Directing Change
Student Participant and School Advisor Impact and Feedback Survey Results
June 2014
Introduction
This report provides survey findings and outcomes from the 2013-14 Directing Change student video contest. As part of the program, high school and UC students throughout California were invited to Direct Change by submitting 60-second videos in two categories: suicide prevention and ending the silence of mental illness. A total of 432 submissions were received, representing 996 students and 112 schools, 9 UC campus locations and 32 counties. Regional high school winners were selected to move onto a second, statewide round of judging and narrowed down to the top three entries in each category. Entries were judged by volunteer experts in mental health and suicide prevention, members of the media and professionals in filmmaking and video production. The purpose of the program is to educate and engage students through the film making process resulting in positive behavior change towards peers and in creating long term leaders, advocates and compassionate community members; to promote school-based prevention programs; to support education and advocacy efforts through showing of films; and to expose reporters and community members to safe messaging guidelines. In partnership with the California Department of Education, information packages were sent to approximately 4,500 schools, districts and county offices of education throughout California. Students were engaged through social media, direct outreach and partnerships with more than 200 organizations.

Directing Change is part of statewide efforts to prevent suicide, reduce stigma and discrimination related to mental illness, and to promote the mental health and wellness of students. These initiatives are funded by the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) and administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Methodology
All students (996) that provided a valid email address were emailed a student feedback survey consisting of 13 questions. All school advisors (112) that were listed as the primary contact for each submitting student team were also emailed a school feedback survey consisting of 17 questions. A total of 161 students and 51 faculty provided responses to the online questionnaire. The survey was designed to evaluate the overall experience of the contest and obtain suggestions for improvement. In addition, the survey assessed the impact the contest had on the ways students think about suicide prevention and eliminating the stigmas of mental illness.

Of the students who responded to the survey, 76.40% (123) of the student teams submitted videos in the suicide prevention category, 22.36% (36) submitted videos in the ending the silence of mental illness category and 1.24% (2) submitted in both. Most of the students, 91.82% (146), were new to the contest and did not participate last year. The majority of students were high school upper classman, either juniors or seniors.

Figure 1: Student Grade

- Freshman, 6.92%
- Sophomore, 11.95%
- Junior, 34.59%
- Senior, 45.91%
- UC Student, 0.63%
Findings
Part I: Outcomes

Students
All student participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding what the contest inspired them to do. Overall, 91.67% (143) of the students agreed that the contest inspired them to change the way they think about mental health and suicide prevention; and 89.17% (140) agreed that it inspired them to get involved in suicide prevention, mental health or stigma busting activities. Students were also asked to indicate which pledging statements applied to them. (n= 160)

Figure 2: Student Impact

The contest inspired me to...

- Get involved in suicide prevention, mental health, or stigma busting activities  | 89.2%
- Change the way I think about mental health and suicide prevention | 91.7%

I pledge to...

- Reach out to others who are experiencing tough times  | 90.6%
- Stand up for youth who are different and picked on as a result | 86.9%
- Not keep it a secret if a friend tells me he or she is thinking about suicide | 81.3%
- Be a leader for suicide prevention and mental health programs at my school | 44.4%
“The contest inspired me to change the way I think about mental health and suicide prevention.” (n= 156)

- Strongly Agree: 63.46% (99)
- Somewhat Agree: 28.21% (44)
- Disagree: 1.28% (2)
- Strongly Disagree: 5.13% (8)
- Not Sure: 1.92% (3)

“The contest inspired me to get involved in suicide prevention, mental health or stigma busting activities.” (n= 157)

- Strongly Agree: 50.32% (79)
- Somewhat Agree: 38.85% (61)
- Disagree: 1.27% (2)
- Strongly Disagree: 5.10% (8)
- Not Sure: 4.46% (7)

Refer to Appendix A for a complete list of student comments regarding why they participated in the contest.

“I participated in the competition as an assignment for my psychology class. We studied the impact of the stigma that exists around mental illness, how it limits help available to people suffering from mental illness, and prevents them from finding and participating in successful treatment.” Student Participant

“I participated in this contest because the subject of the contest has personally affected me and some of those around me. I felt compelled to make videos to further show my support for those who are struggling, and to help those close to me know that they are not alone.” Student Participant

“My group and I decided to participate in this contest because we all felt strongly about preventing suicide. I know that with my personal experience with my friends and myself, that having someone stop and talk to you really does make a difference.” Student Participant
Advisors
Faculty advisors were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding the contest’s impact on students and school administration. Overall, 100% (51) of advisor participants indicated that the contest stimulated discussion among students about mental health, stigma and suicide prevention; and 100% (51) indicated the contest increased students’ understanding towards those who are experiencing tough times.

Figure 3: Advisor Impact

| The contest stimulated discussion among students about mental health, stigma and suicide prevention | 100.0% |
| The contest increased students’ understanding towards those who are experiencing tough times | 100.0% |
| The contest encouraged our school administration to discuss implementing or increasing suicide prevention and mental health programs on campus | 68.6% |

Based on 51 school advisor responses to a post-contest self-administered questionnaire

“The contest encouraged our school administration to discuss implementing or increasing suicide prevention and mental health programs on campus.” (n= 51)

- Strongly Agree: 27.45% (14)
- Somewhat Agree: 41.18% (21)
- Disagree: 17.65% (9)
- Strongly Disagree: 3.92% (2)
- Not applicable: 9.80% (5)

Refer to Appendix B for advisor comments about the contest experience for their students.

“It’s always good to open the doors of discussion regarding teen suicide but the most powerful message received by the students is that they can make a difference in preventing it. I really think this raised their awareness of the signs of suicide, but also what they can do to address it. I also noticed a strong curiosity in my students when we discussed the stigmas related to mental illness. I had three students speak to me privately about their mental illnesses and I was pleased with the level of comfort in our conversations.” School Advisor

“This is the second year for TPHS doing this contest and I love everything about it. We had 15 teams of three students generate some amazing videos. We show the videos in between our Yellow Ribbon Week Assemblies as students come into the gym and wait for speakers to start. As a result, between 1,000 and 2,000 students each period view these videos and their messages six times over two days. These videos are also posted on YouTube and were watched by members of our recent WASC visit.” School Advisor
Part II: Contest Feedback

Students

The majority of students, 84.18% (133), participated in the contest as part of a school project. When asked how the students learned about the contest, 89.94% (143) indicated they learned about the contest through a teacher or other adult at their school. (n=159) Students were asked to mark all that apply.

![Figure 4: How did you learn about the contest?](image)

The following comments were provided:

- “School-wide email message (Happenings@ucmerced.edu).”
- “Participated last year.”
- “Club supervisor.”
- “A judge that judges the videos. We met in a meeting about mental illnesses.”
- “Previous contestant.”

Students were then asked to indicate if the contest rules and submission guidelines were clear and 97.47% (154) indicated that they were. (For comments, refer to Appendix C.) Slightly more than half of the student participants, 57.50% (92), indicated that they would participate in the contest again.

“Would you participate in the contest again?” (n=160)

- Yes: 57.50% (92)
- No: 0.63% (1)
- Not sure: 7.50% (12)
- I am a senior and won’t be in high school next year 34.38% (55)
Lastly, students were asked to identify what types of prizes have the most value to them. *(For comments, refer to Appendix D.)* The majority of students, 83.77% (129) indicated they would participate in the contest even if there was no cash prize, only trophies and plaques. *(n= 154)*

The majority of students, 78.07% (121), also indicated that the cash match to their school or video program is important. “The cash match to my school or video program is important.” *(n= 155)*

- Strongly Agree: 44.52% (69)
- Somewhat Agree: 33.55% (52)
- Disagree: 4.52% (7)
- Strongly Disagree: 4.52% (7)
- Not Sure: 12.90% (20)

Students were then asked to identify how they felt the cash prize should be allocated to first, second and third place teams. “The current cash prize structure works best ($500 first place, $250 second and third place, with a match to my school).” *(n= 159)*

- Strongly Agree: 54.72% (87)
- Somewhat Agree: 35.22% (56)
- Disagree: 0.63% (1)
- Strongly Disagree: 3.77% (6)
- Not Sure: 5.66% (9)

“The winning team should receive a $1000, and the second and third prize should only receive plaques or trophies.” *(n= 156)*

- Strongly Agree: 14.10% (22)
- Somewhat Agree: 25.00% (39)
- Disagree: 37.82% (59)
- Strongly Disagree: 14.74% (23)
- Not Sure: 8.33% (13)

For student comments and contest suggestions refer to appendix E.
Advisors
The majority of the advisors surveyed, 74.51% (38), indicated he or she would participate in the contest again. The amount of student teams that advisors worked with varied across the board. (n= 51)

Advisors were asked to indicate in what capacity he or she assisted students with the project. (n= 51) (Advisors were asked to mark all that apply.)

