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## **Schools add extra avenue for anonymous reporting of at-risk behaviors**

*By Pippa Fisher*

The Acalanes Union High School District rolled out a new program in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, the SHP Say Something - Anonymous Reporting System, to students simultaneously in all four high schools in an hour-long training Sept. 25.

SHP is a nonprofit foundation that formed in the wake of the tragic 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting to prevent gun violence before it happens and to provide free programming for schools across the country. With programs in all 50 states, with more than 7,000 schools and over 3.5 million students and adults trained, SHP has the knowledge of how to work with students, parents and teachers to improve school safety and culture, according to AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson.

The SS-ARS program expands upon Lamorinda high schools' existing "say something" efforts implemented last year and further teaches students how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and say something to a trusted adult or use its anonymous reporting system to share their concern, according to the district's website.

The program educates participants to recognize the signs and signals of at-risk behavior, to take every sign and signal seriously and to act quickly to get help by talking to a trusted adult or reporting anonymously through the app, website or by phone to the crisis center.

The SS-ARS reporting platform provides an app, website and 24/7 crisis telephone hotline for youth and adults to submit anonymous tips. Tips are sent to and reviewed by experienced crisis counselors, triaged and sent on to school officials, and police if necessary, for response as appropriate within seconds of being received.

"It is a partnership between schools, police and Sandy Hook Promise," says Nickerson.

Acalanes Principal Travis Bell says the program has been really well received by the community, teachers and students.

"This program provides another avenue for students to bring their concerns forward, to take action to prevent someone harming themselves or others," explains Bell. He says that although all students have a trusted adult to whom they can talk, this provides a way for students who might otherwise feel uncomfortable reporting something without that anonymity.

Two days after the rollout, Bell says they have had a few reports come in, all unfounded so far, which he says is not unexpected initially.

Information on the SHP SS-ARS can be found here: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Superintendent-s-Message--Say-Something-Anonymous-Reporting-System.html?soid=1011112155911&aid=BccYbjj6fOw>

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