and an undefined cost for phase 2. The fiscal and resource impacts of this proposal for the City and School District would have to be assessed if there is interest in moving forward (including staffing resource impacts regarding managing the contract).

Procedurally, if there is interest in pursuing this partnership, the City Schools Liaison Committee would make recommendations to both the Palo Alto Unified School District School Board as well as the City of Palo Alto City Council for adoption.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: The Jed Foundation Proposal



The Jed Foundation



Proposal to the City of Palo Alto: Mental Health and Wellbeing Consultancy March 2025

About The Jed Foundation

The Jed Foundation (JED) was founded in 2000 by Donna and Phil Satow, who lost their youngest son, Jed, to suicide. JED is now the nation's leading nonprofit working to protect emotional health and prevent suicide for teens and young adults.

JED advances its mission by 1) partnering with school districts, high schools, colleges, universities, and community-based organizations to build and strengthen comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention programs and systems; 2) producing expert-informed campaigns and resources for young people, parents, and educators; 3) undertaking research projects to increase understanding of youth mental health issues and their impact on specific populations; and 4) advising youth-serving organizations, such as the NBA, the NCAA, Paramount Media Networks and Spotify, among others, on youth mental health matters.

JED's lead program, JED Campus, is now implemented at more than 500 colleges and universities collectively attended by over 5.5 million students, including at Northern Arizona University. [*A Decade of Improving College Mental Health Systems: JED Campus Impact Report*](#) analyzes a decade of data (2013 to 2023) from JED Campus schools and the [*Healthy Minds Network survey*](#). Among the findings, the report documents a significant decline in suicidal ideation, suicidal planning, and attempts among students attending colleges and universities who participated in the JED Campus program. Schools participating in and completing the JED Campus program made improvements and significant changes across all seven domains of JED's Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention.

Building on this success, our JED High School program was launched in 2021, and our newest program for School Districts was launched in 2023, reaching more than 600 schools nationwide across both programs and equipping them with expert support, evidence-based best practices, and data-driven guidance to protect student mental health and prevent suicide. JED partners with these high schools and districts to assess student needs, develop a customized strategic plan to build on existing strengths, and implement tools, strategies, and techniques that lead to measurable improvements in student mental health and a more connected community.



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JED also partners with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide data-driven strategic planning and technical assistance to protect youth mental health. JED's CBO capacity-building and strategic planning activities are complemented by educational programming that JED delivers to community groups to raise awareness, reduce shame and silence and normalize mental health, and increase help-seeking behaviors.

Finally, JED's postvention practice provides immediate and compassionate response, evidence- and research-based resources, consultation, and thoughtful engagement with school leadership and program staff members for high schools, colleges, and community organizations that experience a sudden and tragic loss of life.

JED has the requisite expertise to partner with municipalities to protect the mental health of youth and young adults in their communities. Together with local government officials, community providers, young people, educators, families, and others, we can create comprehensive upstream prevention measures that support individual and collective well-being. We can create communities full of human connection, where everyone gets the support they need in order to thrive.

Scope of Work with the City of Palo Alto

The Jed Foundation would be pleased to provide strategic planning, technical assistance (TA), and postvention consultation to the City of Palo Alto. Based on the introductory conversation with Councilperson Julie Lythcott-Haims and Mayor Greer Stone, JED is proposing two phases of engagement.

Phase One is a 12-month scope of work that will be funded by the City of Palo Alto. Phase Two encompasses 12-18 months of additional work following Phase One, and it is contingent upon JED and/or the City of Palo Alto raising the necessary funding.

Phase One

- 1. Provide Postvention Support:** The Jed Foundation's postvention practice provides research-based resources, best practice recommendations, published guidelines, technical assistance, and thoughtful engagements with communities that experience a sudden and tragic loss of life. We recommend the following for the City of Palo Alto:
 - JED will directly facilitate and coordinate among local providers opportunities for postvention grief processing and community healing in the wake of recent losses.



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- JED will provide customized, citywide lethal means safety education. Lethal means safety involves making it more difficult to access the method by which one might die by suicide (e.g., an unsecured firearm, unrestricted access to a rooftop of a tall building, or dangerous medications).
- JED will lead an environmental scan for lethal means safety with customized recommendations for improvement.
- JED will assist with community-wide safe messaging (including news shared in local newspapers and community groups and memorials in the community) to reduce the likelihood that other individuals will die by suicide following a loss.
- JED will provide a customized postvention guide to improve responses to loss by suicide (and other unexpected loss) and reduce the likelihood that other individuals will die by suicide following a loss.

2. **Facilitate Youth Engagement:** JED understands that voice, agency, and purpose are essential to healthy development and wellness. JED will work with youth leaders, community organizations, the Palo Alto Unified School District, and other stakeholders to ensure that Palo Alto's young people are central to this work.

We recommend that this include the following elements:

- JED will understand the needs of Palo Alto's young people through focus groups.
- Young people are meaningfully represented in a Task Force the City will create to work with JED on this project.
- JED will help to generate a roadmap of potential future activities and goals of the Task Force, as well as guidance on overall convening structure and the prioritization of initial Task Force activities and agendas.