- Individual students who were interested in the contest: 45.10% (23)
- As part of a class project (required for students): 33.33% (17)
- As part of a class project (voluntary for students): 33.33% (17)
- As part of an after-school project: 23.53% (12)
- Other: 11.76% (6)

The following comments were provided:
- “We did it as part of our club activity.”
- “She is a participant in an after school club named the Patterson Youth Action Commission (YAC).”
- “Helping the student gather students in between class time to video tape them.”
- “As part of a school club (nonacademic).”
- “I gave input in the story and I had very little input in the production and in the editing.”
- “Campus club.”
- “The project was required as a class project, but the students then volunteered to submit to the competition. Not all teams chose to submit.”

Advisors were then asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements regarding contest rules. Overall, 94.00% (47) of advisors agreed that the contest rules and submission process were clear (n= 50); and 92.15% (47) agreed that it was easy to find the information on the website. (n= 51)
Due to the nature of the topics addressed by the contest, advisors were asked if they thought there was value in offering a webinar that reviews the contest rules, submission guidelines for each topic and resources available to them and their students. Overall, slightly more than half of advisors, 56.86% (29), indicated that this was a good idea for both teachers/advisors and students. (n= 51)

- Yes, this is a good idea for both teachers/advisors and students: 56.86% (29)
- Yes, this is a good idea for teachers and advisors: 11.76% (6)
- Not sure: 23.53% (12)
- No: 7.84% (4)

Advisors were then asked to indicate when these webinars should be offered. (Advisors were asked to mark all that apply.) (n= 45)

- Between 8am and 3pm: 42.22% (19)
- Between 3pm and 5pm: 35.56% (16)
- In the evenings: 24.44% (11)
- First week of August: 2.22% (1)
- Second week of August: 2.22% (1)
- Third week of August: 11.11% (5)
- Anytime in August: 13.33% (6)
- Other: 15.56% (7)

The following comments were provided:

- “September or November - some schools start later.”
- “Please archive the webinar so we can view later.”
- “I think the 7/24 nature of the website worked fine.”
- “I don’t know; frankly, I wouldn’t refer to them, as my priority is my English classes; and I doubt that my theater students would view the lesson on-line on their own.”
- “I would offer a video explaining the guidelines, but then open up a webinar for question and answer time after the student has verified that he has watched the video instructions.”
- “It is great to offer in Sept and Oct when school is session; even if we don’t participate could always post complete ones on the website.”
- “In September after we have started classes.”
- “Last week in August.”
- “Save the webinar so we can access it later.”
- “A month before the submission deadline.”
- “As a recorded session as well for those who can’t attend live, or to share with interested students.”
The majority of advisors received information about the contest through email, 64.71% (33), and a mailed information package, 60.78% (31). (n= 51) Advisors were also asked to indicate how they learned about the contest: (n= 49) (Advisors were asked to mark all that apply.)

The following comments were provided:

- “Email.” (x8)
- “County Office of Education.”
- “We have a Video Instructor list serve that I would be happy to share it on.”
- “Letting administrators know; mailings to film and theater teachers.”
- “Email and Mailers.”
- “Through school districts.”
- “By reaching out to Recreation Departments, maybe contact California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS).”
- “Email and mailing flyers.”
- “Emails and Mailings.”
- “Internet.”
- “Email teachers and counselors.”
- “School Mail.”
- “Posters and information kit.”
- “Email blasts.”
Advisors were also asked which materials he or she used. (n= 50) Advisors were asked to mark all that apply.

**Figure 8: Which of these materials did you use?**

- **Press release for student paper**: 14.0%
- **PowerPoint with information about the contest, suicide…**: 20.0%
- **Suicide Prevention: A Toolkit for Schools**: 28.0%
- **Mental Health Fact Sheet**: 48.0%
- **Judging forms for each category**: 50.0%
- **Getting Started- Submission Tip Sheet**: 50.0%
- **Suicide Prevention Fact Sheet**: 58.0%
- **Contest posters**: 62.0%
- **Films from previous year (on website)**: 70.0%
- **Website (www.directingchange.org)**: 94.0%

The majority of advisors, 84.32% (43), indicated that their school would participate in the contest even if there was no cash prize to the school, and 78.43% (40) agreed their students would participate in the contest with no cash prize. *(For comments, refer to Appendix F.)*

“My students would participate in the contest even if there were no cash prizes, just trophies.” (n= 51)

- Strongly Agree: 29.41% (15)
- Somewhat Agree: 49.02% (25)
- Disagree: 11.76% (6)
- Strongly Disagree: 5.88% (3)
- Not Sure: 3.92% (2)

“My school would participate in the contest even if there was no cash prize to the school, just a trophy.” (n= 51)

- Strongly Agree: 41.18% (21)
- Somewhat Agree: 43.14% (22)
- Disagree: 7.84% (4)
- Strongly Disagree: 1.96% (1)
- Not Sure: 5.88% (3)
Advisors were also asked if they would be able to raise funds to attend the award ceremony in Sacramento if no travel stipends were provided. (n=51)

The following comments were provided:

- “We would like to attend if we place in the contest and are hoping to find funding if that occurs.”
- “Much harder to raise funds for this experience. We would have to know much in advance.”
- “This is another aspect that I talk up with the students and it is part of what motivates them to put in that extra effort.”
- “Due to the time period of award announcements our school and district budgets are already spend due to time restraints.”
- “I am not a full time teacher at this site.”
- “We’re a Title 1 school; most of our students come from low-income households. The theater class is a small part of the Magnet program, and the school has numerous programs and activities it is always raising funds for that take priority, such as AcaDeca, Senior sashes for graduation, Teen Court, etc.”
- “Probably not.”
- “Depends on District priorities.”
- “I hope so.”
- “It is tough to do with my class restraints, for I teach three different courses at LHS.”
- “I don’t see our club winning any time soon.”
- “It would probably be a sponsored method.”
- “Maybe they can use money that they win to help with the trip.”
- “We are a title one school.”
- “Those funds could be found, but then would be taken away from other projects we are working on.”

Figure 9: Would your school be able to raise funds to attend the award ceremony if no travel stipends were provided?
Lastly, advisors were asked to indicate which programs or activities their school utilized in the past year (July 2013-June 2014). (n= 37) Advisors were asked to mark all that apply.

The following comments were provided:

- “Youth Mental Health First Aid.”
- “We do a week long Yellow Ribbon Week that includes lunch activities, 6 assemblies and a host of other awareness-building events.”
- “Circle of Friends.”
- “15 minutes.”
- “Over the past year I am not aware of the school utilizing any of these programs. I would like more information on these programs for the upcoming year.”
- “Let’s Get Real anti bullying curriculum.”
- “We went to the ceremony in Sacramento.”
- “None that I am aware of.”
- “Our club represents and promotes a drug free lifestyle in order for youth to have a healthy lifestyle.”
- “Diversity Week, Every 15 minutes.”
- “We put on various stigma reduction and teen mental health awareness programs that are not attached to any national group or organization.”

