

**BOARD POLICY: SUICIDE AND DEPRESSION AWARENESS AND PREVENTION**

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Section A - Purpose

Youth suicide has a dramatic effect on the school environment. It also affects the staff, diminishing its ability to educate students. Suicide and depression awareness and prevention are important to the overall wellbeing of students and are, as a result, Board goals.

Section B – Suicide and Depression Awareness and Prevention Program

The Superintendent or designee shall develop, implement and maintain a suicide and depression awareness and prevention program (Program) that advances the Board's goal of increasing awareness and prevention of suicide and depression. This program must be consistent with School Code Section 5/2-3.163 (c)(2)-(7). The program shall include:

1. Protocols for administering youth suicide awareness and prevention education to students and staff.
  - a. For students, implementation will incorporate curriculum content that implements 105 ILCS 5.2-3.139 and 105 ILCS 5/27-7, which requires education for students to develop a sound mind and a healthy body.
  - b. For staff, implementation will incorporate staff development and teachers' institutes under 105 ILCS 5/13-14.8, which requires training as to the warning signs of suicidal behavior.
2. Procedures for methods of suicide prevention with the goal of early identification and referral of students possibly at risk of suicide.
  - a. For students in grades 9-12, implementation shall incorporate the training required by 105 ILCS 5/10-22.39 for school guidance counselors, teachers, school social workers, and other school personnel who work with students to identify the warning signs of suicidal behavior in adolescents and teens along with appropriate intervention and referral techniques, including methods of prevention, procedures for early identification, and referral of students at risk of suicide.
  - b. For all students, implementation shall incorporate Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)-recommended guidelines and educational materials for staff training and professional development, along with ISBE-recommended resources for students containing age-appropriate educational materials on youth suicide awareness, if available on ISBE's website.

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3. Methods of intervention, including procedures that address an emotional or mental health safety plan for use during the school day and at school-sponsored events for a student identified as being at increased risk of suicide. Implementation will incorporate section B. 2, along with:

- a. Implementing the goals and benchmarks of the Ill. Learning Standards and 405 ILCS 49/15(b) (requiring student social and emotional development in the District's educational program);
- b. Implementing guidance and counseling program(s) for students, and 105 ILCS 5/10-22.24a and 22.24b, which allow a qualified guidance specialist or any licensed staff member to provide school counseling services.
- c. Implementing the Children's Mental Health Act of 2003, 405 ILCS 49/ (requiring protocols for responding to students with social, emotional, or mental health issues that impact learning ability); and
- d. Identify State and/or federal resources that address emotional or mental health safety plans for students who are possibly at an increased risk for suicide, available on the ISBE's website.

4. A process to incorporate ISBE-recommended resources on youth suicide awareness and prevention programs, including current contact information for such programs in the District's Suicide and Depression Awareness and Prevention Program.

### Section C – Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee

The Superintendent or designee shall attempt to develop a relationship between the District and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee, the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition Alliance, and/or a community mental health agency. The purpose of the relationship is to discuss how to incorporate the goals and objectives of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan into the District's Suicide Prevention and Depression Awareness Program.

### Section D – Information to Staff, Parents/Guardians, and Students

The Superintendent shall inform each school district employee about this policy and ensure its posting on the District's website. The Superintendent or designee shall provide a copy of this policy to the parent or legal guardian of each student enrolled in the District.

### Section E – Implementation

This policy shall be implemented in a manner consistent with State and federal laws, including the Children's Mental Health Act of 2003, 405 ILCS 49, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act, 740 ILCS 110, and the individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101, *et seq.*

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The District, Board, and its staff are protected from liability by the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act. Services provided pursuant to this policy: (1) do not replace the care of a physician licensed to practice medicine in all of its branches or a licensed medical practitioner or professional trained in suicide prevention, assessments and counseling services, (2) are based on existing resources within the District, (3) do not extend beyond the school day and/or school-sponsored events, and (4) cannot guarantee or ensure the safety of a student or the student body.

APPROVED: December 12, 2016