3. **Advise on the City of Palo Alto's Citywide Campaign:** JED can provide up to 40 hours of expert guidance on campaign concepts and materials to help ensure their effectiveness and impact. We can review creative briefs, inform potential impact goals and measures, and share expert feedback on creative and materials.

We can also curate a set of existing, evidence-based resources tailored to the goals and objectives of the campaign for licensed use, e.g. on the citywide campaign landing page. These resources might include digital tools, storytelling content, or social-first assets designed to provide trustworthy information about mental health, including recognizing signs of distress; supporting open conversation, connection, and help-seeking behaviors; and offering specialized information for a wide range of feelings, situations, and identities. Examples include: [Mental Health Resource Center](#) content, videos featuring [expert advice](#) and [voices of lived experience](#) like [Caleb Williams](#), [research reports](#), and [social media assets](#).



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4. Build Knowledge and Skills: JED provides workshops, training, and presentations to community groups, schools and districts, and professional associations across the country. Our standard workshops and [trainings](#) can be tailored to address the needs of specific groups; based on what we've heard, we would recommend the following three trainings for the City of Palo Alto. JED will deliver each of these trainings once in person and once virtually, for a total of six sessions:

- JED's "You Can Help" training equips participants to understand youth mental health, recognize signs of distress, learn how to respond, and know when and how to connect young people to professional resources. JED has developed specialized versions of this training for youth, educator, and parent audiences.
- "Creating an Inclusive Community of Care" covers the connection between belonging and mental well-being, identifies the core elements of a culture of care, and offers proven strategies to combat stigma among historically marginalized groups. It's recommended for leaders and staff members of organizations that work with young people.
- "Facts About Suicide" is a training infused with research from JED's recent [Youth Suicide: Current Trends and the Path to Prevention](#) report. It explains what suicide is, who is at risk, and when and how it is most likely to occur. Participants also learn the use of appropriate vocabulary when discussing suicide-related topics.

Should we determine that other organizations assisting the community have already addressed these high impact needs, we will provide the City Council with a menu of options for workshops to meet the outstanding needs.

Phase Two

1. Co-create and Support a Youth Mental Health Summit: JED, City government staff, the Task Force, youth leaders, community-based organizations, and the Palo Alto Unified School District will collaborate to plan and sponsor an in-person youth mental health summit. JED's initial recommendations are for the summit to include:

- Multiple opportunities to center the voices and experiences of Palo Alto's young people in workshops, panels, presentations, and/or other facets of the event
- A showcase or exhibit hall featuring locally available mental health and wellness resources
- Mental health education including, but not limited to, training led by JED
- Actionable recommendations for changes that can be implemented, tracked, and improved over time.



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2. Strengthen Suicide Prevention in Schools: JED will work with the Palo Alto Unified School District to develop and/or strengthen unified upstream prevention measures across all its schools. The ideas, concerns, and perspectives of teen students will figure significantly in this work. Components of this work will include:

- Resource mapping to develop or update a system-wide inventory of internal and external mental health supports and resources available to students, staff, and families
- Review of the district’s existing policies related to school climate, student mental health and wellness, staff mental health and wellness, crisis response, and postvention
- Staff and student surveys conducted in the district’s middle and high schools
- A detailed report containing concrete, evidence-based recommendations for strengthening policies, processes, and programs
- Technical assistance to begin implementing the recommendations.

3. Build Capacity for Sustainable Engagement, Prevention, and Postvention: JED will work with government, school, and community leaders to ensure that appropriate components of this work can be continued after the City’s partnership with JED concludes. JED will provide:

- Train-the-trainer coaching and/or access to asynchronous online course versions of JED’s mental health education workshops and trainings, such as “Supporting Student Mental Health” or “Handle with C.A.R.E.”
- Recommendations for ongoing data collection, assessment, and evaluation activities the City should consider adopting
- Facilitation among the City, Task Force, school district, and community groups about how to continue and improve upon cross-sector collaboration.

JED Key Personnel

Project Lead: Erlinda Delacruz, Director of Community-Based Programs

Erlinda Delacruz joined The Jed Foundation as a Campus Advisor working with colleges and universities to implement policies and programs that address the needs of young adults. She is a dedicated advocate for mental health equity, particularly for marginalized and underserved student populations. With a background in higher education and a focus on equity and well-being, Erlinda brings a wealth of expertise to her role. Her diverse upbringing in Chicago, Houston, and Phoenix, combined with her educational journey in Boston, gives her a deep appreciation for different communities and experiences. Erlinda holds a Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling and is currently pursuing a PhD in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Her work is driven by a commitment to equitable access to treatment, destigmatization of mental health and substance use concerns, and cultural competency.