For additional advisor comments and suggestions refer to appendix G.
Appendix A:

Student comments- “Why did you participate in the contest?”
Related to Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Advocacy/ Stigma Reduction

- “I wanted people to be enlightened and open their eyes on the touchy subject of mental illness.”
- “I thought it would be a nice chance to learn more about suicide prevention and to make a video on how I feel personally about suicide.”
- “At first, I participated in this contest to help raise money for my video club here. Then it turned into wanting to spread the awareness on the commonality of various mental illnesses. My close church friend casually mentioned she was going to counseling for a mental illness, and I saw at that moment those statistics from all these video entries came to life.”
- “I participated in the contest because as a high school student I know there are a lot of people struggling to deal with problems that can lead them to accepting suicide as an option. I want to help make sure people know that suicide is not the only option and help them deal with their problems.”
- “So I can actually make a difference in lives.”
- “My group and I decided to participate in this contest because we all felt strongly about preventing suicide. I know that with my personal experience with my friends and myself, that having someone stop and talk to you really does make a difference. My group and I all have a passion for creating films with a deeper meaning and a good, creative storyline. We also wanted to show a scenario of what could possibly happen if you were to stop and talk to someone who showed signs of suicide, and how reaching out can make a difference.”
- “Our leadership class really promotes a bully free zone at our school. In result we all participated in the contest by making videos to warn students about how much bullying affects kids.”
- “I was a victim of suicidal tendencies.”
- “I want to save people’s life by changing the way they think about suicide.”
- “We entered the contest to help our school, and to help others who might be experiencing problems of this nature.”
- “For me, personal opinion, I had a suicide moment of my life. It was during my middle school year. I was suffering from depression, isolations, and lack of interest. I would think about hurting myself. Or just running away and disappear forever from family and friends. It was to the point, I had a knife in my hand right next to my arm, just waiting to hurt myself. Until I realized this is not how I want to die and not living my own life to the fullest. So I put the knife down, and start talking to my friends about my suicide and why I’m depressed. Soon later on, I felt better and started to get better myself. As of right now, I am going to graduate this year and planning to move in San Francisco. I want to help people to understand that there is always a friend, or maybe even a stranger to help you. No one is alone when they need someone to be there. Anyone could help someone. Family members, friends, or even someone you just met hours ago. This is why I participated in this contest.”
- “Directing Change is such an amazing program for many different reasons. The first and most important reason is that it brings up truly important issues that are often overlooked and need to be looked at more closely. The second part that this contest is so great is because amateur filmmakers can get an opportunity to create something truly powerful and put their creativity into a very emotionally strong piece. Whenever a person can get the opportunity to do something they love and make something
towards a good cause, it is a win-win situation.”

- “To let young kids know that there’s always help. You’re never alone and there is people willing to help you out.
- “Because I don’t want to see anyone’s life being worth nothing.”
- “I decided to participate in the contest because I have a friend who was contemplating on committing suicide. She felt that no one was there for her. I want to let her know that even when she feels that no one cares, people do care. Suicide won’t just affect the person committing it, but the people around them as well. This experience made me want to help others who face the same thing she struggles with.”
- “I felt that as a student, fellow teenager, and human being of society, I had a duty and obligation to give back to my community by helping to improve and cultivate it. I understand the pain and fear of mental instability and insecurity, and I wanted to reach out to the teenagers that needed help but were afraid to ask for it or didn't know how. I feel proud knowing that everyone who participated, including me, might just save a life.”
- “I participated in this contest to express to others that suicide can be prevented if all of us as individuals make the effort to not hesitate when we notice signs of something being wrong with someone. I also wanted to express that it is very hard to tell who is suicidal and who is not and that when you speak out when you notice someone is crying out to you, you are helping them in a way. I also wanted to express that whether a person is suicidal or not, the fact you’re speaking out could still make a difference for the person going through the troubles in life. I feel that we can all make a difference in the world, but first we need to learn to speak out and help others. I want my video to at least be seen by a lot of people so that maybe it could at least help one person. My group and I feel the same way about speaking out when you see someone down and that by waiting until later could be too late.”
- “This is a topic I care about and it gave me an opportunity to enhance my skills in video and possibly help someone with them.”
- “I participate on the behalf of my past. I’ve been going through some rough times. I just wanted to express myself and to spread awareness.”
- “The reason I participated in the contest is because I wanted to stop suicide. Millions of people were dying. I am hoping that my video will show the world that there is hope. I also wanted show people they are not alone. And I wanted to tell people that they can struggle out of the tangled branches and fly free, they can reach that light and goal, towards the end; and live in a happy and in a safe environment. If they need help they will find a helping hand; and recover their broken wings. Because they will find hope. That is the reason I participated in the contest.”
- “I think it’s important that students are made aware of subjects such as suicide prevention. I think hearing it from other students, rather than teachers or speakers, causes an especially great impact because they realize that it is not an issue that is so far removed. The videos are a great way to get the point across without giving a depressing, scary presentation stating facts and statistics, and it allowed us to get creative.”
- “To make a change.”
- “I entered the contest because there are so many students out there who are not being heard. Anyone can have thoughts of suicide. It can be the cool kids or the quiet ones. These students may be smiling but
inside they are hurting. They may not speak but they want to be heard through their actions and behaviors.”

- “To better help teens know they are not alone. And also to show how it looks to people to have depression.”

- “I participated in this contest, because I was bullied before, and I had thoughts of suicide. From the help with friends and family, I had hope. I want others to think that they are not alone. There will always be someone there for them.”

- “For a couple different reasons: 1. This was the project assigned in school for our Technology and Digital Arts Academy 2. I have felt the effects of suicide, from friends and other close people 3. Making a difference to one person, is making all the difference.”

- “I originally entered the contest because I wanted to help encourage people to seek help, then my teacher Mr. Graham made it a mandatory project for canyon film education students.”

- “I participated in this contest because the subject of the contest has been a personally affected me and some of those around me. I felt compelled to make video to further show my support for those who are struggling, and to help those close to me know that they are not alone.”

- “I participated in this contest because suicide is such a big problem in the US. No one deserves to be mistreated or torn down to pieces. Standing alone is hard, so we need to stand up with people are having these issues. I wanted to take the first step toward change.”

- “Because I wanted to help the cause.”

- “I participated because I have a friend who once wanted to and I wanted to not only encourage her not to, but others as well.”

- “Spread awareness and help as much people as possible.”

- “I know people that suffer from a mental illness, rather, how one might say, closely. I’ve known this person since this person’s birth and have been a friend since then (I was young then). But as time went on I noticed certain pains this person seemed to carry, something I believed was simple awkwardness. It wasn’t and this person nearly faded away permanently. Chance kept this person opaque and now this person does well. I can only watch on this person and I have no problem standing up for others feeling the same way.”

- “I felt that it was a great opportunity to contribute in something that is very serious. I have dealt with the loss of loved ones, both inside and outside of school due to suicides. Also, being a part of the video made me understand more on the concept of being someone who can help prevent it.”

- “Suicide is an unfortunate epidemic in this country that needs to be prevented. Just as heart disease and cancer occur at no fault of the patient, depression is something that people are born with. A person with malfunctioning brain chemistry will not simply get better through the powers of positive thinking, however if society recognizes that there is a way to provide support and steer someone away from attempting suicide that does not include ‘putting negative thoughts in those afflicted persons’ head’, we may have a chance to improve the lives of many who are suffering.”

- “This is a great opportunity to reach out to those who are in need, those who are currently struggling with issues far beyond their control. To let them know they are not alone and hope is just a phone call
“I believe that this is an important topic. Suicide is a serious problem that isn’t hard to prevent. When I heard about the contest I was determined to make a video because it was for a good cause. I knew that I could use my video skills to potentially save a life.”

“I thought it would be a good chance to be able to change the way students view mental health and suicide.”

“In Cinema class me as a 3-4 student, my teacher puts up video contests print outs with information on the contest every 2 months. Its random contests where people in class don’t bother checking out because they have video project homework in class to do for a grade. I look at it while time passes and i got my on this inspirational and memorable video project idea when I saw this paper in particular. I don’t usually do extra work outside of class but this really struck it home for me. This was not going to be a grade at all, just a way to open up the world. I know people with this kinds of problems and got a couple of people from class to do this video with me and see where we can lead as a team. After more research about the topic, I actually learned a lot about this and was more inspired. That was when I had 2 days left to finish recording and submitting the project. Who has time to finish this in 2 days? Encouraged and inspired people, that’s who. I hope what we did can at least help one sole in the future. After this I considered joining my school KATS club. Kids Against Tobacco and Health. This is one step close to learning about all the different kinds of health issues many have.”

“I felt it was a very worthwhile cause and hoped to use my creative abilities to help someone who might be struggling. Being someone who has suffered with depression and has had thoughts of suicide, it was a topic I could relate to and wanted to possible help others.”

“I heard about it and was immediately interested. I loved the idea and wanted to help speak out about ending the silence. I loved the catch phrase and knew I had to make at least something. Another reason is because I want to get into the movie business, whether as a cinematographer or an editor. This was a great way to start practicing and I might as well use my talents for good.”

