

THREATS AND VIOLENCE As It Relates To Students

The Board of Education strives to maintain a school environment free from intimidation, threats, or violent acts, including, but not limited to intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviors, physical abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, possession or use of weapons, or any other act, which, in the administration's opinion, is inappropriate to the school environment. Threats of violence, in any form - verbal, nonverbal, written, in drawing or other visual forms - made by a student or staff member will be immediately addressed by the administration. Serious and/or repeated threats will be followed by appropriate consequences as determined by school policy and recommendations of the Safety Committee following review of the situation.

As part of Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2000, the Schools Against Violence in Education (S.A.V.E.) legislation, students who experience any of the behaviors listed above should immediately report this to any District staff member. All complaints will receive prompt attention and the situation will be investigated. Based on the results of the inquiry, disciplinary action deemed appropriate by school administration will be taken.

Students who observe or have knowledge of violation of this policy should immediately report it to any District staff member. A prompt investigation of these events will occur and the cooperation of all incident-related individuals will be sought. Students who believe there is a serious threat to the safety and health of others must immediately report their concerns directly to any District staff member.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. A **threat** is communication or behavior that indicates that an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others.
 - a. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, verbally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means.
 - b. The communication and/or behavior is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat; observed by or communicated to a third party, and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat.
- B. A **threat assessment** is a systematic process designed to identify situations/persons of concern, investigate, gather information, and assess and manage the situation to mitigate risk.

Districtwide Threat Assessment Team:

The Districtwide Threat Assessment Team shall meet at minimum four (4) times per year. Certain members (i.e. the Directory of Security or other members deemed appropriate) may assist and attend Building level Team meetings as appropriate. The District Level Team will be responsible for providing PD to any new Building Level team members and other staff as appropriate.

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Building Level Threat Assessment Teams:

Annually, each school principal shall identify a building-based threat assessment team which must be multidisciplinary. The team should include persons with expertise in:

- Student mental health, 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 director
- Dean and other district or school staff
- Teachers

Building level team members should adhere to the following:

- A. All threats of violence or physical harm to others shall be taken seriously, since the primary goal of threat assessment is the safety of all persons involved.
- B. Depending on the level of concern determined, the threat assessment team will develop and implement intervention strategies using the Threat Assessment Action Plan to manage and monitor the student's behavior in ways that promote a safe, supportive teaching, and learning environment.
- C. Building based threat assessment teams shall adhere to the rules and responsibilities within the BOE policy with fidelity.
- D. The team should meet monthly to discuss any potential at-risk students exhibiting concerning or "red flag" behaviors.
- E. All school-based administrators and threat assessment team members must attend and complete any district threat assessment training.
- F. Identify 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 according to Policy 1356.

Purpose:

The Building Threat Assessment Team's purpose is to ascertain whether a particular person should be considered a credible threat to safety, through:

1. Information gathering: The building team can gather information from individuals who have personal or professional connections to both the potential perpetrator and the targets. They possess a thorough understanding of both the threatener and the targets.

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Purpose (Cont'd.)

The building team 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.

2. Evaluation: The team will determine what all the information gathered means in terms of threats of violence to people and the school community.

Determines the nature of the threat using the **decision tree**, and level of severity of the risk. The building and/or district threat assessment team will not base a determination of threat on generalizations or stereotypes.

3. Decision making: The building team should determine their course of action for the present and near future. It needs to be clarified who will assume the primary responsibility for managing the behavior or actions of the students (e.g., law enforcement, security personnel, or mental health support staff).

The building team should meet promptly after the threat is resolved to discuss and determine the best approach for managing the behavior or actions of the students. The meeting's goal should aim to clarify roles and responsibilities, establish communication protocols, and develop a comprehensive plan to address the situation effectively in the present and near future. Additionally, it would be essential to ensure that all staff members are adequately trained and equipped to handle any potential escalation of behavior in a timely and appropriate manner.

4. Follow-up: The building team will devise strategies to maintain ongoing surveillance of the individuals and behaviors implicated, ensuring that any potential re-escalation is effectively mitigated.

The building team should assess existing security measures to ensure they are sufficient for monitoring individuals and behaviors. The team should implement clear protocols and procedures for monitoring and reporting suspicious behaviors and for coordinating with relevant authorities if intervention is required. The team should provide training on warning signs and responding appropriately to potential threats.

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Policy Adopted:

August 13, 2001

Policy Reviewed:

October 24, 2016

Policy Reviewed:

August 28, 2017

Policy Reviewed:

August 27, 2018

Policy Revised:

November 25, 2019

Policy Reviewed:

August 24, 2020

Policy Revised:

August 29, 2022

Policy Reviewed:

August 21, 2023

Policy Revised:

October 28, 2024