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Mental Health Expert Lead: Dr. Katie Hurley, DSW, LCSW, Senior Director of Knowledge and Advising and Community Programs

Katie Hurley provides sound clinical assessment for a variety of projects at JED, including its work with schools and community-based organizations. A practicing child, adolescent, and young adult clinician for over 25 years, Katie previously served as a Clinical Director for The HELP Group, the largest family-based nonprofit in Los Angeles. She managed a team of eight clinicians and developed a bullying prevention program during her tenure there. Katie has deep expertise in adolescent and young adult anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions. She is an adjunct professor of neurobiology in social work practice and advanced social work practice at the School of Social Work at Simmons University. She is the author of six books at the intersection of family life and mental health, including the award-winning *No More Mean Girls*.

Dr. Kurt Michael, Senior Clinical Director

Kurt Michael leads the postvention consulting practice at JED. Kurt brings expertise in adolescent suicidology, school mental health, psychotherapy outcomes, and clinical practice. He works with universities and K-12 schools and districts to evaluate their suicide prevention systems and adopt flexible and effective postvention policies and procedures. Before joining The Jed Foundation, Kurt was the Stanley R. Aeschleman Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Assistant Departmental Chairperson at Appalachian State University (now Emeritus), where he established a nationally recognized program in school mental health, including the assessment and treatment of suicidality, postvention, lethal means safety protocols and rural healthcare. He has published over 70 peer-reviewed scientific articles and book chapters on the assessment and treatment of anxiety, depression, and suicidality, especially in the context of schools.

Dr. Tony Walker, Senior Vice President of Academic Programs

Tony Walker structures, expands, and leads JED's high school and higher education programs to meet the organization's strategic plan objectives.. Prior to joining JED, Tony served as Vice President of Education Strategy and Innovation at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, where he led a team of school mental health consultants and contributed to the public policy discussion around school-linked mental health in Texas and beyond. He previously worked in multiple roles in public education, including as a teacher, school counselor, and most recently as an executive district leader over Student Support Services at Uplift Education, a high performing network of schools serving more than 23,000 students in North Texas. Under his decade of leadership, Uplift developed and implemented one of the largest school-based mental health systems in Texas. Tony is also a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified School Counselor.

Dr. Michelle Mullen, Chief Design and Impact Officer



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Michelle Mullen pairs her formal training in implementation science and commitment to equity through participatory action/stakeholder engagement to inform all aspects of her work from designing interventions/programs to evaluating impact. Her areas of expertise are mental health, young adult services, young adult career development, and enhancing academic persistence of college students. At JED, Michelle leads a multidisciplinary team to implement and evaluate programming focused on improving help seeking, help giving, enhancing mental health, and preventing suicide with teens and young adults in schools or other key settings. Michelle is also a researcher in the Department of Psychiatry at UMass Chan Medical School and previously at Rutgers University. Michelle's research focuses on career development of young adults; standardizing complex interventions to better support college students with mental health conditions; and evaluating the effectiveness of various educational supports to enhance persistence of college and high school students.

Dr. Kristen Clark, Senior Evaluation Analyst

Kristen Clark is a social entrepreneur whose motivation to leave behind a legacy of justice comes from a quote she holds close to her by Audre Lorde, "When I dare to be powerful — to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." Through her professional and philanthropic work, she has dedicated her time to ensuring that barriers to access and opportunities don't inhibit opportunities for marginalized communities. A graduate of Rowan University, Dr. Clark has been an educational professional and researcher for over 15 years primarily focusing on the social inequities that impact meaningful engagement experiences as well as Social-Emotional Learning. Clark also teaches courses entitled "Rebel Girls: How Girls Do Activism" and "Social Problems in Education" at the higher education level.

Shani Drake Duncan, Senior Director, Marketing and Campaigns

Shani brings over 15 years of experience in the Marketing & Communications field after having worked in the music, telecom, and nonprofit industries, as well as the public sector. Shani's passion is to elevate and amplify the voices of marginalized communities and uplift the work of those pushing towards true social change. She is deeply and personally connected to ensuring the mental health and wellness of these communities, as they strive towards equity and justice. As Senior Director of Marketing & Campaigns, she develops and implements marketing strategies, campaigns, and initiatives to increase awareness of JED, drive programmatic growth, help to meet impact goals, and support overall revenue growth.

Renia McCauley, Director, Learning and Development

Renia is a hands-on, energetic learning and development leader specializing in program design, improving DEIB practices, and evaluating and driving impact. With a passion for learning as a lifelong learner herself, spotlighting marginalized groups, and curating meaningful training experiences, Renia has been at the helm of collaborating cross-departmentally, transforming organizations and



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individuals, and building future-oriented teams. Previously, Renia was the Director of Learning & Development at Teach for America NC and has served as an Instructional Coach, Program Manager, and COO to various organizations.

Kiana Davis, Senior Manager, Educational Programming

Kiana Davis joined The Jed Foundation with a background in program management, health education, and public mental health. Kiana works to ensure that JED continually offers high-quality workshops, training, and other education programming to communities looking to learn more about teen and young adult mental health and suicide prevention. Most recently, Kiana served as the Team Lead for HomeLink, a program at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill that connects precariously-housed people living with mental health conditions to support and resources.

Proposed Fees

Phase One: \$125,000

Phase Two: Scope, costs, and fundraising to be determined for phase two.

This does not include costs for JED travel, and the estimated cost may change as we further define the activities.