“I felt that I could make a change by making a video that appeals to the social network.”

“To help people to see that suicide is not the way to go that there is help out there and no matter who brings you down you always have someone who cares about you even when you think you don’t have anybody there because god has a plan for everybody and he will show himself thru people you may ever talk to or associate with but he is there all the time like they say in my bible class god may not come when you want him but he is always on time.”

“My friend and I entered this contest to spread awareness, and also to actually go out and try to make something, instead of sitting around all day, plus if we make something that is impactful, it might just change someone else’s life.”

“It would be a great opportunity for our high school club, LETS (Lets Erase The Stigma) to spread the word and learn more about the illnesses.”

“I participate in this contest because I felt that we have a lot of suicides going on around the world and have to put a stop to it.”

“To raise awareness toward the blatantly obvious issue of depression that plagues the well-being of young adults around the world.”

“I participated in the contest to help create awareness about teen suicide and suicide in general. I think it’s important to not ignore suicide and to help as much as possible as we can for those who really do consider it.”

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[Logos and websites]
• “I felt like this is a huge problem in my area and being someone who a lot of people know, felt like this was my way of helping others be more aware about this ongoing problem.”
• “I entered this contest because I believe both issues are important for society to be knowledgeable on and I thought it was a great opportunity to get the word out about suicide and use my broadcast skills.”
• “I felt like this is a huge problem in my area and being someone who a lot of people know, felt like this was my way of helping others be more aware about this ongoing problem.”
• “I like to create videos and I saw that this was a great opportunity to bring awareness to this issue.”
• “I wanted to create a film that would be inspirational and instill hope in those who watched it. The Directing Change contest provided me with an opportunity to be creative and make something that had a purpose, rather than something that was solely for the sake of just art.”
• “After a drama presentation where a friend of mine shared her struggle against suicide I decide to participate in something that would give hope and awareness to any person with the same problems, that’s when I saw in the wall of my drama teacher the poster of the direct change contest and I got excited with the opportunity of participating.”
• “To get the chance to show a meaningful video that I created to a large audience, as well as deliver a strong message about suicide prevention.”
• “I wanted to contribute something from my community for the cause.”
• “I participated in this contest because I have a passion for filming. When I heard about the topic of the contest, I knew I could use my filming/editing skills to create a video to create awareness of the topic of mental illness. I have always stood up for others who are feeling troubled, or who may seem out-cased due to their mental illness. I know that my video will show others the importance of being aware of those who are struggling with a mental illness.”
• “I felt like this was a good opportunity to use my talents and creativity to possibly help somebody in their time of need and at the very least to just provide awareness about the simple things that can ultimately save a life.”
• “We entered this contest to help those contemplating suicide or having suicidal thoughts.”
• “I’ve talked to people about suicide, and I tried to give them reasons to stay. It felt great knowing that I potentially persuaded someone that suicide was not the answer. This contest let my group and I get the message through video, one of our favorite hobbies. It was interesting trying to make an emotional film about suicide prevention.”
• “I participated in this contest for several reasons. The first and most important is because this subject is really important to me. I believe that life is a gift. One that we are granted to live to love and help others. It makes me really upset to think about all those out there that feel like they have nothing to live for. I believe it is the community’s responsibility to help and show love to these individuals. The final reason why I participated was because I enjoy creating films. I saw this as my opportunity to use my skills to help those in need.”
• “To make people aware of people who have disability like my brother.”
• “Because I think suicide is something that is preventable and I wanted to help teens realize that they aren’t alone.”
• “Sounded like something I wanted to be a part of, ending the silence of mental illness is basically reaching out to someone and helping them get through it.”
• “It was both part of a school project, but I also have been personally affected by friends who have struggled with suicidal thoughts.”
• “I had an interest in creating a motivational video. This seemed like the best cause to do it for.”
• “I’ve always wanted to impact the world, but in this case I want to create change with one of my passions. Film. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I learned that there is so much more to suicide prevention than the stereotyped belief. Participating in this contest allowed me to become emotionally involved just as I was physically.”
• “To make a video that will aware people about ending the stigma of mental health.”
• “I participated in this contest because suicide is a large problem in the area where I live, and it’s very easy to stop.”
• “To help raise awareness about ways to prevent suicide while presenting my skills in video production.”
• “I thought it was a great idea to make a video, hopefully for a lot of people to see and help them get through tough situations. Giving them advice about what they should do before they commit suicide. I’ve always tried to reach out and stand up for people that get picked on and I saw this as a great opportunity to keep helping them.”
• “I am looking for a way to spread awareness for mental illness which is dear to my heart and to also showcase my work.”
• “Our teacher told us about this great opportunity to make a video on a very serious topic, this is happening all around the world. It’s never a wrong time to let people see what’s really happening around us if we don’t notice.”
• “I believe that suicide can be prevented by giving positive thoughts and hopefulness to the many people contemplating suicide. By using the power of film I knew that could be accomplished. This contest informs people struggling with suicidal thoughts that there are people out there to help them and they are not alone. Being a young adult I see the many people at my school and in my community struggling with suicide, I wanted to try and make a difference by using the passion I have for film to let those people know suicide is not the answer.”
• “I’ve never really received tips on suicide prevention in school. Honestly, I think people generally try to look the other way when a teen commits suicide, and I think teens should be able to protect each other. They should be able to protect themselves. Everyone deserves a chance at getting help, and I think videos are a great way of getting a message out there. I’ve always been making films, it’s something I can’t imagine not doing, but what makes it worthwhile is having the chance to create a project that matters. The Directing Change has given me that platform, and for that, I’m extremely grateful.”
• “I wanted to make a difference by bringing awareness to individuals my age so they can see my PSA and know that they are not alone.”
• “I participated in the contest because our club was interested in making a change.”
• “Our club was interested in making a difference, and we wanted to make a change in the world.”
• “Since I am co-founder of a suicide prevention peer support group called Be A Friend I found the contest a task I had to complete. I was at the award ceremony last year and loved how inspirational and real the videos people submitted were, so I decided that alongside my peers we could enter the contest this year. It was an opportunity I didn’t want to miss and wished I would have done in the past. It is not about winning or losing, it is about spreading the word about suicide prevention and eliminating stigma!”
• “I joined this contest because I want to show people that they are not alone and there are people that really do care for them and that everyone is loved.”
• “I wanted to do what I could to help bring awareness and help end stigma on mental illness.”
• “I participated because it was an important issue that everyone needs to come to terms with and I also
felt I needed to help and also because my teacher made me.”

School Project

- “It was a class assignment as well as a very important matter to me.”
- “Class project.”
- “I shot this video for my TV/Video Productions class project.”
- “It was mandatory as a class assignment to participate.”
- “Mostly because our teacher made us.”
- “It was brought up as an average school animation assignment; we had to choose a topic and make a PSA about it. I’m in the Animation 3 course over at my school (Franklin High School) so I had a little bit more experience under my belt. My teacher encouraged me to enter the Directing Change contest and so I did. I really do like to make PSAs, especially ones like this; ones geared toward my age group and about important topics like preventing suicide. I’ve seen so many people on the verge of suicide and the helpless feeling of just watching them suffer is absolutely horrendous. I hope that, with entering this contest, that myself, or anyone else for that matter, can help both sides that are affected by suicide.”
- “I participated in this competition as part of a class project.”
- “I participated in this contest because it was a project for my Digital Media class but I completed it with a different mindset. After taking into consideration the factual evidence and possibility of such things, I wanted to help.”
- “It was a project in school.”
- “I entered the contest because it was a school project.”
- “It was a project for my high school film class.”
- “It was a school project but I also entered mine in because I felt this was a good way of expressing my feelings towards the topic.”
- “I have participated in this contest to help those that are in need of help, to show them that their not the only ones feeling this way and that they should get help. I was thinking, suicide is a very serious thing and if making this video could help put an end to it then I should do it.”
- “Our teacher made this an assignment and I really believe that this is an issue that people need to be educated on.”
- “I originally participated in this as an assignment for one of my classes. But once being presented with this opportunity the video I made became ‘my baby’. It was really important to me because I personally deal with mental illness and I know how much of a struggle and a battle it can be. I’ve succumbed to it in times of weakness and let it control me. But I am fighting through it now and learning to live with it and not let it live me. So it became important for me to spread awareness so that other people like me wouldn’t let it define them or feel like they are alone. Because I know both of those feelings are very common in people that have mental illnesses.”
- “My leadership class and I participated in this contest to promote awareness of bullying and how much of a negative impact suicide has on lives. We wanted to show that suicide isn’t the answer. No matter
how bad someone bully’s you don’t let it push you to the edge. Also, bullying only hurts people and leads to something bad.”

