Dear Parent and Guardian

The teen years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions—difficult for teens, parents, and educators. It’s easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a match earlier age, and the past decade has seen teen suicide rates double.

To proactively address this issue, WHS is offering depression screening and suicide prevention training as part of the SOS Suicide Prevention Program. This program has been used by thousands of schools over the past ten years. It has proven successful at increasing awareness and helping students concerned about themselves or a friend. It is the only school-based suicide prevention program to show a reduction in suicide attempts in a randomized, controlled study (American journal of public health, March 2004).

Our goals for participating in this program are straightforward:

● To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness, and help them assess whether or not they may have symptoms consistent with depression
● To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
● To provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicide in a friend
● To impress upon teens that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns.

If you do NOT wish your child to take a written screening test for depression and participate in SOS: Signs of Suicide intervention training in school, please call your student’s grade level secretary. The presentation will commence in the month of November.

Ms. Ludowise for 9th-grade students (224) 303-2911
Ms. Davail for 10th-grade students (224) 303-2921
Ms. Minnoch for 11th-grade students (224)303-3303
Ms. Bautista for 12th-grade students (224)303-3302

Sincerely,

Timothy S. Bryner
Lead Co-Principal

Dr. Terry Ehiorobo
Co-Principal