

School-Based Threat Assessment

The Board is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. This policy establishes a school-based threat assessment program to provide for timely and methodical school-based threat assessment and management.

Threat assessment best occurs in school climates of safety, respect, and emotional support. Student behavior, rather than a student's demographic or personal characteristics will serve as the basis for a school-based threat assessment.

The threat assessment process is distinct from student discipline procedures. The mere fact that the district is conducting a threat assessment does not by itself necessitate suspension or expulsion and the district will not impose suspension or expulsion, including emergency expulsion, *solely* for investigating student conduct or conducting a threat assessment. Further, suspension, or other removal from the school environment can create the risk of triggering either an immediate or a delayed violent response, unless such actions are coupled with containment and support. However, nothing in this policy precludes district personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat, including imposing an emergency expulsion, if the district has sufficient cause to believe that the student's presence poses an immediate and continuing danger to other students or school personnel or an immediate and continuing threat of material and substantial disruption of the educational process.

Structure of threat assessment teams

The superintendent shall establish and ensure the training of a multidisciplinary, multiagency threat assessment team or more than one such team to serve district schools. As the threat assessment team must be multidisciplinary and multiagency, it might include persons with expertise in:

- Counseling, such as a school counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker;
- Law enforcement, such as a school resource officer;
- School administration, such as a principal or other senior administrator,
- Other district or school staff,
- Community resources,
- Special education teachers, and a
- Practicing educational staff member.

Not every multidisciplinary team member need participate in every assessment. A threat assessment team member with expertise in special education should be included as a member of the threat assessment team when faced with a threat made by, or directed towards, a student receiving special education services. Although parents, guardians, or family members are often interviewed as part of the threat assessment process, neither the student nor the student's family members are part of the threat assessment team. This does not diminish the district's commitment that school personnel will make every reasonable attempt to involve parents and the student in the resolution of the student's behavioral violations.

Function of threat assessment team

The threat assessment team:

- Identifies and assess the behavior of a student that is threatening, or potentially threatening, to self, other students, staff, school visitors, or school property. Threats of self-harm or suicide unaccompanied by threats of harm to others should be promptly evaluated.
- Gathers and analyzes information about the student's behavior to determine a level of concern for the threat. The threat assessment team may conduct interviews of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or target(s) of the threat, other witnesses who have knowledge of the threat, and where reasonable, the individual(s) who allegedly engaged in the

threatening behavior or communication. The purpose of the interviews is to evaluate the individual's threat in context, to determine the meaning of the threat and intent of the individual. The threat assessment team may request and obtain records in the district's possession, including student education, health records, and criminal history record information. The purpose of obtaining information is to evaluate situational variables, rather than the student's demographic or personal characteristics.;

- Determines: the nature, duration, and level of severity of the risk; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk. The threat assessment team will not base a determination of threat on generalizations or stereotypes. Rather, the threat assessment team makes an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, best available objective evidence, or current medical evidence as applicable;
- Communicates lawfully and ethically with each other, school administrators, and other school staff who have a need to know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, its students, and its staff; and
- Timely reports its determination to the superintendent or designee.

No member of a threat assessment team, including district / school based members and community resource / law enforcement members, shall re-disclose records obtained by being a member of the threat assessment team or otherwise use any student record beyond the prescribed purpose of the threat assessment team.

Depending on the level of concern determined, the threat assessment team develops and implements intervention strategies to manage the student's behavior in ways that promotes a safe, supportive teaching and learning environment, without excluding the student from the school.

In cases where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, the threat assessment team aligns intervention strategies with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or the student's plan developed under section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973 (section 504 plan) by coordinating with the student's IEP team or section 504 plan team. Although some of the functions of school-based threat assessment may run parallel to the functions of a student's IEP team or 504 plan team, school-based threat assessment remains distinct from those teams and processes.

Other tasks of threat assessment team

The threat assessment team may also participate in school-based threat management to manage or reduce threatening or potentially threatening behavior and increase physical and psychological safety. This may include:

- Providing guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of behavior that may represent a threat to students, staff, school, the community, or the individual;
- Providing informational resources for community services boards or health care providers for medical evaluation or treatment, as appropriate;
- Assessing individuals other than students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of students or staff and notify the superintendent or designee of such an individual.

Cross References:

2121 - Substance Abuse Program
2145 - Suicide Prevention
2161 - Special Education and Related Services for Eligible Students
2162 - Education of Students With Disabilities Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
3143 - District Notification of Juvenile Offenders
3432 - Emergencies
4210 - Regulation of Dangerous Weapons on School Premises

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4310 – District Relationships with Law Enforcement and other
Government Agencies

4314 – Notification of Threats of Violence of Harm

Legal References: Chapter 28A.300 RCW
Chapter 28A.320 RCW

Management Resources: 2019 - December Issue

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