• “Because our teacher told us about it.”
• “I had wanted to enter the contest, but had trouble finding a team to do it with me. My teacher made it an assignment in my film class, which made me happy because it gave me a team to work with.”
• “This was a school assignment, but it was also a good opportunity to learn more about video editing.”
• “This was a mandatory project for my class but it is a very nice project with a great message behind it.”
• “I participated at first to receive a good grade in class but then I got into it and had fun doing it to help others in need.”
• “I participated because it was a school project.”
• “We did it as a class assignment but it was pretty emotional subject.”
• “In one of our classes, my friends and I are peer counselors and this topic hit home to us.”
• “Our Psychology teacher brought this contest to our class’s attention, she wondered if we would have any interest. The entire class was very excited to take part, and thought it would be a great learning experience. The project became more serious and combined it with our curriculum.”
• “I am the president of the Teen International Media Exchange Club at my high school, which seeks to participate in social justice projects. We found out about this project, and it was a perfect opportunity for us to use our media skills as well as exploring a social issue and brainstorming solutions.”
• “I participated in this contest because my photography teacher made this an assignment, but now that I know what this contest is aiming for, I want to let others know about how to prevent suicide and spread the knowledge of mental illnesses.”
• “I entered this competition as a project for a school club. I wanted to gain filmmaking experience and work to make film a medium for social commentary. Between the two choices for topic, I chose suicide prevention because it relates to a lot more people. Suicide isn’t hushed in our society as much as made a trivial matter. My team worked to make a video that ultimately makes people have hope.”
• “Class assignment.”
• “My TV and film elective class had a project on PSA’s.”
• “School assignment. Interested in becoming a filmmaker.”
• “My teacher brought it up to me as an option for our PSA assignment and I liked the idea of possibly helping others through my video.”
• “The contest was introduced to my class by my teacher as an option for one of the class projects. My team decided to take on the contest and make a video for it. I also wanted to be able to make a video for people to see that would make an impact on them or cause a realization towards discrimination of people who are going through difficult times.”
• “Class requirement.”
• “It was an assignment for my digital media class and a good chance to earn money for college.”
“It was part of a project for my digital media class.”

“This was presented to us as a class project in Digital Photography and I was immediately excited and tempted to participate in this, but not for the prize though but because I’ve had and have friends who have trouble with thoughts of suicide and I thought this was an awesome way to help show that there’s help.”

“It was for a grade in my digital media class but I soon got really into the project and applied myself fully because of the chance to have my video help someone.”

“School project.”

“It was a class assignment.”

“I participated in the competition as an assignment for my psychology class. We studied the impact of the stigma that exists around mental illness, and how that limits help available to people suffering from mental illness, and prevents them from finding and participating in successful treatment.”

“A school project made it mandatory, but my group put work into the video in hopes of helping students like us.”

“My digital photo teacher asked us to all participate for a grade. After learning more, I was hesitant and cautious.”

“I am in a film class at Redwood, this was a project that was started in class. I was intrigued by the opportunity to make something that mattered.”

“I participated in this contest for several reasons. I am enrolled in a Video Production class at my high school and it was our mandatory final assignment. I also wanted to participate because I love creating videos to help boost awareness of public issues. I have known several people; friends and family, who suffer from mental illnesses such as the illness portrayed in this video, and would like the chance to make others more conscious about the hard lives these individuals can sometimes live.”

“I participated in this contest because it was a project I had to do and also see if I have a chance to win.”

“We have a Video Productions class, and we had to choose a contest of our choice to enter in.”

“Because our teacher made us.”

“For school.”

“I did it last year in pals class and it was fun, so I did it again! We did it in class again this year, too.”

“It was a class project.”

“It was a class assignment and I have people around me every day that I know are affected by suicide and it feels good to know I can help someone struggling.”

“It was a project for my video production class at school. I also think it is important to spread the message.”

Other

“I enjoy working on video making and production. I also like that through video making I can make a
difference. I hope to continue entering directing change with my friend throughout my high school career.

- “To work on video effects and be a part of a competition. I've never done it before and I want to start making a difference by doing things that'll cause action.”
- “I started a filmmaking club at my school and I wanted to give its members a few real film contests to compete in. We do offer informal challenges but we really wanted a formal, more exciting contest.”
- “My friend, Christine Lin, invited me to compose the song for her short film, and I thought it would be a fun idea. Through the experience, I saw how videos such as these can help to make the world a more inspiring place. Not only was it a new and exciting activity for me to do, but I actually learned a lot about music and about working with other people through this contest.”
- “Because I love making videos.”
- “I was asked to participate in the contest, and I accepted because it seemed like a unique opportunity to possibly help people who have serious problems in their lives.”
- “My teacher recommended the contest to me, and I thought it was both an important project to do and a good challenge as a filmmaker.”
- “Because I enjoy making videos and it was for a good cause.”
- “I participated because I wanted to make my teacher happy about me participating in this contest.”
- “I participated in this project as the film director and as an actor. I was acting as a bully that provoked someone to stay in a depressed state instead of standing up and helping him.”
- “My friends and I say this contest, we decided it would be a good activity to improve our film skills, and we feel like it is an important message.”
- “I wanted the cash prize.”
- “I am very interested in film making and I love to take every opportunity I can to improve my skills.”
- “I enjoy making movies and telling stories. If I can, I would like to bring awareness to certain situations.”
- “Because I have a passion for film, and loved being a part of it last year.”
- “It is a business that I am wanting to get into so I am trying to have as much experience as I can.”
- “To win money and practice editing film.”
Appendix B:
Advisor comments- “Was the contest a positive experience for your students?”
• “This was a great experience because students realize that everybody has their issues and that they aren’t defined by their issues.”

• “I would say that this contest was extremely beneficial for my students. I work with two Friday Night Live clubs who wanted to address this exact issue already. The contest was the perfect outlet for them to get this done. Once we got the ball rolling, they got really into it! I think this allowed them to discover new skills and a new appreciation/excitement for video making. It was a slow starting project that was initially hard for them to wrap their heads around, but in time they were able to get really creative. I think this is something that schools need more of! There are not enough outlets for creativity in schools these days. This project will probably be the main thing they remember from this club, so I thank you all so much for holding this contest!”

• “Definitely a positive experience for my students. My whole class of 30 students worked through the Youth Mental Health First Aid course before we began development on the film projects. We watched last year’s excellent set and were inspired to make our own. Please continue again next year.”

• “Yes, it was. Students were required to analyze the aspects of the categories and learn about them in the process. Critical thinking skills were used to develop a concept, storyboard and produce the video. Seeing the students follow through from start to finish was a positive experience for all involved.”

• “Yes, it encouraged conversations among the teams that were preparing to work on the PSA’s.”

• “This is the second year for TPHS doing this contest and I love everything about it. I love how supported and clear the Directing Change Contest website is. The FAQs, rubrics, examples, storyboard, links page, etc. It answers all questions and is easy to use. This assignment has it all: group work, planning, creative thinking, critical thinking, technology, service, relevant real world experience, etc. We had 15 teams of three generate some amazing videos. We show the videos in between our Yellow Ribbon Week Assemblies as students come into the gym and wait for speakers to start. As a result, between 1,000 and 2,000 students each period view these videos and their messages six times over two days. These videos are also posted on YouTube and were watched by members of our recent WASC visit.”

• “For my students this was a very positive experience because they had to do research in the area of suicide prevention. They had to speak with our counseling staff who brought in presentation about this topic. Students had the feeling that by doing these videos they could actually reach out and help students who may not know that there is help out there. This inspired my students to be creative and really learn about suicide. Several of the teams are now making PSA videos for bullying and other suicide videos to help other clubs and programs on campus.”

• “The contest was not mandatory, but created a sense of purpose in many of my students who participated.”

