

September 14, 2026

Dear Parents and Guardians,

You may be aware that September is Suicide Prevention Month. During this time, we often do activities at school to help bring awareness to the suicide epidemic currently facing our nation. **On Tuesday, September 22nd, we will be partnering with SEM Public Schools and several other local organizations to bring a screening of the documentary *My Ascension* to our students.** This is a powerful film which focuses on mental health, suicide prevention, hope, resilience, and the importance of reaching out for help. The film has been shown on PBS and used by other school districts in Nebraska.

We recognize that conversations about mental health and suicide can feel difficult. However, we also believe that avoiding these conversations does not make these issues go away. Our students are growing up in a world where mental health challenges are increasingly common, and they deserve adults who are willing to talk openly, compassionately, and honestly about what they may be experiencing. We are taking the opportunity to provide a space during schooltime to support students in best ways to respond and process this information.

We understand that students may respond differently to this material. Some may find the film encouraging and hopeful, while others may have personal experiences that make the topic feel more emotional or difficult. For that reason, **students will have access to mental health professionals and trusted school staff throughout this experience.** We will also provide time following the documentary for students to process what they watched, ask questions, participate in guided discussion, and connect privately with an adult if they need additional support.

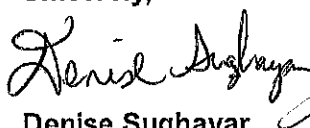
We will approach the conversation in an age-appropriate, thoughtful, and supportive manner. Students will not be expected to share personal experiences publicly, however we hope this creates opportunities for continued conversations at home.

If you have questions or concerns about the screening or would like to discuss how we will be supporting students, please feel free to contact the school.

If you would like to opt your student (s) out of the film viewing, they will be placed in another room with adult supervision for alternative work time the morning of September 22. Please return the below slip with your signature, NO LATER than Monday, September 21, 2026 if you do NOT want your student (s) to view *My Ascension* or be a part of the activities following. If you give consent for your student to participate, no parent action is required.

If your child is experiencing an immediate mental health crisis or you are concerned about their safety, please seek immediate support. Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7.

Sincerely,

Denise Sughayar

JD Furrow

Heath Birkel

Callaway Public Schools Counseling and Administration

Opt-Out Parent permission slip:

I, parent/guardian of _____, do NOT want my student(s) to view *My Ascension* or be a part of the activities following. I consent for my student to remain in a supervised room to work on homework during the movie and follow up activities.

(Parent Printed Name)

(Parent Signature)

Date