• “Yes. I was able to use the contest to allow the students to express some positive thoughts following an event in the classroom where a student shared that he had once attempted suicide. We asked one of our counselors to come in and talk to the students as they were conceptualizing their PSA’s. It always helps to break the ice and be able to speak about such tough topics. On the flip side it is always fabulous for me to have a project that is work based. Teaching professionalism, time management, and meeting specific criteria. You did a great job of outlining this project.”

• “Yes, I believe it was. The theater class is an elective, and my purpose is to enhance students’ English
skills while allowing them to be creative and enjoy themselves. This competition expanded those goals and also encouraged them to be more aware of teen mental health issues and how to address them.”

- “Yes, it was a positive experience. I believe the conversation among the participating students about the problems and solutions to such difficult issues was good. As a school we worked hard to remain ‘hands off’ so the students were forced to do the research and communicate their thoughts and solutions on the video. This truly was a work of the students.”
- “Yes, it exposes students to information that they were unaware of and expands their awareness.”
- “For the students who responded to the challenge, yes.”
- “Raised awareness and made talking about it easier for everyone.”
- “Yes. Our student canvassed a number of students, many at-risk as well as those in leadership roles at the school.”
- “The contest was very positive for Maria. Suicide intervention and prevention is a subject that she is very passionate about both bringing awareness, but also helping anyone who is in need of help. The contest allows her to continue to reach out to the community in different ways to create the greatest outreach to the community, with this project she has brought awareness to City Council, and the Patterson Joint Unified School District. The contest allows her to bring more awareness to her co-founded campaign Be A Friend a Stanislaus County peer support group for suicide intervention and prevention..”
- “YES! It was wonderful that James brought this to our community, as it continued the discussion of how important it is for us to reach out to all students. We shared the video with students, after a Mental Health, Suicide Awareness Presentation. It is very important for students to be reminded that you do not know what it is going on in other people’s lives, reach out, and give a hand, which is what the video James Barton produced. He focused on how important it is to not be silent and sending the message that Suicide is a Permanent Solution to a temporary problem. Not only did the students who participated in the clip benefit, but others in a community and we would like to continue broadcasting it when able to do so.”
- “Yes. It opened up the students eyes to mental health issues at Lemoore High School and our community.”
- “Yes, they moved toward this topic BECAUSE of the competition...and when they got there they developed sensitive, kind, informative videos.”
- “It got students from various fields and areas of expertise to come together and work as one. It’s amazing how a common goal of delivering a positive message can create a young, dynamic and diverse group I can be so proud of!”
- “Absolutely. The students who created the video enlisted the help of a lot of other students. They all felt they were part of an important endeavor and were inspired by the contest. It sparked conversation about mental health.”
- “Overall the experience was positive. However, students were more willing to talk about the issues instead of put their ideas into visual media.”
- “This was the second time we entered the contest. The film this year was very lacking and rushed and probably should not have been submitted. Students did have good conversations about how to impart
the message. It required them to really think about the stigma and how to communicate the idea of stigma and how to let others know stigmas are not acceptable. The scoring guides were very useful.

- “Got students thinking about a relevant topic outside of the curriculum.”
- “Very! Big opportunity for students to get creative.”
- “Yes, some students from watching the video recognized that they be suffering from a mental health issue. They reached out for help.”
- “Yes, they came together as a club and worked collaboratively to produce the film. The student whose vision was used became a strong leader in the group.”
- “Yes it was. I started the process by asking questions about mental health and suicide. These two topics sparked many discussions within my classroom and I knew the students were interested. I followed up with past winner video’s and then explained what the rules and expectations of the video were from you and from me as their instructor. On completion of student video’s we watched them as a class. This was great because each group got to see what the other had done.”
- “I am not sure, as I have not interacted with students about it.”
- “Our students really enjoyed creating a video piece about such an important issue, using the skills they learned in our video/film classes.”
- “The possibility to make a video with a purpose of helping someone brought a different meaning to making a video.”
- “Absolutely! It's always good to open the doors of discussion regarding teen suicide but the most powerful message received by the students is that they can make a difference in preventing it. I really think this raised their awareness of the signs of suicide, but also what they can do to address it. I also noticed a strong curiosity in my students when we discussed the stigmas related to mental illness. I had three students speak to me privately about their mental illnesses and I was pleased with the level of comfort in our conversations.”
- “It opened their eyes to the subject! In fact we had one student who was presently going through it.”
- “Yes, the project was very positive experience for students, it gave them an opportunity to demonstrate their creativity, acting and leadership skills. They had fun while producing an awareness of suicide within our community.”
- “It can be difficult to get all the students to be involved on the same subject for their video projects, however suicide and mental health issues were a unifying subject.”
- “Having student address and focus issues that NEED to be addressed in the school system was very beneficial to my class.”
- “It was a wonderful experience. I had a number of students work together with one student leader to prepare the project! It truly came out incredible!”
- “The students dealt with the topic seriously and worked well as a team to convey their ideas as a whole. They worked together to create a poem and recite it before the camera in the form of a spoken word piece.”
- “The contest really encouraged students to come up with active, positive solutions for those struggling
• “Yes it was. Unfortunately, one of our students (not in my class) committed suicide in December, right as we were in the middle of this project, and all my students insisted on continuing with their work and found a new drive and desire to get the message across positively. I truly believe this project helped many of them cope with what happened. It also helped my administration with positive and accurate messaging to our student body, and they were thrilled to be able to see what our students had created.”
• “This is our second year participating in the contest. It makes our campus aware of stigma as well as suicide prevention. It’s a great project for all students.”
• “They seemed to get very involved in breaking the stigma of mental health and it was surprising how many of them knew students who had attempted suicide or had a mental illness. I think they learned a lot about schizophrenia since they had to portray it honestly.”
• “This was a VERY positive experience for my students. They were fully engaged in the process, from initial research into the categories, sharing personal stories, to examining how best to get across a message in 60 seconds.”
• “For me I have known the student for 4 years as her school counselor. This opportunity allowed me to really get to know who she is as a person. I always thought that she was a great person, but with her submission to direct change contest just solidifies my opinion of her. She is an amazing person and will definitely make a positive effect in this world.”
• “For the student who entered the contest, it allowed for him to think about how to connect to his peers about mental illness.”
• “My students resisted the research they needed to do at first but after showing them some previous winners, they were very motivated to create something significant.”
Appendix C:

Student comments: “Were the contest rules and submission guidelines clear?”
“They were easy to understand and follow.”

“The rules were perfectly clear, however navigating through the website to find the rules was difficult in some instances.”

“The instructions and guidelines were very specific and clear. Thank you for making the process easier for me.”

“I would have liked it if you were to put all of the required visuals in one place, haha! Like, the icons that were required were in one location, but the title template was a bit difficult to find. If you were to just put a simple link at the top or at the side with the required visuals that included the icons and title template, it would've made it a bit simpler. Other than that, the rules and submission guidelines were perfectly fine and easy to navigate!”

“The contest rules and guidelines were also very helpful and informative.”

“We were very surprised to find that only four filmmakers could receive awards. We found this rule in the FAQ, not the guidelines. The rules are very complicated and sometimes even somewhat contradict each other (The judging form has different requirements for statistics concerning suicide). They are not all in one place and one has to scavenge the whole website for them.”

“While they were clear, I do wish there was some kind of straight to the point checklist to make sure everything that needed to be completed was completed. I feel like some information was very spread out and therefore harder to keep track of.”

“Very long application and submission process. Very clear though!”

“There were a lot of rules that were not specified point blank, which made it difficult to figure out the requirements.”

“Some of the contest rules were easy to follow, yet there were many subsections of rules and paperwork to fill out that the directions were not clear on.”

“I would make them mandatory for teachers to explain.”

“Straightforward and simple.”

“Stan was a very helpful source in terms of clarification of rules and guidelines.”

“Everything was very straightforward.”

“It was not that clear but it was understandable. There can be many questions to ask and there was email available to message the person about the issue so that was good. Overall it was nice.”

“I really appreciate the clarity of the regulations. Some contests I’ve entered have been sucky in that area.”

“Good job, we will see if I overlooked something.”

“The instructions regarding the template at the beginning of the video as well as the limit on the length of the film could have been more clearly explained. An example of what was meant would've been helpful. In addition, I contacted the one of the emails that was given to use in cases of confusion or technical difficulties, and I never received an answer.”

“They were very clear and I could easily follow from the step by step instructions provided for us.”
• “There were a lot of rules and specifications, but if you took the time to find them and read them, they were very clear.”

• “I was extremely confused with the copyright issues regarding music for the video, and how I could get my matters in order on such short notice (due to deadlines).”
Appendix D:
Student comments- “We hope to continue to offer cash prizes to students in the future as well. But just in case we have less funding we would love to hear from you what types of prizes have the most value to you.”
• “I think the rewards for this are fair.”
• “Instead of a cash prize, I propose offering an internship with a well-known Director as an alternative prize.”
• “I enjoyed this as a school project.”
• “I would probably still enter the contest if there were no cash prizes. I would also like to include that I support the same cash prize structure because it seems fairer if that makes any sense? It doesn’t seem too fair for the winning team to receive all of the money, seeing that different teams come from different places with different types of equipment and income. Also, one of the big reasons that I entered this contest was winning at least some money. As nice as it is that I can help send a message via PSA and art, I really do need the money to go to my college funds.”
• “I believe that the fact of being able to participate in a program like this and to be able to get 1st 2nd or 3rd places is satisfactory enough. Cash is a plus and would be useful for those who want to do something, the money could give them a chance to do so.”
• “The recognition is more important than the money but money is the deciding factor when deciding between contests. We like this contest because we are very likely going to get recognized because there is the regional level we can win at before we go to the statewide contest.”
• “Thank you I had so much fun.”
• “For the second question I disagreed because if one person is getting something then all of them should get the same thing.”
• “I don’t think the match to my school is important because it’s not going to get spent correctly by the school anyway.”
• “I participated as part of a mandatory class project for a voluntary peer counseling class. The idea of helping others who are experiencing hardship is incentivizing enough for me, however for many people, the cash prizes/ recognition may be the driving factors for participating. Having a cash prize will draw in people who may not necessarily be interested in the cause, which is great because those are the people who are not as well informed.”
• “This is important regardless of the prize.”
• “The cash prize is what catches most of the filmmaker’s attention, which is why I think it is important to continue it in order for the contest to grow.”
• “On the cash match, it depends if you did it on your own or if the school actually helped you so that can get overly complicated.”
• “For many students in my class the money drove them to be more successful.”
• “I appreciate all the prize offers but if I’m helping others that’s a prize in itself.”
• “I worked on this project as part of a school club. We desperately need funding as many of our members lack basic camera and editing software.”
• “It would be best if every winner got a little share of something.”
• “The money should not be the most important thing when in fact such an important issue is discussed,
the share of information is the most important thing.”

- I think the prize system should go 1st: $500, 2nd: $350, and 3rd: $150.”

- “In my personal opinion, I just want my video to have a chance at being seen and heard and that hopefully it can have a positive impact on at least one person. But I have to be honest saying that a cash prize doesn’t hurt and it could possibly help me in my future career in this industry helping me to make more videos similar to this one.”

- “This was an interesting experience that helped me have a better idea of what I’d like to do with my life.”

- “Cash prizes are encouraging factors, but what really pushed me were the deadlines.”

- “A prize is always great, but I definitely think the experience I got out of this project is worth it, prize or no prize. I’m a better person and filmmaker overall.”
Appendix E: Additional student comments and suggestions
Praise

- “It honestly is done really well.”
- “No, the contest is already very good.”
- “The guidelines and requirements are nice and clear.”
- “I think the contest is very well structured. And it glad that it actually exists.”
- “No, I like how the contest was specific however also broad. We knew our topic but we had freedom to choose a sub topic in that category. It was well organized and fun to participate in!”
- “Nope. Keep up the good work.”
- “No! This is such a wonderful chance to get the word and knowledge spread to promote a better world!”
- “No I think it's great as it is.”
- “Nope. It was good.”
- “The contest is very well organized.”
- “Very good job....Not much to change.”
- “I am not sure. The contest seemed to flow fairly well.”
- “I love the topics, it can give students creative thought on how to approach these ideas.”
- “No I truly like the way it is right now.”
- “The contest is fine the way it is.”
- “I believe the contest is great the way it is, it would be better for more sponsoring of this cause.”
- “I think the contest is great! Nothing really to change!”
- “I love the positivity this contest brings to so many people and how it is geared towards making a difference. This contest has helped me want to make a difference and make suicide prevention better understood by my classmates and community. Thank you so much for this contest and the opportunity to use my passion for filmmaking to make a difference. I have no complaints and wish only positive things for this organization and contest in the years to come, thank you.”
- “No, I believe it is fine the way it is.”
- “I have no suggestions, I think it is great the way it is done.”

Suggestions

- “No, I do not think there are any suggestions I could make to improve the contest. All of the instructions were well organized on the website and were very clear and understandable. However if the person in charge of receiving the emails with questions asked by students could respond faster to the students, that could help future contestants.”
- “I believe the website layout could be improved.”
- “Advertise the contest to a broader range of people to get more submissions.”
- “Broaden the subjects. Include ways for inexperienced to do well and learn. I also would appreciate
getting some sort of judging sheets that tell me how I can improve and what to work on.”

- “Spread the word, people should get more involved.”
- “You may want to make the contest guidelines clearer and all in one place.”
- “I think we should add one more topic that fits the categories. Maybe like a video tell how someone got through tough times and how you found hope.”
- “Just the timing and day of the contest, there are some people that can’t attend because of AP testing.”
- “I would actually prefer if the mandatory symbols could be easier to find and/or placed on a specific photo to put in the video.”
- “A little more publicity to make the contest more apparent to more people. I felt that the contest was not announced or told to people enough.”
- “I think it is great. Maybe a little bit more organization involving the forms.”
- “Make it more interesting. Like open a third box and it should say ‘make another video that inspires you to help other students, another health issue, or another illness’- something that attracts what they are going through in a way.”
- “Perhaps give a little more direction as to what sort of video you’re looking for. Maybe a preferred feel or something.”
- “I think the contest should allow scriptwriters a little more freedom with restrictions to make the video more emotionally compelling.”
- “Host the event at another time besides May. AP testing is from May 5- May 16. The event is on the 13th and high school students are taking these tests nationwide and won’t have the time to attend especially if they live out of the area.”
- “Apparently communication with the Directing Change staff for clarifications was a bit slow. So if that were to speed up it would be great.”
- “Extend the time from 1 to 2 minutes, so the construction of a story line or the idea itself do not look rushed.”
- “Letting the video be longer than 60 seconds might work better for the contest.”
- “Just the price system.”
- “Let the contestants know of scores and placements via email and within the timeframe provided on the website.”
- “Maybe set up the website in a user-friendlier manner. It was hard for many of my classmates to find the transparent logo-files and I had to help them out. Also the facts on these issues weren’t as updated as I had expected in order to make the video more relatable. Quick-links would be the best thing for the students trying to obtain what they need for the requirements for the video.”

Other

- “Not really. This is my first time entering, so I really don’t have that much to say, haha.”
- “I feel like we should be able to show people dying in a suicide PSA. It helps creating the idea and lets us
do interesting things with the way we film. I do understand that seeing someone die in a suicide prevention PSA could possibly provoke someone into suicide. But it might also stop others, say if we showed the aftermath of the suicide and how it affects others, not just the victim.”

- “The extended March deadline was very helpful, I almost didn't finish my film, but the extra time let me get it in early.”
- “I think there should be honorable mentions.”
Appendix F:
Advisor comments- “It is our intention to continue to offer cash prizes to students and a match to the school, but your thoughts on the questions below will help us determine how to rearrange the prize structure should we ever need to. Please mark how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements:

- *My students would participate in the contest even if there were no cash prizes, just trophies*
- *My school would participate in the contest even if there was no cash prize to the school, just a trophy.*
“The cash awards are honestly a great incentive for my students every year.”

“Our students were excited to have a great, fun, and productive way to try and bring funding to their school in order to address a topic that is very important to their school currently, as they have had two students die by suicide in the last year.”

“Money motivates students, plain and simple.”

“Teens like the idea of some type of award compensation for working or providing their expertise on creating real life application PSA’s that display their work.”

“The cash prize is a real incentive to put in the extra effort, I really talk up this aspect as well as the service we provide our school by creating and sharing our videos.”

“This is a great way for students to learn how to compete and earn money for their work. By having award money put into our school it helps support our programs very limited budget.”

“They increase competition and raise student standards on their work.”

“I think the cash incentive allows the students to feel like they have more of an internship possibility. It feels more real. I’m not sure that it would be a deal breaker for someone really committed to participate.”

“It’s tangible, and something that they can personally feel they’ve been rewarded.”

“Money motivates, and for our school we are using the money to purchase more recording equipment for the students to use. We don’t have budgeted money for this kind of equipment. So, the cash prizes to students and school actually is a double bonus to students because the students are having a say in what needs to be purchased to make entering more of these contests possible. Trophies don’t give students resources to keep moving forward in their hobbies of video communication. Money helps a student invest more through technology purchases.”

“I give my video and animation students a choice of several PSA topics. Directing Change offers a topic that is difficult for students. They really have to work to understand the information and identify a creative way to present it. The money is a great incentive to get kids who might select an easier topic to try to tackle than yours. Even if only a few students select the topic, the PSA will eventually be shown to everyone in the class, and if it is successful, to everyone in the school on our Morning Bulletin.”

“It would help us fund camperships to the LETS conference in the summer.”

“Good incentive.”

“To support the individual (as well as the school) in encouraging students to actively take part.”

“For Maria, and myself the idea of this project is to raise awareness. If received the prizes could go back into raising that awareness. I know for Maria she is co-founder to Be A Friend which is an suicide prevention and awareness campaign that prize money would be able to help grow.”

“I don’t feel they are needed. If anything, put the cash prizes towards Suicide Awareness Programs. But I do understand that some students want to buy certain equipment to help make production better, so I can understand the desire for cash prizes.”

“We can always use the money to improve our multimedia program and give incentives to students.”
“Students want to do good work, yet many worthy project compete for their attention. The cash prize hooks their attention and the topic draws them in.”

“Cash prizes are always enticing and a nice bonus for good work.”

“I run a film festival and have found that students produce better quality when they have the potential to win something other than thank you. Additionally, the school I teach for requires exceedingly hard graduation requirements and is on a block system. This leaves less time for students to complete work and participate in any extracurricular activities. The cash incentive helps provide motivation to participate.”

“A cash prize would be helpful since this is a club that has no access to school funds. I don’t think they once even discussed the prize.”

“We would have put the money towards the club. The film club has no funds provided to it and fundraising has become a challenge on our campus.”

“The cash prizes are an acknowledgement that the students did really well. It is very rare for high school students to ever win cash. This is a good thing!”

“Incentive for all the work involved.”

“Nice incentive for the students.”

“The cash prices help the school with new technology that will help to create movies ideas.”

“They would participate because I would require it as a class project. However, they may not be as "motivated" to do well. They are very enticed by the cash prize. I think a cash prize just for the students would be enough, eliminate the one for teacher/advisor.”

“We always have a ton of things that we have to cover and it is hard to do a project that is so worthy just because of the timeline.”

“We do many outreach projects throughout the school year and I the money would be helpful with supplies and club incentives for our faithful members.”

“My students are low income, as well as the need for equipment not furnished by the school, and students can buy their own equipment with the prize money, or use it towards enrolling in higher education.”

“Students are planning on using it for college and for purchasing additional video making technology.”

“For NOVA Academy, a cash prize is important because it will provide us an opportunity to give students a field trip, assembly, or other presentation that will continue to educate them. For the students, winning a cash prize places ownership and responsibility on the students. When given a cash prize, they have the opportunity to use it for the betterment of the school or community by contributing monetarily to them. They become funders for something greater and this is teaching them to give back in more ways than one.”

“Cash prizes are nice, but my students participated first because it was required, but ultimately those who submitted to the competition did so because they believed in the message and felt their projects were strong.”

“It motivates students to be aware.”
• “Helps purchase new equipment.”
• “My students were motivated to earn money for the school.”
• “It adds a bit more of the ‘real world’ feel to the project.”
• “Everything helps.”
• “The students could use it for college.”
• “It motivates the students to do things on their own time, vs. only doing the project while in school.”
• “Students hear cash prizes and they are immediately motivated. It’s amazing how well this works.”
Appendix G:

Additional advisor comments and suggestions
Praise

• “Thank you!”
• “Great job, love this assignment and competition and the important service it provides in helping students know it’s okay to ask for help!”
• “I think this is a worthy project. I am hopeful that other teachers at our site might participate reaching more than just Video Production students.”
• “It’s a good activity, and a good learning experience. I’d like to have my students do it again next year if I have a theater class.”
• “I very much appreciated the feedback that was given to our students when they would email a question. You were helpful and allowed the students to keep moving forward in participating and doing so properly.”
• “I really think this is a very valuable contest. From a career technical education perspective, it is great because it is like working with a client. You have very specific information that you want to communicate, and it is left to students to develop a creative method to present this information. You are able to get a number of really professional looking PSAs. I think the next step is to see if you can get TV stations to pick these up, giving these PSAs a much broader audience. I want to encourage you to look into partnering with local public television stations to air some of these. They will do it if you provide the ‘sponsorship’ funds. One issue to consider is the length. Most PSAs are 30 seconds. It would be easier to get 30 second projects on the air.”
• “Thanks for doing this! The topic is critical in a high school. We just lost a former student to suicide...it’s a topic that needs to be more in our curriculum and this is a way to involve students. The cash prize aspect isn’t distasteful nor means students will only work for the prize, but it asks them to turn their attention to an underserved topic--one that high school kids might be more reluctant to work on since it can be emotional. One of my students remarked after our student’s suicide that she wished she knew him since she now has more awareness of the signs and could have been helpful--it creates peer counselors and plants at least few students with awareness in the classes that kids take --and they talk about the topic while they are working on it. Thanks for doing this!”
• “We are glad you hold this contest. It is very important to remove the stigma from issues surrounding ill mental health.”
• “If I am in a position that offers video instruction I will participate.”
• “In reference to question 16, we will participate if we have a club next year. Thanks for your help. This is a great project for kids to involve themselves in.”
• “Everything is perfectly well done. The stuff is super patience. The material provided is very clear. The website is very friendly and easy to use.”
• “I think this is an incredible opportunity for teaching our teens about two powerful topics. You have provided excellent resources and have organized everything very well. I honestly can’t think of anything more or different you could do to improve it. Thank you!”
• “This is a solid and important video contest that I feel truly aided my students as well as my school and district.”
• “This has been a great experience both for the staff at NOVA and the students along with our community partner, the Santa Ana Public Library. Our students have really learned a lot by coming up with their own message and we hope that our video will be able to save and protect lives and encourage their peers to think twice about life and appreciate the potential that exists in all of us. We thank you for the opportunity to be a part of Directing Change.”

• “I feel this is a great program, and definitely needed in our schools. My students did really well, and even though the topic can be hard, it opened their eyes. I believe they now look at their classmates a bit differently, and I hope that ultimately this will help them be more compassionate and aware of those around them and what they may be going through.”

• “Keep up the good work... Unfortunately the problem seems to be growing and there is a need for more information In addition to the PSA we have done a number of news stories on autism, suicide prevention, and mental illness.

Suggestions
• “Streamline the criteria or rules for the contest. I think it was so much information, it was a little overwhelming at times to keep up with everything that had to be completed before submitting the video products.”

• “I would like to see the contest have winning results earlier in the year so if a school would like to send students to Sacramento there is a better chance to have money to send some students and teachers for students who placed in 2nd or 3rd. This is difficult to budget for because our school budget money has to be spend prior to the announcements of the winners.”

• “This is merely a suggestion from a teacher of ‘visual arts’... You may wish to try a ‘less cluttered’ design in your printed materials that focuses on the ‘core issue’ so that it is immediately and clearly screamingly obvious. This year's printed materials were somewhat ‘busy’... and therefore less likely to ‘grab attention’ of students. Thanks for doing what you do!”

• “I think it was misleading that there would be a regional winner from each region. In the end it appears that regions were combined. That was a little misleading for the students.”

• “It is a lot of paper work for the students and the instructor to fill out and that is a big drawback. The paperwork was so intense that some teams were unable to submit their films because of it.”

• “Have the upload process easier.”

Other
• “This survey was brought to me by a student, but I am sure more students would be interested.”

• “It is very interesting to see the types of one minute videos that students produce.”

• “I will if there is a student interested in submitting a video.”